

Anguttara Nikāya

The Numerical Discourses

Sattakanipāta
(Book of the Sevens)

AN 7.53

Nandamātā Sutta “Nanda’s Mother”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

Copyright © Bhikkhu Candana 2022

I have personally heard this.

At one time, the Venerables Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna were going on tour in Dakkhināgiri, the Southern Hilly region, along with a large Sangha of Bhikkhus.

It was during that time, that the Upāsika Nandamātā of Veḷukaṇṭakī, having woken up very early in the morning, began reciting loudly the Pārāyana Vagga.

Then, Vessavaṇa, one of the Four Great Kings, heard the female lay disciple Nandamātā reciting loudly the Pārāyana Vagga, and he waited until she finished.

When the female lay disciple Nandamātā of Veḷukaṇṭakī finished reciting the Pārāyana Vagga and became silent, The Great King Vessavaṇa, realizing that she had finished chanting, applauded her by saying:

“Good, sister! Very Good, Sister!”

Then, Veḷukaṇṭakī asked, in her surprise:

“But my dear, who might you be, whose voice it is that I now hear?”

“Sister, I am your brother, Vessavaṇa, the Great Protector King.”

“In that case, my dear, may the recitation of those verses be considered the gift for a guest, and an offering I make to you, my good guest!”

“Good, Sister! Then, may this also be considered a gift to a guest: tomorrow morning, when the Sangha of Bhikkhus headed by the Venerables Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna come for alms food in your city of Veḷukaṇṭakī, do make an offering of food to them, and dedicate the fruits of that offering also to me, as your guest.”

Without wasting any time, the female lay disciple Nandamātā prepared nourishing foods and drinks at her home before sunrise, in anticipation of the Sangha of Bhikkhus who were soon to arrive at Veḷukaṇṭakī.

Then, the Sangha of Bhikkhus, headed by the Venerables Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, who had not yet had their meal, arrived at the monastery in Veḷukaṇṭakī.

Meanwhile, the female lay disciple Nandamātā addressed a man by telling him to go to the monastery and inform the Sangha that the day’s meal has already been prepared and was now ready at her house, the Upāsika Nandamātā’s home. And so he did.

Then, headed by the Venerables Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, having put on their robes in the morning and taking their alms bowls and outer robes with them, the Sangha of Bhikkhus approached the house of the female lay disciple Nandamātā and sat on the prepared seats.

Subsequently, the female lay disciple Nandamātā began serving the food with her own hands, as she offered nourishing foods and drinks to the Sangha of Bhikkhus headed by the Venerables Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, and they were fully satisfied.

Afterwards, on seeing that the Venerable Sāriputta had finished taking his meal and had put aside the bowl, the female lay disciple Nandamātā went and sat to one side, and the Venerable Sāriputta said:

“Nandamātā, who informed you about the arrival of the Sangha of Bhikkhus to Veḷukaṇṭakī?”

1. At this, the female lay disciple Nandamātā recounted her entire experience from the night prior, and how the Great King Vessavaṇa had informed her about the arrival of the Sangha of Bhikkhus headed by the Venerables Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna. And then she added:

“In that way, Bhante, I offer the merits of whatever fruits are to be accrued from making this offering to the happiness of the Great King Vessavaṇa.”

And the Venerable Sāriputta said:

“Nandamātā, it is wonderful and quite amazing that you are able to speak face to face with such a powerful and majestic Deva!”

2. “Bhante, that is not the *only* wonderful and amazing thing! You see, Bhante, I had a single son, my beloved Nanda, but for some reason or other, the rulers took him away from me, tortured and then killed him. Bhante, even though my child was taken away from me, tortured and then killed, I do not recall my heart being even the least shaken, as a result of that experience.”

“Nandamātā, it is indeed quite wonderful and amazing that you have trained yourself to maintain the purity of the heart to such a degree, careful of each arising thought.”

3. “Bhante, that is not the *only* wonderful and amazing thing! You see, Bhante, my husband died and was reborn in the company of Yakkhas. When he appeared to me in the form that was familiar to me, the one from his last birth, I do not recall my heart being even the least shaken, as a result of that experience.”

“Nandamātā, it is indeed quite wonderful and amazing that you have trained yourself to maintain the purity of the heart to such a degree, careful of each arising thought.”

4. “Bhante, that is not the *only* wonderful and amazing thing! You see, Bhante, from the day my husband and I were married, as a young couple, I do not recall even an instance where I betrayed him, even in thought, let alone cheating on him with my physical body!”

“Nandamātā, it is indeed quite wonderful and amazing that you have trained yourself to maintain the purity of the heart to such a degree, careful of each arising thought.”

5. “Bhante, that is not the *only* wonderful and amazing thing! You see, Bhante, from the day I became an Upāsika, a female lay disciple, I do not recall ever intentionally breaking any of the Precepts, even if slightly.”

“Nandamātā, it is indeed quite wonderful and amazing that you have trained yourself to maintain the purity of the heart to such a degree, careful of each arising thought.”

6. “Bhante, that is not the *only* wonderful and amazing thing! You see, Bhante, whenever I wish to, by secluding my mind from sensual desires and unwholesome states of mind, in the presence of thinking and pondering, as well as with joy and pleasure that are the result of seclusion, I enter and abide in the first *jhāna*.

“Further, by overcoming both thinking and pondering, I enter upon and abide in the second *jhāna*, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind, without thinking and pondering, with joy and pleasure born of collectedness of mind. With the detachment from joy, I later abide in equanimity, where I stay mindful and fully aware as I experience both delight and pleasure within the body, which is the third *jhāna*, and for which the Noble Ones state:

“Such a person mindfully abides in happiness, with an ever-present equanimity, throughout.”

Further, by giving up both pleasure and discomfort, having already gone beyond pleasure and discomfort, while experiencing neither the previous state of joy nor any discomfort, and abiding in the purifying mindful state with equanimity, I attain to the fourth *jhāna*.”

“Nandamātā, it is indeed quite wonderful and amazing that you have trained yourself to maintain the purity of the heart to such a degree, careful of each arising thought.”

7. “Bhante, that is not the *only* wonderful and amazing thing! You see, Bhante, I do not see within me even a single one of the lower fetters that bind one to the sensual world, as taught and declared to us by The Blessed One.”

“Nandamātā, it is indeed quite wonderful and amazing, that you have trained yourself to maintain the purity of the heart to such a degree, careful of each arising thought.”

Then, the Venerable Sāriputta encouragingly spoke and advised Nandamātā, as he inspired, roused, and lightened her heart with an enlivening talk on The Dhamma, after which he arose from his seat and left.

Sādhū

Sādhū

Sādhū