

SN 47.12

Saṃyutta Nikāya

The Connected Discourses

Mahāvagga Saṃyutta

The Great Section of the Connected Discourses

Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta

Connected Discourses on the Four Bases of Mindfulness

Nālandā Vagga

The Section on Nālandā

Nālandā Sutta

“Discourse at Nālandā” (*Sāriputta’s Lion’s Roar*)

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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Once, The Blessed One had traveled to and taken up residence at Nālandā, while staying at Pāvārika’s mango grove.

It was during that time, when the Venerable Sāriputta went to The Blessed One, and after respectfully paying homage to The Teacher, sat down at one side, and spoke the following words:

“Bhante, I have such faith, such confidence in The Blessed One, that I declare that there has never been, there can never be, nor could there be in the present, any other recluse or brahmin more exalted and superior in his Awakening than The Blessed One.”

“Sāriputta, now that indeed is quite a lofty declaration for you to be making!

“For, Sāriputta, that is truly a bold statement and an assertion, a bona fide and genuine sounding of the lion’s roar!

“But, how is it, Sāriputta, that you make such a categorical declaration? After all, have you had the direct experience of knowing the Fully Awakened Buddhas from the past, those Arahants from bygone eras? Do you have direct and personal understanding of the quality of the Heart of all those Tathāgatas from the past, or have you gained personal knowledge of the level of their virtue, their meditation, their level of wisdom, their inner state, and their freedom from defilements and from future rebirths?”

“No, Blessed Lord.”

“And how about those Arahants, Sāriputta? Do you have the direct experience of knowing the Fully Awakened Buddhas that are to appear in the future? Do you have direct and personal understanding of the quality of the Heart of all those Tathāgatas who have not yet appeared, or have you gained personal knowledge of the level of their virtue, their meditation, their level of wisdom, their inner state, and their freedom from defilements and from future rebirths?”

“No, Blessed Lord.”

“And how about me, Sāriputta? Do you have the direct experience of knowing The Fully Awakened Buddha sitting in front of you at this present moment? Do you have direct and personal understanding of the quality of the Tathāgata’s Heart, here and now, or have you gained personal knowledge of the level of My virtue, My meditation, My level of wisdom, My inner state, and My freedom from defilements and from any future rebirths?”

“No, Blessed Lord.”

“Then, Sāriputta, it seems that you do not have the direct personal knowledge or understanding of the quality of the Heart of all those Tathāgatas from the past, those to appear in the future, or The Tathāgata at the present. Therefore, how is it that you dare to set forth a proclamation, such a lofty and bold utterance, a veritable sounding of the lion’s roar, by stating:

‘Bhante, I have such faith, such confidence in The Blessed One, that I declare that there has never been, there can never be, nor could there be in the present, any other recluse or brahmin more exalted and superior in his Awakening than the Blessed One?’

“Blessed Lord, indeed, I do not possess the direct experience of knowing the Heart of the Fully Awakened Buddhas from the past, those Arahants from bygone eras, those to come in the future, nor of the Tathāgata Himself, in the present. Nevertheless, I have personally come to know and see the Truth of The Dhamma, and it is *this* realization itself, which is giving me the confidence to make such a proclamation.

“Suppose, Bhante, a king’s frontier fortress was strongly fortified, with strong ramparts and turrets, all of which were accessible only through a single gate, where there was positioned a gatekeeper who was intelligent, alert, experienced, and very cautious; keeping all strangers out, while permitting the entry of only those, who are genuinely friendly.

“Now, as the gatekeeper carefully monitors and patrols the path that leads all around the fortress, he does not observe there being even a tiny hole or crack in the thick walls, that would be big enough to allow even a tiny house kitten to slip through. In this way, he comes to the conclusion:

‘Whatever decent sized living beings wanting to enter or leave this city, they will all have to do so by going through this gate, and this gate only!’

“In the same way, Bhante, I have personally come to know and see the Truth of The Dhamma, and it is this realization itself which allows me to infer and make such a proclamation.

“This is because, Bhante, all the Arahants, all the Fully Awakened Buddhas of the past had already abandoned the five hindrances, the corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom; having well established their minds in the four foundations of mindfulness, they had duly cultivated the Seven Factors of Awakening, and thus had liberated themselves by waking up to the Unsurpassed, Supreme, and Perfect Enlightenment.

“Similarly, Bhante, all the Arahants, all the Fully Awakened Buddhas that will appear in the future will have abandoned the five hindrances, the corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom; well establishing their minds in the four foundations of mindfulness, while duly cultivating the Seven Factors of Awakening, and thus they will liberate themselves by waking up to the Unsurpassed, Supreme, and Perfect Enlightenment.

“And similarly, Bhante, at present, all the Arahants, starting with The Blessed One Himself, all have already abandoned the five hindrances, the corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom; having well established their minds in the four foundations of mindfulness and duly cultivated the Seven Factors of Awakening, and thus they have liberated themselves by waking up to the Unsurpassed, Supreme, and Perfect Enlightenment.”

“Sādhu, Sādhu indeed, Sāriputta!” exclaimed The Blessed One, while confirming the heartfelt declaration uttered by Sāriputta, the Chief Disciple.

Then, The Teacher continued instructing:

“In this manner, Sāriputta, you must therefore continue to teach and share This Beautiful Dhamma as you instruct and encourage your fellow Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, as well as the Upāsakas and Upāsikās, the male and female lay disciples.

“For, in doing so, those listening to your words who might be of a lesser capacity of understanding or faith, still lacking that strong trust and confidence in their heart towards The Tathāgata, on being exposed to your explanation and sharing of This Beautiful Dhamma, they too, will indeed come out of their delusion; abandoning at last and leaving behind their perplexities and doubts, along with whatever wrong views that once plagued them.”

Sādhu

Sādhu

Sādhu