Ud 3.2 — Nanda Sutta: Nanda

English translation by John D. Ireland.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved; source ellipsis or repetition-omission statement retained. Canonical repetitions were not reconstructed.

Text

Thus have I heard. At one time the Lord was staying near Savatthi in the Jeta Wood at Anathapindika's monastery. On that occasion the Venerable Nanda, the Lord's (half-) brother, the son of his maternal aunt, informed a number of bhikkhus thus: "I am discontented with leading the holy life, friends. I am unable to endure the holy life. I will give up the training and return to the low life."

Then a certain bhikkhu approached the Lord, prostrated himself, sat down to one side, and said: "The Venerable Nanda, revered sir, the Lord's (half-) brother, the son of his maternal aunt, informed a number of bhikkhus thus: 'I am discontented with leading the holy life... I will give up the training and return to the low life.'"

Then the Lord addressed a certain bhikkhu: "Come, bhikkhu, in my name tell the bhikkhu Nanda, 'The Teacher calls you, friend Nanda.'"

"Very well, revered sir," that bhikkhu replied, and approaching the Venerable Nanda, he said, "The Teacher calls you, friend Nanda."

"Very well friend," the Venerable Nanda replied, and approaching the Lord he prostrated himself and sat down to one side. The Lord then said to him: "Is it true, Nanda, that you informed a number of bhikkhus thus: 'I am discontented with leading the holy life... I will return to the low life'?"

"Yes, revered sir."

"But why, Nanda, are you discontented with leading the holy life?"

"On departing from home, revered sir, a Sakyan girl, the loveliest in the land, with her hair half-combed, looked up at me and said, 'May you return soon, master.' Recollecting that, revered sir, I am discontented with leading the holy life... I am unable to endure the holy life. I will give up the training and return to the low life."

Then the Lord took the Venerable Nanda by the arm, and just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm, even so did they vanish from the Jeta Wood and appear among the devas of the Tavatimsa heaven. Now on that occasion about five hundred pink-footed nymphs had come to minister to Sakka, ruler of the devas. And the Lord said to the Venerable Nanda, "Do you see those five hundred pink-footed nymphs?"

"Yes, revered sir."

"What do you think, Nanda, who is more beautiful, more fair to behold, and more alluring — that Sakyan girl, the loveliest in the land, or these five hundred pink-footed nymphs?"

"Revered sir, compared to these five hundred pink-footed nymphs, that Sakyan girl, the loveliest in the land, is like a mutilated she-monkey that has had its ears and nose chopped off. She does not count; she is not worth a fraction compared to them; there is no comparison. These five hundred nymphs are far more beautiful, more fair to behold, and more alluring."

"Rejoice, Nanda, rejoice, Nanda! I guarantee that you will obtain five hundred pink-footed nymphs."

"If, revered sir, the Lord guarantees that I will obtain five hundred pink-footed nymphs, I shall be content in living the holy life under the Lord."

Then the Lord took the Venerable Nanda by the arm... even so did they vanish from among the devas of the Tavatimsa heaven and appear in the Jeta Wood.

The bhikkhus heard: "It is said that the Venerable Nanda, the Lord's (half-) brother, the son of his maternal aunt, is living the holy life for the sake of nymphs. It is said that the Lord has guaranteed that he will obtain five hundred pink-footed nymphs."

Then the bhikkhu-friends of the Venerable Nanda went about calling him "hireling" and "menial," saying: "The Venerable Nanda is a hireling! The Venerable Nanda is a menial! He is living the holy life for the sake of nymphs! It is said that the Lord has guaranteed that he will obtain five hundred pink-footed nymphs!"

Then the Venerable Nanda was humiliated, ashamed, and dismayed by his friends calling him "hireling" and "menial." Living alone, secluded, diligent, ardent, and resolute, he soon realized even here and now through his own direct knowledge that unequalled goal of the holy life for the sake of which sons of good family rightly go forth from home to the homeless state, and entering into it he abode in it. And he knew: "Finished is birth, lived is the holy life, done is what had to be done, there is no more of this state." And the Venerable Nanda became one of the arahats.

Then, when the night was far advanced, a certain devata of surpassing beauty, illuminating the whole Jeta Wood, approached the Lord, prostrated himself and stood to one side. Standing there that devata said to the Lord: "The Venerable Nanda, revered sir, the Lord's (half-) brother, the son of his maternal aunt, by the ending of the taints has realized here and now through his own direct knowledge the taintless mind-deliverance and wisdom-deliverance, and entering into it, he abides in it."

The knowledge also arose in the Lord: "Nanda, by the ending of the taints, has realized here and now the taintless mind-deliverance and wisdom-deliverance, and entering into it, he abides in it."

When that night had ended the Venerable Nanda approached the Lord, prostrated himself, sat down to one side, and said to the Lord: "Revered sir, as to the Lord's guarantee that I will obtain five hundred pink-footed nymphs, I release the Lord from that promise."

"But, Nanda, comprehending your mind with my mind, I knew: 'Nanda has realized here and now the taintless mind-deliverance and wisdom-deliverance.' Also, a devata told me: 'The Venerable Nanda, revered sir, has realized here and now the taintless mind-deliverance and wisdom-deliverance.' When, Nanda, your mind was released from the taints without grasping, I was then released from that promise."

Then, on realizing its significance, the Lord uttered on that occasion this inspired utterance:

That bhikkhu who has crossed the mire, Crushed the thorn of sensual desire, And reached the destruction of delusion Is not perturbed by pleasures and pains.