

Anguttara Nikāya

The Numerical Discourses

Atthakanipāta
(Book of the Elights)

AN 8.54

Dīghajāṇu Sutta
“To Dīghajāṇu”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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At one time, The Blessed One was living in Kakkarapatta, a town of the Koliyans, where Dīghajāṇu, the son of the Koliyans, came and approached The Blessed One, and after paying homage and worshipping Him, he sat down to one side and said to The Blessed One:

“Bhante, we as lay people live the household life while enjoying sensual pleasures of various kinds, having the responsibility of maintaining a wife and children, using sandalwood and silk imported from Varāṇasi, wearing flower garlands, scents, and all kinds of luxurious ointments, as well as having a livelihood with which we earn gold and silver.

“Bhante, I have come to ask The Blessed One to please teach me the Dhamma that will be for my happiness and welfare, as I see its usefulness immediately in this life, as well as carry those benefits into the hereafter.”

“Byagghapajja, there are these four things that lead to the happiness and welfare of clansmen and all sons of good families, who can indeed see their usefulness immediately in this life, as well as carry those benefits into the hereafter. And what are these four?

“These are: rising up to the occasion by taking initiative of opportunities without procrastinating; making sure you protect and maintain the success you have accomplished; cultivating wholesome friendships and appreciating the value and importance of having genuinely good people in one’s life; and living a well-balanced life.

1. “And what, Byagghapajja, is meant by rising up to the occasion by taking initiative of opportunities without procrastinating?

“Here, Byagghapajja, whatever trade or business with which the clansman makes a living - whether in farming, trading, cattle rearing, serving in the military or having an important position at the king’s court, or any other type of skill, he always seeks to sharpen his abilities, and not become stale or lazy with the skillsets he has mastered or the position he has already reached in life. Thus, he is sharp and always on the lookout for how to improve himself, so to perform his tasks better, maintain his business, as he also completes his financial goals that had not yet been achieved, meanwhile working on them, so that they too can reach certain completion.

“In this way, Byagghapajja, the clansman rises up to the occasion by taking initiative of opportunities without procrastinating.

2. “And what, Byagghapajja, is meant by making sure you protect and maintain the success you have accomplished?

“Here, Byagghapajja, whatever wealth and success the clansman achieved that often would not come easy, but only by his blood, sweat, and time, along with the many challenges he had faced, all this wealth that he has rightfully gained, he works to fully protect. He does this while reflecting that, if he is not vigilant in protecting them, then kings and governments, robbers and thieves, floodwaters or blazing fires, not to mention unwanted or undeserving relatives, might one day come ravenously seeking to inherit the fortune he has amassed, taking it all away from him. So, he diligently protects his wealth by responsibly doing his very best to keep his wealth safe and secure.

“In this way, Byagghapajja, make sure you protect and maintain the success you have accomplished.

3. “And what, Byagghapajja, is meant by cultivating wholesome friendships and appreciating the value and importance of having genuinely good people in one’s life?

“Here, Byagghapajja, in whatever village or town the clansman may live, there he connects with other householders or their sons, whether those younger or older than him, because he would be looking at their level of maturity in character and development in virtue, no matter their age. Thus, he establishes healthy relationships with those endowed with genuine faith, kindness and benevolence, along with integrity, discipline, while possessing wisdom and a genuine curiosity to seek understanding of things. In this way, he stands and associates with them, learning and developing while discussing things in such a manner that those with faith gain more faith. Meanwhile, he himself finds his faith more strengthened through his association with them, along with his development in virtue, and in gaining of true wisdom.

“In this way, Byagghapajja, he cultivates wholesome friendships while appreciating the value and importance of having genuinely good people in his life.

4. “And what, Byagghapajja, is meant by living a well-balanced life?

“Here, Byagghapajja, the householder or his son knows full well how much he has and the money he will be earning as his income, as well as all his expenses and liabilities he must take

into account, balancing his budget so to achieve financial stability. In this manner, his income is always more than his expenses, and not vice versa, just like one sitting in front of a weight scale, holding the balance would know, by measuring and seeing how the weight on this side is more by this much, while the other side is less by that much.

“In this manner, the householder or his son knows full well how much he has and the money he will be earning as his income, as well as all his expenses and liabilities which he must take into account, balancing his budget so to achieve financial stability. In this manner, his income is always more than his expenses, and not vice versa.

“Now, Byagghapajja, if this clansman were to have a limited income, but desires to spend it by living lavishly and carelessly, he would be recognized by many as someone who ‘eats away his wealth’ as though he were eating figs.’ On the other hand, if the clansman were to have a large and steady income, but hardly spends it at all, being stingy with his earnings, then he would be recognized by many as someone who ‘being afraid of losing his wealth, is willing to starve himself to death, rather than spend the money he has earned.’ However, Byagghapajja, when the householder knows how to be smart and not impulsively waste away the income he has made, by being neither too frugal nor spendthrift, he learns how to balance his budget so to achieve financial stability. In this manner, his income is always more than his expenses, and not vice versa.

“After all, Byagghapajja, be aware that there are four major causes for the loss of one’s wealth that has been gained: being addicted to sex and womanizing; consuming intoxicants and being addicted to mind altering substances; gambling; and having evil friends in life who lack virtue and maintaining close relationships with them.

“Imagine, Byagghapajja, there was a large sized water reservoir with four inlets and four outlets. And a man comes and closes the inlets, but keeps the outlets open. Now, when it rains heavily, the reservoir would not be sufficiently filled up, and as a result, there would barely be any water left in it, instead of an abundance of water within the container. Of course, if this were to happen, it would spell disaster for all those who relied on the reservoir being full with water, once the rains have come and gone, for there would be none left in the reservoir for them.

“In the same way, Byagghapajja, these four major causes for the loss of one’s wealth that has been gained, are like those outlets that have been left open, that is: being addicted to sex and womanizing; consuming intoxicants and being addicted to mind altering substances; gambling; and having evil friends in life who lack virtue and maintaining close relationships with them.

“On the other hand, Byagghapajja, there are four causes for the gaining of wealth and fortune: Not being addicted to sex or womanizing; abstaining from consuming intoxicants or being addicted to mind altering substances; abandoning gambling; and having good friends in life who live with virtue, while maintaining close relationships with them.

“Here too, Byagghapajja, you can imagine a large sized water reservoir with four inlets and four outlets. And a man comes and opens the inlets but closes the outlets. Now, when it rains heavily, the reservoir would become sufficiently filled up, and as a result, there would indeed be plenty of

water in it, in fact an abundance of water within the container. Thus, after the heavy rains, all those who rely on the reservoir being full of water, will be happy and contented knowing that they have plenty of water to sustain themselves, once the rains have come and gone.

“In the same way, Byagghapajja, these four causes for the gaining of wealth and fortune are like those inlets that have been left open, that is: not being addicted to sex or womanizing; abstaining from consuming intoxicants or addictions to mind altering substances; abandoning gambling; and having good friends in life who live with virtue, while maintaining close relationships with them.

“Therefore, Byagghapajja, these are the four things that lead to the happiness and welfare of clansmen and all sons of good families, who can indeed see their usefulness immediately in this life, as well as carry those benefits into the hereafter.

“Furthermore, Byagghapajja, there are these four things that lead to the happiness and welfare of clansmen and all sons of good families, who can indeed see their usefulness and benefits into the hereafter, once this body breaks down, after death. And what are these four?

“Here, Byagghapajja, the good clansman has cultivated a strong sense of faith in his heart, while also living his life with genuine virtuous behavior, throughout, as well as with generosity, while possessing wisdom.

5. “And how, Byagghapajja, is a clansman declared as having cultivated a strong sense of faith in his heart?

“Here, Byagghapajja, such a clansman lives with complete faith in the Awakening of The Tathāgata, as he knows for sure that, *‘The Blessed One is an Arahant, Perfectly Awakened, endowed with Sublime Knowledge and Supremely Pure Conduct, the Well-Gone, the Knower of worlds, the Incomparable Tamer of those to be tamed, The Teacher of gods and humans, the Enlightened and Blessed.’*

“In this way, a good clansman is declared as having cultivated a strong sense of faith in his heart.

6. “And how, Byagghapajja, does a good clansman live his life with genuine virtuous behavior, throughout?

“Here, Byagghapajja, a good clansman is virtuous, behaving with high ethical standards while abstaining from harming or killing living beings; abstaining from taking that which is not freely given to him; he does not engage in any sexual misbehavior; he abstains from speaking what is false or from telling lies; and he does not consume any kind of intoxicating substances and brewed drinks that are the cause for deluding the mind, as well as making one become negligent.

“In this way, a good clansman lives his life with genuine virtuous behavior, throughout.

7. “And how, Byagghapajja, does a good clansman live his life with generosity?

“Here, Byagghapajja, the clansman is generous and open-handed with the things he has, possessing a mind that is free from the stains of stinginess, being charitable and always ready to give to those less fortunate and the needy.

“In this way, the good clansman lives his life with generosity.

8. “And how, Byagghapajja, can a good clansman possess wisdom?

“Here, Byagghapajja, the clansman is wise for he is able to discern the arising and disappearance of phenomena, which in itself is noble, because it allows one to gain the penetrative insight to see through things, leading one to achieve the complete obliteration and destruction of suffering. In this way, the good clansman is declared as one possessing wisdom.”

*‘Actively involved in securing the means for a rightful livelihood,
Diligent and responsible in protecting the wealth gained,
While balancing his budget with what is gained and spent;*

*Supported by his deep faith, developed in virtues and
With generosity that dispels the stains of greed and miserliness,
He is one who constantly works on clearing the path
For him to cross safely into the other world.*

*These eight qualities chisel for such a faithful householder
A beautiful life indeed,
It is no surprise then, why such a householder is truly declared as
The one who enjoys a beautiful life, as he continues to grow in both his benevolence and merits,
Both here and in the hereafter.’*

Sādhu

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