

SN 35.241

Salāyatanaṅga Saṃyutta
Collection on the Six Sense Bases
Āsīvisa Vagga
The Section on Serpents

Paṭhama Dārukkhandha Sutta

“The Log - Part 1”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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Once, while the Blessed One lived in Kosambi, He went out walking on the shore of the river Ganges.

Then the Blessed One, on seeing a huge log being carried along by the current of the river, addressed the Bhikkhus thus:

“Bhikkhus, do you see that huge log, being carried along by the current of the river Ganges?”

“Yes, Bhante, we do see it,” replied the Bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, if this log does not reach the near shore or the further shore of the river, if it does not sink in the middle, nor get stranded on higher ground; if it is not seized by humans, nor seized by non-humans; if it is not caught in a whirlpool, nor corrupted from within, then it bends, slants, and meanders all the way to the ocean.

“And what is the reason for this?”

“Bhikkhus, it is because the current of the river Ganges bends, slants and meanders its way all the way to the ocean. In the same way Bhikkhus, if you do not reach the near shore or the further shore of the river, if you do not sink in the middle, nor stranded on higher ground, if you are not seized by humans, nor are seized by non-humans, if you are not caught in a whirlpool, nor corrupted from within, then you will bend, slant, and meander all the way to Nibbāna. And what is the reason for this?”

“Bhikkhus, it is because Right View bends, slants, and meanders all the way to Nibbāna.”

Now, when this was said a certain Bhikkhu asked the Blessed One:

“Bhante, what is the near shore of the river, what is the further shore; what is the middle, what is it to sink; what is getting stranded on higher ground, what is being seized by humans, what is being seized by non-humans; what is the whirlpool, and what is corruption from within?”

“Bhikkhu, the near shore of the river is a synonym for the six sense bases.

“Bhikkhu, the further shore of the river is a synonym for the six external sense objects.

“Bhikkhu, to sink in the middle is a synonym for greed and longing.

“Bhikkhu, to get stranded on higher ground is a synonym for the conceit ‘*I am.*’

“And what Bhikkhu, is being seized by humans? Here, the Bhikkhu lives associating with lay people sharing their interests, grief, pleased with the pleasant, unhappy with the unhappy, as he identifies himself with whatever situation that arises. This, Bhikkhu, is called being seized by humans.

“And what Bhikkhu, is being seized by non-humans? Here, Bhikkhu, someone leads the Holy Life with the intention to be reborn in some heavenly realm. Thus, he lives the Holy Life while thinking to himself: *‘By observing these virtues, observances, and austerities may I be reborn in the company of such and such a god!’*

“This, Bhikkhu, is called being seized by non-humans.

“Bhikkhu, the whirlpool is a synonym for the five strands of sensual pleasures.

“And what Bhikkhu, is the corruption from within?

“Here, Bhikkhu, someone does not live with virtuous behavior, thinks evil and vile thoughts, commits unwholesome actions in secret, and only pretends to be a recluse and never truly living the Holy Life. As a result, the evil thoughts leaking from him will overtake him. This is corruption from within.”

Meanwhile, the cowherd Nanda while standing close to the Blessed One, was listening to the Blessed One’s explanation. Then, Nanda addressed the Blessed One and said:

“Bhante, I do not reach the near shore nor the further shore of the river. I do not sink in the middle, nor get stranded on higher ground. I am neither seized by humans, nor by non-humans; I am not caught in a whirlpool, and I am not corrupted from within. Therefore Lord, may I be granted the Going Forth and the Higher Ordination.”

“In that case, Nanda, first return the herd to their owner.”

“Bhante, they are with calves, and they will return on their own.”

“Nevertheless, Nanda, you must first return them to their master.”

Then the cowherd Nanda, having returned the herd back to their owner came and approached the Blessed One and said:

“Bhante, I have returned the herd to their owner. May I now be granted the Going Forth and the Higher Ordination, in the presence of the Blessed One.”

Then, at that instant, the cowherd Nanda obtained the Going Forth and the Higher Ordination in the presence of the Blessed One. And before long, the Venerable Nanda while practicing diligently, while residing secluded and withdrawn from the crowd, achieved the Highest Goal of the Holy Life, for the sake of which good sons of families rightfully Go Forth, from home life into homelessness.

Thus, by realizing it for himself here and now, the Venerable Nanda became one of the Arahants.

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