

## **Dīgha Nikāya - The Long Discourses**

### **The Great Lion's Roar to the Udumbarikans (Udumbarika-Sīhanāda Sutta)**

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** Once the Lord was staying in Rājagaha at the Vultures' Peak. And at that time the wanderer Nigrodha<sup>759</sup> was staying at the Udumbarikā lodging<sup>760</sup> for wanderers, with a large company of some three thousand wanderers. And one morning early, the householder Sandhana came to Rājagaha in order to see the Lord. Then he thought: 'It is not the proper time to see the Blessed Lord, he is in retreat; it is not the proper time to see the meditating monks, they are in retreat. Perhaps I should go to the Udumbarikā lodging for wanderers and call on Nigrodha.' And he did so.

2. And just then Nigrodha was sitting in the midst of a large crowd of wanderers who were all shouting and screaming and making a great clamour, and indulging in various kinds of unedifying conversation<sup>761</sup> about kings, [37] robbers, ministers, armies, dangers, war, food, drink, clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes, relatives, carriages, villages, towns and cities, countries, women, heroes, street- and well-gossip, talk of the departed, desultory chat, speculation about land and sea, talk of being and non-being.

3. Then Nigrodha saw Sandhāna approaching from a distance, and he called his followers to order, saying: 'Be quiet, gentlemen, don't make a noise, gentlemen! The householder Sandhāna, a follower of the ascetic Gotama, is approaching. He is one of the number of white-robed householder followers of the ascetic Gotama in Rājagaha. And these good folk are fond of quiet, they are taught to be quiet and speak in praise of quiet. If he sees that this company is quiet, he will most likely want to come and visit us.' At this the wanderers fell silent.

4. Then Sandhāna approached Nigrodha and exchanged courtesies with him, and then sat down to one side. Then he said: 'Reverend sirs, the way the wanderers of another faith conduct themselves when they come together is one thing: [38] they make a great clamour and indulge in all manner of unedifying conversation...The Blessed Lord's way is different : he seeks a lodging in the forest, in

the depths of the jungle, free from noise, with little sound, far from the madding crowd, undisturbed by men, well fitted for seclusion.’

5. Then Nigrodha replied: ‘Well now, householder, do you know whom the ascetic Gotama talks to? Whom does he converse with? From whom does he get his lucidity of wisdom? The ascetic Gotama’s wisdom is destroyed by the solitary life, he is unused to assemblies, he is no good at conversation, he is right out of touch. Just as bison<sup>762</sup> circling around keep to the fringes, so it is with the ascetic Gotama. In fact, householder, if the ascetic Gotama were to come to this assembly, we would baffle him with a single question, we would knock him over like an empty pot.’

6. Now the Lord, with his divine-ear-faculty, purified and surpassing human range, heard this exchange between Sandhāna and Nigrodha. And, descending from the Vultures’ Peak, he came to the Peacocks’ Feeding Ground beside the Sumāgadha Tank, and [39] walked up and down there in the open air. Then Nigrodha caught sight of him, and he called his company to order, saying: ‘Gentlemen, be quiet, be less noisy! The ascetic Gotama is walking up and down beside the Sumāgadha Tank. He is fond of quiet, he speaks in praise of quiet. If he sees that this company is quiet, he will most likely want to come and visit us. If he does so, we will put this question to him: “Lord, what is this doctrine in which the Blessed Lord trains his disciples, and which those disciples whom he has so trained as to benefit from it recognise as their principal support, and the perfection of the holy life?”’ At this, the wanderers were silent.

7. Then the Lord approached Nigrodha, and Nigrodha said: ‘Come, Blessed Lord, welcome, Blessed Lord! At last the Blessed Lord has gone out of his way to come here. Be seated, Lord, a seat is prepared.’ The Lord sat down on the prepared seat, and Nigrodha took a low stool and sat down to one side. Then the Lord said to him: ‘Nigrodha, what was the subject of your conversation just now? What talk have I interrupted?’ Nigrodha replied: ‘Lord, we saw the Blessed Lord walking up and down at the Peacocks’ Feeding Ground by the Sumāgadha Tank, [40] and we thought: “If the ascetic Gotama were to come here we could ask him this question: Lord, what is this doctrine in which the

Blessed Lord trains his disciples, and which those disciples whom he has so trained as to benefit from it recognise as their principal support, and the perfection of the holy life?”

‘Nigrodha, it is hard for you, holding different views, being of different inclinations and subject to different influences, following a different teacher, to understand the doctrine which I teach my disciples... Come on then, Nigrodha, ask me about your own teaching, about your extreme austerity. How are the conditions of austerity and self-mortification fulfilled, and how are they not fulfilled?’

At this the wanderers made a great commotion and noise, exclaiming: ‘It is wonderful, it is marvellous how great are the powers of the ascetic Gotama in holding back with his own theories and in inviting others to discuss theirs!’

8. Silencing them, Nigrodha said: ‘Lord, we teach the higher austerities, we regard them as essential, we adhere to them. Such being the case, what constitutes their fulfilment or non-fulfilment?’

‘Suppose, Nigrodha, a self-mortifier goes naked, uses no polite restraints, licks his hands, does not come or stand still when requested. [41] He does not accept food out of the pot or pan...(as Sutta 8, verse 14). He wears coarse hemp or mixed material, shrouds from corpses, rags from the dust-heap ... He is a plucker-out of hair and beard, devoted [42] to this practice; he is a covered-thorn man, making his bed on them, sleeping alone in a garment of wet mud, living in the open air, accepting whatever seat is offered, one who drinks no water and is addicted to the practice, or he dwells intent on the practice of going to bathe three times before evening. What do you think, Nigrodha, is the higher austerity thereby fulfilled, or not?’ ‘Indeed, Lord, it is fulfilled.’ ‘But, Nigrodha, I maintain that this higher austerity can be faulted in various ways.’

9. ‘In what way, Lord, do you maintain that it can be faulted?’ ‘Take the case, Nigrodha, of a self-mortifier who practises a certain austerity. As a result, he is pleased and satisfied at having attained his end. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. Or else in so doing he elevates himself and

disparages others. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. Or else he has become intoxicated with conceit, infatuated and therefore careless. And this [43] is a fault in that self-mortifier.

10. ‘Again, a self-mortifier practises a certain austerity, and this brings him gains, honours and fame. As a result, he is pleased and satisfied at having attained his end... Or else he elevates himself and disparages others ... Or else he becomes intoxicated with conceit, infatuated and therefore careless. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. Again, a self-mortifier practises a certain austerity, and he divides his food into two heaps, saying: “This suits me, that doesn’t suit me!” And what does not suit him he eagerly rejects, while what suits him he eats up greedily, recklessly and passionately, not seeing the peril, with no thought for the consequences. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. [44] Again, a self-mortifier practises a certain austerity for the sake of gains, honours and fame, thinking: “Kings and their ministers will honour me, Khattiyas and Brahmins and householders, and religious teachers.” And this is a fault in that self-mortifier.

11. ‘Again, a self-mortifier disparages some ascetic or Brahmin, saying: “See how he lives in abundance, eating all sorts of things! Whether propagated from roots, from stems, from joings, from cuttings or fifthly from seeds,<sup>763</sup> he chews them all up with that thunderbolt of a jaw of his, and they call him an ascetic!” And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. Or he sees another ascetic or Brahmin being made much of by families, being honoured and respected and worshipped, and he thinks: “They make much of that rich-liver, they honour him, respect him and worship him, whereas I who am a real ascetic and self-mortifier get no such treatment!” Thus he is envious and jealous because of those householders. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier.

‘Again, a self-mortifier sits in a prominent position. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. Or he goes round ostentatiously <sup>764</sup> among the families, as if to say: “See, this is my way of renunciation!” And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. [45] Or he behaves in an underhand way. On being asked: “Do you approve of this?” although he does not approve he says: “I do”, or although he does approve he says: “I do not.” In this way he becomes a conscious liar. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier.

12. ‘Again, a self-mortifier, when the Tathagata or a disciple of the Tathagata presents the Dhamma in a way that should command his assent, withholds that assent. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. Or he is angry and bad-tempered. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. Or he is mean and spiteful, envious and jealous, crafty and deceitful, obstinate and proud, with evil desires and under their sway, with wrong views and given to extremist opinions; he is tainted with worldliness, holding on firmly, unwilling to give up. And this is a fault in that self-mortifier. What do you think, Nigrodha? Are these things faults in the higher austerity, or not?’ ‘Certainly they are, Lord. It could happen that a single self-mortifier was possessed of all these faults, not to speak of just one or the other.’

13.-14. ‘Now, Nigrodha, take the case of a certain self-mortifier who practises a certain austerity. As a result, he is not pleased and satisfied at having attained his end. This being so, [46] in this respect he is purified. Again, he does not elevate himself and disparage others... (similarly with all examples in 10 — 11). [47] Thus he does not become a conscious liar. In this respect he is purified.

15. ‘Again, a self-mortifier, when the Tathagata or a disciple of the Tathagata presents the Dhamma in a way that should command his assent, gives his assent. In this respect he is purified. And he is not angry or bad-tempered. In this respect he is purified. And he is not mean and spiteful, envious and jealous, crafty and deceitful, obstinate and [48] proud, he is without evil desires and not under their sway, without wrong views and not given to extremist opinions, he is not tainted with worldliness, does not hold on firmly and is not unwilling to give up. In this respect he is purified. What do you think, Nigrodha? Is the higher austerity purified by these things, or not?’ ‘Certainly it is, Lord, it attains its peak there, penetrating to the pith.’ ‘No, Nigrodha, it does not attain its peak there, penetrating to the pith. It has only reached the outer bark.’<sup>765</sup>

16. ‘Well then, Lord, how does austerity attain its peak, penetrating to the pith? It would be good if the Blessed Lord were to cause my austerity to attain its peak, to penetrate to the pith.’

‘Nigrodha, take the case of a self-mortifier who observes the fourfold restraint. And what is this? Here, a self-mortifier does not harm a living being, does not cause a living being to be harmed, does not approve of such harming; [49] he does not take what is not given, or cause it to be taken, or approve of such taking; he does not tell a lie, or cause a lie to be told, or approve of such lying; he does not crave for sense-pleasures,<sup>766</sup> cause others to do so, or approve of such craving. In this way, a self-mortifier observes the fourfold restraint. And through this restraint, through making this his austerity, he takes an upward course and does not fall back into lower things.

‘Then he finds a solitary lodging, at the root of a forest tree, in a mountain cave or gorge, a charnel-ground, a jungle-thicket, or in the open air on a heap of straw. Then, having eaten after his return from the alms-round, he sits down cross-legged, holding his body erect, having established mindfulness before him.<sup>767</sup> Abandoning hankering for the world, he dwells with a mind freed from such hankering, and his mind is purified of it. Abandoning ill-will and hatred, he dwells with a mind freed from them, and by compassionate love for the welfare of all living beings, his mind is purified of them. Abandoning sloth-and-torpor, ... by the perception of light,<sup>768</sup> mindful and clearly aware, his mind is purified of sloth-and-torpor. Abandoning worry-and-flurry, ... and with an inwardly calmed heart his mind<sup>769</sup> is purified of worry-and-flurry. Abandoning doubt, he dwells with doubt left behind, without uncertainty as to what things are wholesome, his mind purified of doubt.

17. ‘Having abandoned these five hindrances, and in order to weaken by insight the defilements<sup>770</sup> of mind, he dwells, letting his mind, filled with loving-kindness, pervade one quarter, then a second, then a third, then a fourth. And so he continues to pervade the whole wide world, above, below, across and everywhere with a mind filled with loving-kindness, extensive, [50] developed,<sup>771</sup> measureless, free from hatred and ill-will. And he dwells, letting his mind, filled with compassion, ... with sympathetic joy, ... with equanimity, pervade one quarter,... extensive, developed, measureless, free from hatred and ill-will. What do you think, Nigrodha? Is the higher austerity purified by these things, or not?’ ‘Certainly it is, Lord. It attains its peak there, penetrating to the pith.’ ‘No, Nigrodha, it does not attain its peak there. It has only penetrated to the inner bark.<sup>772</sup>

18. ‘Well then, Lord, how does austerity attain its peak, penetrating to the pith? It would be good if the Blessed Lord were to cause my austerity to attain its peak, to penetrate to the pith.’

‘Nigrodha, take the case of a self-mortifier who observes the fourfold restraint... (as verses 16-17), free from hatred and ill-will. He recalls various past lives ... There my name was so-and-so,... my caste was so-and-so...(as Sutta 1, verse 1.31). I experienced such-and-such pleasant and painful conditions ...Having passed from there, I arose there... [51] Thus he remembers various past lives, their conditions and details. What do you think, Nigrodha? Is the higher austerity purified by these things, or not?’ ‘Certainly it is, Lord. It attains its peak there, penetrating to the pith.’ ‘No, Nigrodha, it only reaches the fibres surrounding the pith.’<sup>773</sup>

19. ‘Well then, Lord, how does austerity reach its peak, penetrating to the pith? It would be good if the Blessed Lord were to cause my austerity to attain its peak, to penetrate to the pith.’

‘Well, Nigrodha, take the case of a self-mortifier who observes the fourfold restraint..., free from hatred and ill-will... Thus he [52] remembers various past lives, their conditions and details. And then, with the purified divine eye, he sees beings passing away and arising: base and noble, well favoured and ill-favoured, to happy and unhappy destinations as kamma directs them. What do you think, Nigrodha? Is the higher austerity purified by these things, or not?’ ‘Certainly it is, Lord. It attains its peak there, penetrating to the pith.’<sup>774</sup>

‘So indeed it is, Nigrodha, that austerity is so purified as to reach its peak and penetrate to the pith. And so, Nigrodha, when you ask: “What, Lord, is this doctrine in which the Blessed Lord trains his disciples, and which those disciples whom he has so trained as to benefit from it recognise as their principal support, and the perfection of the holy life?” I say that it is by something more far-reaching and excellent that I train them, through which they...recognise as their principal support, and the perfection of the holy life.’

At this the wanderers made a great commotion and noise, exclaiming: ‘We and our teacher are ruined! We know of nothing higher or more far-reaching than our teaching!’ [53]

20. And when the householder Sandhāna realised: ‘These wanderers of other views are actually listening and attending to the Lord’s words, and inclining their minds to the higher wisdom, he said to Nigrodha: ‘Reverend Nigrodha, you said to me: “Come now, householder, do you know whom the ascetic Gotama talks to? ... His wisdom is destroyed by the solitary life, he is no good at conversation, he is right out of touch...” So now that the Blessed Lord has come here, why don’t you baffle him with a single question and knock him over like an empty pot?’ And at these words Nigrodha was silent and upset, his shoulders drooped, he hung his head and sat there downcast and bewildered.

21. Seeing the state he was in, the Lord said: ‘Is it true, Nigrodha, that you said that?’ [54] ‘Lord, it is true that I said that, foolishly, mistakenly, and wickedly.’ ‘What do you think, Nigrodha? Have you ever heard it said by wanderers who were aged, venerable, the teachers of teachers, that those who in the past were Arahants, fully-enlightened Buddhas used to talk, when they came together, by shouting and screaming and making a great clamour, and indulging in unedifying conversation ... the way you and your teachers do? Or did they not say rather that those Blessed Ones sought lodging in the forest, in the depths of the jungle, free from noise, with little sound, far from the madding crowd, undisturbed by men, well-fitted for seclusion, just as I do now?’ ‘Lord, I have heard it said that those who were Arahants, fully-enlightened Buddhas did not indulge in loud talk ... but sought lodging in the forest, ... just as the Blessed Lord does now.’

‘Nigrodha, you are an intelligent man of mature years. Did it never occur to you to think: “The Blessed Lord is enlightened and teaches a doctrine of enlightenment, he is self-restrained and teaches a doctrine of self-restraint, he is calm and teaches a doctrine of calm. He has gone beyond [55] and teaches a doctrine of going beyond, he has gained Nibbāna and teaches a doctrine for the gaining of Nibbāna”?’



22. At this, Nigrodha said to the Lord: ‘Transgression overcame me, Lord! Foolish, blind and evil as I was, that I spoke thus of the Lord. May the Lord accept my confession of this fault, that I may restrain myself in future!’<sup>775</sup> ‘Indeed, Nigrodha, transgression overcame you when, through folly, blindness and evil you spoke thus of me. But since you recognise the nature of your transgression and make amends as is right, we accept your confession. For, Nigrodha, it is a mark of progress in the discipline of the Noble Ones, if anyone recognises the nature of his transgression and makes amends as is right, restraining himself for the future.

‘But, Nigrodha, I tell you this: Let an intelligent man come to me who is sincere, honest and straightforward, and I will instruct him, I will teach him Dhamma. If he practises what he is taught, then within seven years he will attain in this life to that unequalled holy life and goal, for the sake of which young men of good family go forth from the household life into homelessness, by his own knowledge and realisation, and he will abide therein. Let alone seven years — in six years, five, four, three, two years, one year, ... seven months, six months, [56] five, four, three, two months, one month, half a month. Let alone half a month — in seven days he can gain that goal.’<sup>776</sup>

23. ‘Nigrodha, you may think: “The ascetic Gotama says this in order to get disciples.” But you should not regard it like that. Let him who is your teacher remain your teacher.’<sup>777</sup> Or you may think: “He wants us to abandon our rules.” But you should not regard it like that. Let your rules remain as they are. Or you may think: “He wants us to abandon our way of life.” But you should not regard it like that. Let your way of life remain as it was. Or you may think: “He wants to establish us in the doing of things that according to our teaching are wrong, and are so considered among us.” But you should not regard it like that. Let those things you consider wrong continue to be so considered. Or you may think: “He wants to draw us away from things that according to our teaching are good, and are so considered among us.” But you should not regard it like that. Let whatever you consider right continue to be so considered. Nigrodha, I do not speak for any of these reasons ... [57]

‘There are, Nigrodha, unwholesome things that have not been abandoned, tainted, conducive to rebirth,<sup>778</sup> fearful, productive of painful results in the future, associated with birth, decay and death.

It is for the abandonment of these things that I teach Dhamma. If you practise accordingly, these tainted things will be abandoned, and the things that make for purification will develop and grow, and you will all attain to and dwell, in this very life, by your own insight and realisation, in the fullness of perfected wisdom.’

24. At these words the wanderers sat silent and upset, their shoulders drooped, they hung their heads and sat there downcast and bewildered, so possessed were their minds by Māra.<sup>779</sup> Then the Lord said: ‘Every one of these foolish men is possessed by the evil one, so that not a single one of them thinks: “Let us now follow the holy life proclaimed by the ascetic Gotama, that we may learn it — for what do seven days matter?”’

Then the Lord, having uttered his lion’s roar in the Udumbarika park, rose up in the air and alighted on the Vultures’ Peak. And the householder Sandhāna also returned to Rājagaha. <sup>780</sup>

<sup>759</sup> His name means ‘Banyan’ . Cf. DN 8.23.

<sup>760</sup> A park given by Queen Udumbarikā for wanderers, similar to that mentioned at DN 24, n.746.

<sup>761</sup> Cf. DN 1.1.17, and DN 9.3.

<sup>762</sup> Go-kaṇṇa. Dictionaries give ‘a large species of deer’, for which ‘bison’ seems to be the correct rendering; RD, following DA, has ‘a one-eyed cow’.

<sup>763</sup> As at DN 1.1.11.

<sup>764</sup> Adassayamāno: rendered by RD as ‘furtively’ (‘not showing himself’), but DA considers the seemingly negative prefix a- ‘a mere particle’. The Sub-Commentary declares that ādassamāno

(‘showing off’) is the meaning. It makes little real difference, since either direct ostentation or mock-humility is intended.

765 For a fuller treatment of the pith-image, see MN 18.

766 Or: ‘remain satisfied with what has been achieved.’

767 Cf. n.637.

768 Cf n.676.

769 ‘Heart’ and ‘mind’ here both render citta.

770 Upakkilesā.

771 Mahaggata: cf. DN 22.12 and n.664 there.

772 The stages reached as at DN 2.93.

773 The stage reached as at DN 2.95. Cf. MN 29.

774 This is the stage reached at DN 2.97, though the wording is slightly discrepant.

775 Cf. DN 2.99ff.

776 As at DN 22.22.

777 The extreme tolerance of Buddhism is shown here. This can be quoted to those who, wishing to practise, e.g. Buddhist meditation, are worried about their prior allegiance to another faith. But see DN 29.4.

778 Ponobhavika: as at DN 22.19 and n.702 there.

779 Like Ananda at DN 16.34ff.

780 DN says that the Buddha's words, though not successful at the time, were of benefit to the wanderers in the future.

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