AN 8.82 — Puṇṇiya Sutta — The Venerable Puṇṇiya

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

Once, the Venerable Puṇṇiya came and approached The Blessed One, and after paying his respects by worshipping The Teacher, he sat to one side and said:

“Bhante, what might be the reason that sometimes The Tathāgata’s Dhamma Talks are so revealing and clear to me, but on other occasions, they are not so very clear, and I find myself not inspired at all, feeling as though I’m so far from ever realizing their Truth?”

1. “Puṇṇiya, even though a Bhikkhu might possess faith, when he does not approach The Tathāgata to listen to His Dhamma Talks, then The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

2. “And, Puṇṇiya, while having faith in his heart, when the Bhikkhu does approach The Tathāgata to listen to His Dhamma Talks but does not do so with genuine humility and trust while attending to Him, then The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

3. “Furthermore, Puṇṇiya, while having faith when approaching The Tathāgata, the Bhikkhu goes on attending to Him with humility and trust, yet as he does so, although he notices that doubt or a sense of uncertainty arise in his heart, he does not ask The Teacher the necessary questions he must ask in order for The Tathāgata to clear up any confusion or issues he has on The Dhamma. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

4. “Also, Puṇṇiya, while approaching The Tathāgata with faith, humility, and trust, the Bhikkhu continues attending to Him, but even though he does ask his questions on The Dhamma, when The Tathāgata gives the explanation, the Bhikkhu does not pay heed by fully and attentively listening to what is being said to him. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

5. “Further, Puṇṇiya, while the Bhikkhu might have faith as he approaches The Tathāgata, attending to Him with humility and trust, and after asking his questions, even though the Bhikkhu may listen attentively, yet he does not retain what was taught to him nor memorizes it, by recalling it again and again in his heart. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

6. “Also, Puṇṇiya, while the Bhikkhu might approach The Tathāgata with faith, as well as humility and trust, continuing to attend to Him and asking questions, but even though he listens to Him attentively and may retain The Teachings by memorizing what was taught, yet he does not investigate their depth of meaning. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

7. “Next, Puṇṇiya, when the Bhikkhu approaches The Tathāgata with faith, humility, and trust as he goes on attending to Him, and after asking questions and listening attentively, despite retaining the teachings by memorizing what was taught, and even though he may investigate the depth of meaning of The Dhamma that was taught to him, nevertheless, for the majority of his life, the Bhikkhu remains disinterested by not incorporating The Dhamma into his life in order to really know and see the truth. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

8. “And, Puṇṇiya, while having faith in his heart, when the Bhikkhu approaches The Tathāgata with humility and trust, as he continues attending to Him, asking questions while listening attentively, and although he retains The Teachings by memorizing what was taught, and investigates their depth of meaning and the truth in them, by probing from time-to-time what he has learned deeply, yet, he still does not want to dedicate himself fully to living a life according to The Dhamma. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata neither becomes revealed nor realized by that Bhikkhu.

“On the other hand, Puṇṇiya:

1. “When a Bhikkhu, while possessing faith in his heart, does approach The Tathāgata to listen to His Dhamma Talks, then The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

2. “Also, Puṇṇiya, while having faith, when the Bhikkhu approaches The Tathāgata to listen to His Dhamma Talks with humility and trust, as he goes on attending to Him, then The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

3. “And, Puṇṇiya, although having faith while approaching The Tathāgata, with humility and trust, as he attends to Him, when the Bhikkhu does have doubt or uncertainty arise in

his heart, he asks The Teacher the necessary questions, which he must ask in order to clear up any confusion or issues he may have on The Dhamma. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

4. “Next, Puṇṇiya, having faith while approaching The Tathāgata, with humility and trust as he attends to Him, the Bhikkhu does not hesitate to ask his questions on The Dhamma, and when The Tathāgata gives the explanations, he does pay heed by fully and attentively listening to what is being said to him. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

5. “Further, Puṇṇiya, while having faith, the Bhikkhu approaches The Tathāgata with humility and trust as he continues attending to Him, and after asking his questions and listening attentively, he does retain what was taught to him and memorizes it, by recalling it again and again in his heart. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

6. “Also, Puṇṇiya, when the Bhikkhu approaches The Tathāgata with faith, along with humility and trust, as he goes on attending to Him and never misses an opportunity to ask his questions, and while listening to The Teacher attentively, he retains by memorizing what was taught to him, he thus goes on to investigate and probe their depth of meaning. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

7. “Next, Puṇṇiya, when the Bhikkhu approaches The Tathāgata with faith, attending to Him with genuine humility and trust, and after asking his questions and listening attentively, and while retaining in his heart The Teachings by memorizing them, he proceeds to investigate and probe the depth of meaning found within The Dhamma taught to him. To this end, the Bhikkhu maintains his interest and drive to penetrate their meaning and thereby comes to personally know and see their truth. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

8. “And, Puṇṇiya, when the Bhikkhu has faith and approaches The Tathāgata with humility and trust while attending to Him, asking questions and listening attentively, and by retaining The Teachings and memorizing what was taught, he goes on to investigate their depth of meaning by probing and thus penetrating their truth, he then dedicates himself fully to living a life according to The Dhamma, making It his primary goal in life. As a result, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.

“In this manner, Puṇṇiya, The Dhamma being taught by The Tathāgata becomes fully revealed and realized by that Bhikkhu.”

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu