

## **Sutta Retreat at Jhana Grove, 21-23 January 2011 with Ajahn Brahmāli**

Day 1 (21 January) : Why Study the Suttas? Texts 1 and 2.

Days 2 (22 January) : The Noble Truth of Suffering. Texts 3-7.

Days 3 (23 January) : The Noble Truth of the Path to the End of Suffering. Texts 8-11.

### **(1) Future Perils**

“Bhikkhus, there are these five future perils as yet unarisen that will arise in the future. You should recognize them and make an effort to abandon them. What five?

...

(4) “Again, bhikkhus, in the future there will be bhikkhus who are undeveloped in body, undeveloped in virtuous behavior, undeveloped in mind, and undeveloped in wisdom. When those discourses spoken by the Tathāgata are being recited that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, connected with emptiness, they will not want to listen to them, lend an ear to them, or apply their minds to understand them; they will not think those teachings should be studied and learnt. But when those discourses are being recited that are mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by disciples, they will want to listen to them, lend an ear to them, apply their minds to understand them; and they will think those teachings should be studied and learnt. Thus, bhikkhus, through defilement of the Dhamma comes defilement of the discipline, and from defilement of the discipline comes defilement of the Dhamma. This is the fourth future peril as yet unarisen that will arise in the future. You should recognize it and make an effort to abandon it ...

(Extract from Sutta 79 of the Collection of Fives in the Aṅguttara Nikāya)

### **(2) Decline of the Good Dhamma**

“Bhikkhus, there are these five things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma. What five?

(1) “Here, the bhikkhus do not learn the Dhamma: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired utterances, quotations, birth stories, marvelous accounts, and questions-and-answers. This is the first thing that leads to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma.

(2) “Again, the bhikkhus do not teach the Dhamma to others in detail as they have heard it and learnt it. This is the second thing that leads to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma.

...

(5) “Again, the bhikkhus do not ponder, examine, and mentally inspect the Dhamma as they have heard it and learnt it. This is the fifth thing that leads to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma.

“These are the five things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma ...

(Extract from Sutta 155 of the Collection of Fives in the Aṅguttara Nikāya)

### **(3) Born from Those Who Are Dear**

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvathī at Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Now at that time a certain householder’s dear and beloved son, his only child, had died. Because of his death, the father had no desire to work

or to eat. He kept going to the cemetery and crying out, “Where are you, my only child? Where are you, my only child?”

Then he went to the Blessed One and, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. The Blessed One then said to him, “Householder, your faculties are not those of one who is steady in his own mind. Your faculties are deranged.”

“Lord, how could my faculties not be deranged? My dear and beloved son, my only child, has died. Because of his death, I have no desire to work or to eat. I keep going to the cemetery and crying out, ‘Where are you, my only child? Where are you, my only child?’”

“That’s the way it is, householder, that’s the way it is — for sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”

“But lord, who would ever think that sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear? Happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.” So the householder, not delighting in the Blessed One’s words, rejecting the Blessed One’s words, got up from his seat and left.

Now at that time some gamblers were playing dice not far from the Blessed One. The householder went to them and said, “Just now, sirs, I went to Gotama the contemplative and, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. He then said to me, ‘Householder, your faculties are not those of one who is steady in his own mind. Your faculties are deranged.’

“When this was said, I said to him ... [the entire conversation is repeated] ...”

“That’s the way it is, householder [said the gamblers], that’s the way it is. Happiness and joy are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”

Then the householder left, thinking, “I agree with the gamblers.”

Eventually, word of this conversation made its way into the king’s inner chambers. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala addressed Queen Mallikā, “Mallikā, your contemplative, Gotama, has said this: ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.’”

“If that was said by the Blessed One, great king, then that’s the way it is.”

“No matter what Gotama the contemplative says, Mallikā endorses it: ‘If that was said by the Blessed One, great king, then that’s the way it is.’ Just as a pupil endorses whatever his teacher says, saying: ‘That’s the way it is, teacher, that’s the way it is’; so too, no matter what Gotama the contemplative says, Mallikā endorses it: ‘If that was said by the Blessed One, great king, then that’s the way it is.’ Go away, Mallikā! Out of my sight!”

Then Queen Mallikā called for the brahman Nālijangha: “Come, brahman. Go to the Blessed One and show reverence in my name with your head at his, and ask whether he is free from illness and affliction, is healthy, strong, and living in comfort, saying: ‘Queen Mallikā, lord, shows reverence with her head at your feet and asks whether you are free from illness and affliction, are healthy, strong, and living in comfort.’ And then say: ‘Lord, did the Blessed One say that sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear?’ Whatever the Blessed One says, remember it well and tell it to me. For Tathāgatas do not speak what is untrue.”

“Yes, madam,” the brahman Nālijangha responded to Queen Mallikā. He then went to the Blessed One, exchanged courteous greetings with him, sat to one side, and said to him: “Master Gotama, Queen Mallikā shows reverence with her head at your feet and asks whether you are free from illness and affliction, are healthy, strong, and living in comfort. And she says further: ‘Lord, did the Blessed One say that sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear?’”

“That’s the way it is, brahman, that’s the way it is. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear. It may be

understood in this way how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.

“Once in this same Sāvattthī there was a woman whose mother died. Owing to her mother’s death she went mad, out of her mind, and wandering from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, would say, ‘Have you seen my mother? Have you seen my mother?’ It is in this way that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.

“Once in this same Sāvattthī there was a woman whose father died ... whose brother died ... whose sister died ... whose son died ... whose daughter died ... whose husband died. Owing to his death she went mad, out of her mind, and wandering from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, would say, ‘Have you seen my husband? Have you seen my husband?’ It is in this way, too, that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.

“Once in this same Sāvattthī there was a man whose mother died ... whose father died ... whose brother died ... whose sister died ... whose son died ... whose daughter died ... whose wife died. Owing to her death he went mad, out of his mind, and wandering from street to street, crossroads to crossroads, would say, ‘Have you seen my wife? Have you seen my wife?’ It is in this way, too, that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.

“Once in this same Sāvattthī there was a woman who went to her relatives’ home. Her relatives, having separated her from her husband, wanted to give her to another against her will. So she said to her husband, ‘These relatives of mine, having separated us, want to give me to another against my will,’ whereupon he cut her in two and slashed himself open, thinking, ‘We will be together in the afterlife.’ It is in this way, too, that it may be understood how sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.”

Then the brahman Nālijangha, delighting in and approving of the Blessed One’s words, got up from his seat, went to Queen Mallikā, and told her all that had been said in his conversation with the Blessed One.

Then Queen Mallikā went to King Pasenadi Kosala and said to him, “What do you think, great king: Is Princess Vajjīrī dear to you?”

“Yes, Mallikā, Princess Vajjīrī is dear to me.”

“And what do you think: would sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair arise in you from any change and alteration in Princess Vajjīrī?”

“Mallikā, any change and alteration in Princess Vajjīrī would mean an alteration of my life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair not arise in me?”

“Great king, it was with reference to this that the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully awakened, said, ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.’

“Now what do you think, great king: Is the noble Queen Vāsabhā dear to you? ... Is [your son] General Viḍūḍabha dear to you? ... Am I dear to you? ... Are [the countries of] Kāsi and Kosala dear to you?”

“Yes, Mallikā, [the countries of] Kāsi and Kosala are dear to me. It is owing to Kāsi and Kosala that we use Kāsi sandalwood and wear garlands, scents, and ointments.”

“And what do you think: would sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair arise in you from any change and alteration in Kāsi and Kosala?”

“Mallikā, any change and alteration in Kāsi and Kosala would mean an alteration of my life. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair not arise in me?”

“Great king, it was in connection with this that the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully awakened, said, ‘Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are born from those who are dear, arise from those who are dear.’”

“It’s wonderful, Mallikā, it’s marvellous how deeply the Blessed One penetrates and sees with wisdom. Come, Mallikā, give me the ablution water.”

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala rose from his seat, and arranging his upper robe over one shoulder, paid homage in the direction of the Blessed One with his hands in añjali, and exclaimed three times:

Homage to the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened!

Homage to the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened!

Homage to the Blessed One, accomplished and fully awakened!

(Sutta 87 of the Majjhima Nikāya)

#### **(4) The Simile of the Mountain**

At Sāvattḥī. Then, in the middle of the day, King Pasenadi of Kosala approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When they had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, the Blessed One said to him as he was sitting to one side: “Now where are you coming from, great king, in the middle of the day?”

“Just now, venerable sir, I have been engaged in those affairs of kingship typical for head-anointed khattiya kings, who are intoxicated with the intoxication of sovereignty, who are obsessed by greed for sensual pleasures, who have attained stable control in their country, and who rule having conquered a great sphere of territory on earth.”

“What do you think, great king? Here, a man would come to you from the east, one who is trustworthy and reliable; having approached, he would tell you: ‘For sure, great king, you should know this: I am coming from the east, and there I saw a great mountain high as the clouds coming this way, crushing all living beings. Do whatever you think should be done, great king.’ Then a second man would come to you from the west ... Then a third man would come to you from the north ... Then a fourth man would come to you from the south, one who is trustworthy and reliable; having approached, he would tell you: ‘For sure, great king, you should know this: I am coming from the south, and there I saw a great mountain high as the clouds coming this way, crushing all living beings. Do whatever you think should be done, great king.’ If, great king, such a great peril should arise, such a terrible destruction of human life, the human state being so difficult to obtain, what should be done?”

“If, venerable sir, such a great peril should arise, such a terrible destruction of human life, the human state being so difficult to obtain, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

“I inform you, great king, I announce to you, great king: aging and death are rolling in on you. When aging and death are rolling in on you, great king, what should be done?”

“As aging and death are rolling in on me, venerable sir, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

“There are, venerable sir, elephant battles (fought by) head-anointed khattiya kings, who are intoxicated with the intoxication of sovereignty, who are obsessed by greed for sensual pleasures, who have attained stable control in their country, and who rule having conquered a great sphere of territory on earth; but there is no place for those elephant battles, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. There are, venerable sir, cavalry battles (fought by) head-anointed khattiya kings ... There are chariot battles ... infantry battles ... but there is no place for those infantry battles, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. In this royal court, venerable sir, there are counsellors who, when the enemies arrive, are

capable of dividing them by subterfuge; but there is no place for those battles of subterfuge, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. In this royal court, venerable sir, there exists abundant bullion and gold stored in vaults and depositories, and with such wealth we are capable of mollifying the enemies when they come; but there is no place for those battles of wealth, no scope for them, when aging and death are rolling in. As aging and death are rolling in on me, venerable sir, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

“So it is, great king! So it is, great king! As aging and death are rolling in on you, what else should be done but to live by the Dhamma, to live righteously, and to do wholesome and meritorious deeds?”

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, further said this:

414 “Just as mountains of solid rock,  
Massive, reaching to the sky,  
Might draw together from all sides,  
Crushing all in the four quarters –

415 So aging and death come  
Rolling over living beings –  
Khattiyas, brahmins, vessas, suddas,  
Caṇḍālas and scavengers:  
They spare none along the way  
But come crushing everything.

416 There’s no ground there for elephant troops,  
For chariot troops and infantry.  
One can’t defeat them by subterfuge,  
Or buy them off by means of wealth.

417 Therefore a person of wisdom here,  
Out of regard for his own good,  
Steadfast, should settle faith  
In the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.

418 When one conducts oneself by Dhamma  
With body, speech, and mind,  
They praise one here in the present life,  
And after death one rejoices in heaven.”

(Sutta 25 of the Kosalasamyutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya)

### **(5) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma**

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Bārāṇasī in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus of the group of five thus:

“Bhikkhus, these two extremes should not be followed by one who has gone forth into homelessness. What two? The pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification,

which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

“And what, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna? It is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, nonreliance on it.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: it is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

(Extract from Sutta 11 of the Saccasamyutta in the Samyutta Nikāya)

## **(6) Tears**

At Sāvattthī. “Bhikkhus, this saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. What do you think, bhikkhus, which is more: the stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered on through this long course, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable – this or the water in the four great oceans?”

“As we understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, venerable sir, the stream of tears that we have shed as we roamed and wandered through this long course, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable – this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans.”

“Good, good, bhikkhus! It is good that you understand the Dhamma taught by me in such a way. The stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered through this long course, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable – this alone is more than the water in the four great oceans. For a long time, bhikkhus, you have experienced the death of a mother; as you have experienced this, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable, the stream of tears that you have shed is more than the water in the four great oceans.

“For a long time, bhikkhus, you have experienced the death of a father ... the death of a brother ... the death of a sister ... the death of a son ... the death of a daughter ... the loss of relatives ... the loss of wealth ... loss through illness; as you have experienced this, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable,

the stream of tears that you have shed is more than the water in the four great oceans. For what reason? Because, bhikkhus, this saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. It is enough to experience revulsion to all formations, enough to become dispassionate towards them, enough to be liberated from them.”

(Sutta 3 of the Anamataggasaṃyutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya)

### (7) Dear

At Sāvattḥī. Sitting to one side, King Pasenadi of Kosala said to the Blessed One: “Here, venerable sir, while I was alone in seclusion, a reflection arose in my mind thus: ‘Who now treat themselves as dear, and who treat themselves as an enemy?’ Then, venerable sir, it occurred to me: ‘Those who engage in misconduct of body, speech, and mind treat themselves as an enemy. Even though they may say, “We regard ourselves as dear,” still they treat themselves as an enemy. For what reason? Because of their own accord they act towards themselves in the same way that an enemy might act towards an enemy; therefore they treat themselves as an enemy. But those who engage in good conduct of body, speech, and mind treat themselves as dear. Even though they may say, “We regard ourselves as an enemy,” still they treat themselves as dear. For what reason? Because of their own accord they act towards themselves in the same way that a dear person might act towards one who is dear; therefore they treat themselves as dear.’”

“So it is, great king! So it is, great king!”

[The Buddha then repeats the entire statement of King Pasenadi.]

- 359 “If one regards oneself as dear  
One should not yoke oneself to evil,  
For happiness is not easily gained  
By one who does a wrongful deed.
- 360 When one is seized by the End-maker  
As one discards the human state,  
What can one call truly one’s own?  
What does one take when one goes?  
What follows one along  
Like a shadow that never departs?
- 361 Both the merits and the evil  
That a mortal performs right here:  
This is what is truly one’s own,  
This one takes when one goes;  
This is what follows one along  
Like a shadow that never departs.
- 362 Therefore one should do what is good  
As a collection for the future life.  
Merits are the support for living beings  
(When they arise) in the other world.”

(Sutta 4 of the Kosalasaṃyutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya)

## (8) Diligence

At Sāvattthī. Sitting to one side, King Pasenadi of Kosala said to the Blessed One: “Here, venerable sir, while I was alone in seclusion, the following reflection arose in my mind: ‘The Dhamma has been well expounded by the Blessed One, and that is for one with good friends, good companions, good comrades, not for one with bad friends, bad companions, bad comrades.’”

“So it is, great king! So it is, great king! The Dhamma has been well expounded by me, and that is for one with good friends, good companions, good comrades, not for one with bad friends, bad companions, bad comrades.

“On one occasion, great king, I was living among the Sakyans, where there is a town of the Sakyans named Nāgaraka. Then the bhikkhu Ānanda approached me, paid homage to me, sat down to one side, and said: ‘Venerable sir, this is half of the holy life, that is, good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship.’

“When this was said, great king, I told the bhikkhu Ānanda: ‘Not so, Ānanda! Not so, Ānanda! This is the entire holy life, Ānanda, that is, good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship. When a bhikkhu has a good friend, a good companion, a good comrade, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path ...

“By the following method too, Ānanda, it may be understood how the entire holy life is good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship: by relying upon me as a good friend, Ānanda, beings subject to birth are freed from birth; beings subject to aging are freed from aging; beings subject to illness are freed from illness; beings subject to death are freed from death; beings subject to sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair are freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair. By this method too, Ānanda, it may be understood how the entire holy life is good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship.’

“Therefore, great king, you should train yourself thus: ‘I will be one who has good friends, good companions, good comrades.’ It is in such a way that you should train yourself.

“When, great king, you have good friends, good companions, good comrades, you should dwell with one thing for support: diligence in wholesome states.

“When, great king, you are dwelling diligently, with diligence for support, your retinue of harem women will think thus: ‘The king dwells diligently, with diligence for support. Come now, let us also dwell diligently, with diligence for support.’

“When, great king, you are dwelling diligently, with diligence for support, your retinue of khattiya vassals will think thus ... your troops will think thus ... your subjects in town and countryside will think thus: ‘The king dwells diligently, with diligence for support. Come now, let us also dwell diligently, with diligence for support.’

“When, great king, you are dwelling diligently, with diligence for support, you yourself will be guarded and protected, your retinue of harem women will be guarded and protected, your treasury and storehouse will be guarded and protected.

385 “For one who desires lofty riches  
Following in succession,  
The wise here praise diligence  
In performing deeds of merit.

386 The wise person who is diligent  
Secures both kinds of good:  
The good found in this very life  
And the good of the future life.

The steadfast one, by attaining the good,  
Is called a person of wisdom.”

(Sutta 18 of the Kosalasamyutta in the Samyutta Nikāya)

### (9) With Caṅkī

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was wandering in Kosala, with a large Sangha of bhikkhus, and came to the Brahman village Opasāda. There the Blessed One stayed in the Gods’ Grove, the Sāla-tree grove to the north of Opasāda.

...

Then the brahman student Kāpaṭhika said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, with regard to the ancient hymns of the brahmins — passed down through oral transmission and included in their canon — the brahmins have come to the definite conclusion: ‘Only this is true, anything else is worthless.’ What does Master Gotama have to say to this?”

“Tell me, Bhāradvāja, is there among the brahmins even one brahmin who says, ‘This I know, this I see; only this is true, anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“And has there been among the brahmins even one teacher or teacher’s teacher back through seven generations who said, ‘This I know, this I see; only this is true, anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“And among the brahmin seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns — those ancient hymns, sung, repeated, and collected, which brahmins at present still sing, still chant, repeating what was said, repeating what was spoken — that is, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Angirasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāsetṭha, Kassapa and Bhagu: was there even one of these who said, ‘This we know, this we see; only this is true, anything else is worthless?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“So then, Bhāradvāja, it seems that among the brahmins there isn’t even a single brahmin who says, ‘This I know, this I see; only this is true, anything else is worthless.’ And there hasn’t been among the brahmins even a single teacher or teacher’s teacher back through seven generations who said, ‘This I know, this I see; only this is true, anything else is worthless.’ And there hasn’t been among the brahmin seers of the past, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns ... even one who said, ‘This we know, this we see; only this is true, anything else is worthless.’ Suppose there were a row of blind men, each holding on to the one in front of him: the first one doesn’t see, the middle one doesn’t see, the last one doesn’t see. In the same way, in regard to their statement, the brahmins are like a row of blind men: the first one doesn’t see, the middle one doesn’t see, the last one doesn’t see. So what do you think, Bhāradvāja, this being the case, doesn’t the conviction of the brahmins turn out to be groundless?”

“It’s not only out of conviction, Master Gotama, that the brahmins honor this. They also honor it as oral tradition.”

“Bhāradvāja, first you went by conviction. Now you speak of oral tradition. There are five things that can turn out in two ways in the here and now. Which five? Conviction, approval, oral tradition, logical reasoning, and reflective acceptance of a view. These are the five things that can turn out in two ways in the here and now. Now some things are firmly held in conviction, and yet they are vain, empty, and false. Some things are not firmly held in conviction, and yet they are genuine, factual, and unmistakable. Some things are fully approved of ... well-transmitted by tradition ... well-reasoned ... well-reflected on and yet they are vain,

empty, and false. Some things are not well-reflected on and yet they are genuine, factual, and unmistakable. In these cases it isn't proper for a wise person who safeguards the truth to come to a definite conclusion: 'Only this is true, anything else is worthless.'

"But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the safeguarding of the truth? In what way does one safeguard the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the safeguarding of the truth."

"If a person has conviction, he safeguards the truth when he says, 'This is my conviction.' But he doesn't yet come to the definite conclusion: 'Only this is true, anything else is worthless.' In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the safeguarding of the truth. In this way one safeguards the truth. I describe this as the safeguarding of the truth. But it is not yet the awakening to the truth.

"If a person approves of something ... receives an oral tradition ... has reasoned logically... has well-reflected on something, he safeguards the truth when he says, 'This is my reflective acceptance of a view.' But he doesn't yet come to the definite conclusion: 'Only this is true, anything else is worthless.' In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the safeguarding of the truth. In this way one safeguards the truth. I describe this as the safeguarding of the truth. But it is not yet the awakening to the truth.

"Yes, Master Gotama, in this way there is the safeguarding of the truth. In this way one safeguards the truth. We regard this as the safeguarding of the truth. But in what way is there the awakening to the truth? In what way does one awaken to the truth? We ask Master Gotama about awakening to the truth."

"Here, Bhāradvāja, a monk may be living in dependence on a certain village or town. Then a householder or householder's son goes to him and observes him with regard to three qualities — qualities based on greed, qualities based on aversion, qualities based on delusion: 'Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on greed that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing; or say, "I see," while not seeing; or might urge another to act in a way that would be for their long-term harm and pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on greed ... His bodily behaviour and verbal behaviour are those of one devoid of greed. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by one who is greedy.

When he observes that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on greed, he next observes him with regard to qualities based on aversion: 'Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on aversion that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing; or say, "I see," while not seeing; or might urge another to act in a way that would be for their long-term harm and pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on aversion ... His bodily behaviour and verbal behaviour are those of one devoid of aversion. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by one who is aversive.

When he observes that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on aversion, he next observes him with regard to qualities based on delusion: 'Are there in this venerable one any such qualities based on delusion that, with his mind overcome by these qualities, he might say, "I know," while not knowing; or say, "I see," while not seeing; or might urge another to act in a way that would be for their long-term harm and pain?' As he observes him, he comes to know, 'There are in this venerable one no such qualities based on delusion ... His bodily behaviour and verbal behaviour are those of one devoid of delusion. And the Dhamma he teaches is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined, unattainable by mere

reasoning, subtle, to-be-experienced by the wise. This Dhamma can't easily be taught by one who is deluded.

When he observes that the monk is purified with regard to qualities based on delusion, he places faith in him. Filled with faith, he visits him and pays respects to him. Paying respects to him, he lends ear. Lending ear, he hears the Dhamma. Hearing the Dhamma, he remembers it. Remembering it, he investigates its meaning. Investigating the meaning, he comes to a reflective acceptance of those teachings. Having gained a reflective acceptance of the teachings, desire arises. When desire arises, he applies himself. Having applied himself, he scrutinizes. Having scrutinized, he strives. Striving, he directly realizes the supreme truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom.

“In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the awakening to the truth. In this way one awakens to the truth. I describe this as the awakening to the truth. But it is not yet the final attainment of the truth.

“Yes, Master Gotama, in this way there is the awakening to the truth. In this way one awakens to the truth. We regard this as the awakening to the truth. But in what way is there the final attainment of the truth? In what way does one finally attain the truth? We ask Master Gotama about the final attainment of the truth.”

“The cultivation, development, and pursuit of those very same qualities – in this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the final attainment of the truth. In this way one finally attains the truth. I describe this as the final attainment of the truth.”

...

(Extract from Sutta 95 of the Majjhima Nikāya)

## **(10) Ignorance**

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus:

“Bhikkhus!”

“Venerable sir!” those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

...

“Bhikkhus, true knowledge is the forerunner in the entry upon wholesome states, with shame and fear of wrongdoing following along. For a wise person who has arrived at true knowledge, right view springs up. For one of right view, right intention springs up. For one of right intention, right speech springs up. For one of right speech, right action springs up. For one of right action, right livelihood springs up. For one of right livelihood, right effort springs up. For one of right effort, right mindfulness springs up. For one of right mindfulness, right concentration springs up.”

(Sutta 1 of the Maggasamyutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya)

## **(11) Analysis**

At Sāvattḥī. “Bhikkhus, I will teach you the Noble Eightfold Path and I will analyse it for you. Listen to that and attend closely, I will speak.”

“Yes, venerable sir,” those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Eightfold Path? Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“And what, bhikkhus, is right view? Knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the origin of suffering, knowledge of the cessation of suffering, knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: this is called right view.

“And what, bhikkhus, is right intention? Intention of renunciation, intention of non-ill will, intention of harmlessness: this is called right intention.

“And what, bhikkhus, is right speech? Abstinence from false speech, abstinence from divisive speech, abstinence from harsh speech, abstinence from idle chatter: this is called right speech.

“And what, bhikkhus, is right action? Abstinence from the destruction of life, abstinence from taking what is not given, abstinence from sexual misconduct: this is called right action.

“And what, bhikkhus, is right livelihood? Here a noble disciple, having abandoned a wrong mode of livelihood, earns his living by a right livelihood: this is called right livelihood.

“And what, bhikkhus, is right effort? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu generates desire for the non-arising of unarisen bad unwholesome qualities; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the abandoning of arisen bad unwholesome qualities; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome qualities; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the maintenance of arisen wholesome qualities, for their non-decay, increase, expansion, and fulfilment by development; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. This is called right effort.

“And what, bhikkhus is right mindfulness? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating feelings in feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating mind in mind, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating mental phenomena in mental phenomena, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. This is called right mindfulness.

“And what, bhikkhus, is right concentration? Here, bhikkhus, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which consists of rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by thought and examination. With the subsiding of thought and examination, he enters and dwells in the second jhāna, which has internal placidity and unification of mind and consists of rapture and pleasure born of concentration, without thought and examination. With the fading away as well of rapture, he dwells equanimous and, mindful and clearly comprehending, he experiences pleasure with the body; he enters and dwells in the third jhāna of which the noble ones declare: ‘He is equanimous, mindful, one who dwells happily.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and displeasure, he enters and dwells in the fourth jhāna, neither painful nor pleasant, which has purification of mindfulness by equanimity. This is called right concentration.”

(Sutta 8 of the Maggasamyutta in the Samyutta Nikāya)