MN 74 — MN 74 To LongNails | Dīghanakha Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

To LongNails

Dīghanakha Sutta (MN 74)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha on Vulture Peak Mountain, in the Boar’s Cave. Then LongNails the wanderer1 went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, I am of the view, of the opinion, that ‘All is not pleasing to me.’”

“But even this view of yours, Aggivessana—’All is not pleasing to me’—is even that not pleasing to you?”

“Even if this view of mine were pleasing to me, Master Gotama, it would still be the same, it would still be the same.”

“Well, Aggivessana, there are more than many in the world who say, ‘It would still be the same, it would still be the same,’ yet they both do not abandon that view and they cling to another view. There are fewer than few in the world who say, ‘It would still be the same, it would still be the same,’ and they both abandon that view and do not cling to another view.

“There are some contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion, that ‘All is pleasing to me.’ There are some contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion, that ‘All is not pleasing to me.’ There are some contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion, that ‘A part is pleasing to me; a part is not pleasing to me.’

“With regard to those contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion, that ‘All is pleasing to me’: That view of theirs is close to being impassioned, close to bondage, close to delighting, close to holding, close to clinging. With regard to those contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion, that ‘All is not pleasing to me’: That view of theirs is close to not being impassioned, close to non-bondage, close to not-delighting, close to not-holding, close to not-clinging.”

When this was said, LongNails the wanderer said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama commends my viewpoint. Master Gotama recommends my viewpoint.”

“With regard to those contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion that ‘A part is pleasing to me; a part is not pleasing to me’: Whatever is pleasing to them, their view is close to being impassioned, close to bondage, close to delighting, close to holding, close to clinging. Whatever is not pleasing to them, their view is close to not being impassioned, close to non-bondage, close to not-delighting, close to not-holding, close to not-clinging.

“With regard to those contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion, ‘All is pleasing to me’: An observant person among them considers that ‘If I were to grasp and insist firmly on this view of mine that “All is pleasing to me,” and to state that “Only this is true, all else is worthless,” I would clash with two—the contemplative or brahman who is of the view, of the opinion that “All is not pleasing to me” and the contemplative or brahman who is of the view, of the opinion that “A part is pleasing to me; a part is not pleasing to me.” I would clash with these two. Where there is a clash, there is dispute. Where there is a dispute, quarreling. Where there is quarreling, annoyance. Where there is annoyance, frustration.’ Envisioning for himself clash, dispute, quarreling, annoyance, frustration, he both abandons that view and does not cling to another view. Thus there is the abandoning of these views; thus there is the relinquishing of these views.

“With regard to those contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion that ‘All is not pleasing to me’: An observant person among them considers that ‘If I were to grasp and insist firmly on this view of mine that “All is not pleasing to me,” and to state that “Only this is true, all else is worthless,” I would clash with two—the contemplative or

brahman who is of the view, of the opinion that “All is pleasing to me” and the contemplative or brahman who is of the view, of the opinion that “A part is pleasing to me; a part is not pleasing to me.” I would clash with these two. Where there is a clash, there is dispute. Where there is a dispute, quarreling. Where there is quarreling, annoyance. Where there is annoyance, frustration.’ Envisioning for himself clash, dispute, quarreling, annoyance, frustration, he both abandons that view and does not cling to another view. Thus there is the abandoning of these views; thus there is the relinquishing of these views.

“With regard to those contemplatives & brahmans who are of the view, of the opinion that ‘A part is pleasing to me; a part is not pleasing to me’: An observant person among them considers that ‘If I were to grasp and insist firmly on this view of mine that “A part is pleasing to me; a part is not pleasing to me,” and to state that “Only this is true, all else is worthless,” I would clash with two—the contemplative or brahman who is of the view, of the opinion that “All is pleasing to me” and the contemplative or brahman who is of the view, of the opinion that “All is not pleasing to me.” I would clash with these two. Where there is a clash, there is dispute. Where there is a dispute, quarreling. Where there is quarreling, annoyance. Where there is annoyance, frustration.’ Envisioning for himself clash, dispute, quarreling, annoyance, frustration, he both abandons that view and does not cling to another view. Thus there is the abandoning of these views; thus there is the relinquishing of these views.

“Now, Aggivessana, this body—endowed with form, composed of the four primary elements, born from mother & father, nourished with rice & porridge, subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion—should be envisioned as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. In one who envisions the body as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self, any desire for the body, attraction to the body, following after the body is abandoned.

“There are these three kinds of feeling: a pleasant feeling, a painful feeling, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. On the occasion when one feels a pleasant feeling, one does not feel either a painful feeling or a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. One feels only a pleasant feeling on that occasion. On the occasion when one feels a painful feeling, one does not feel either a pleasant feeling or a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. One feels only a painful feeling on that occasion. On the occasion when one feels a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling, one does not feel either a pleasant feeling or a painful feeling. One feels only a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling on that occasion.

“A pleasant feeling is inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen, subject to ending, subject to vanishing, fading, ceasing. A painful feeling is also inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen, subject to ending, subject to vanishing, fading, ceasing. A neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling is also inconstant, fabricated, dependently co-arisen, subject to ending, subject to vanishing, fading, ceasing.

“Seeing this, an instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with pleasant feeling, disenchanted with painful feeling, disenchanted with neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling. Disenchanted, he grows dispassionate. From dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns, ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’ A monk whose mind is thus released does not take sides with anyone, does not dispute with anyone. He words things by means of what is said in the world but without grasping at it.”

Now at that time Ven. Sāriputta was sitting2 behind the Blessed One, fanning him. The thought occurred to him, “Indeed, it seems that the Blessed One speaks to us of the abandoning of each of these qualities through direct knowledge.3 Indeed, it seems that the One Well-Gone speaks to us of the relinquishing of each of these qualities through direct knowledge.”4 As Ven. Sāriputta was reflecting thus, his mind was released from effluents through not-clinging. While in LongNails the wanderer there arose the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.”

Then LongNails the wanderer—having seen the Dhamma, having attained the Dhamma, having known the Dhamma, having fathomed the Dhamma, having crossed over and beyond uncertainty, having no more perplexity, having gained fearlessness, having becoming independent of others with regard to the Teacher’s message—said to the Blessed One: “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life.”5

Notes

1. The Commentary states that LongNails (Dīghanakha) was a nephew of Ven. Sāriputta.

2. Following the Thai edition of the Canon. The Burmese and PTS editions say that Ven. Sāriputta was standing.

3. The Pali word no in this sentence can mean either “indeed” or “to us.”

4. Compare this account of Ven. Sāriputta’s awakening with the account given in MN 111.

5. The Commentary states that after delivering this discourse the Buddha returned to the Bamboo Forest outside of Rājagaha and met with 1,250 arahant disciples to deliver the Ovāda Pāṭimokkha—the event commemorated every year on Māgha Pūjā.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 18; AN 3:68; Sn 4:3; Sn 4:8; Sn 4:12–13