

Bhikkhunupassaya Sutta

SN V 47.10 Discourse at The Nun's Residence

Translated by Ānanda

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*H*aving dressed up in the morning,

The Venerable Ānanda took his bowl and robe,
went to the nun's residence
and sat down on a prepared seat.

Then, many nuns approached him,
Paid loving respects and sat down in front of him.

Then a nun said this:

[The Nun]

“Bhante Ānanda, many nuns,
Meditating with a mind well settled¹
In the four resting places of awareness²,
Are experiencing wonderful progress.”³

[Ānanda]

“So it is sisters, so it is sisters.
Indeed sisters, whosoever, monk or nun,
Meditates with a mind well settled
In the four resting places of awareness,
It can be expected that
they will experience wonderful progress.”

Then the Venerable Ānanda taught the Dhamma to the nuns.

Having taught,
sparked,

¹ Suppatiṭṭhitacittā: Ṭhita -atta: self-controlled, composed, steadfast

² Catūsu satipaṭṭhānesu suppatiṭṭhitacittā viharantiyo

³ Uḷāraṃ pubbenāparaṃ viśesaṃ sañjānantī”ti.

*uplifted
and gladdened them⁴,
he stood from his seat and left.*

*In the afternoon, having walked for alms in Sāvatti,
the Venerable Ānanda approached the Awakened One.
Paid loving respects, sat down to one side and said:*

“Here, Bhante, in the morning... [All that had taken place]

[The Buddha]

*“So it is, Ānanda, so it is Ānanda!
Indeed Ānanda, whosoever, monk or nun,
Meditating with a mind well settled
In the four resting places of awareness,
It can be expected that
they will experience wonderful progress.”*

[Development by Application]

What are the four?

[Body as body]

Here Ānanda

*One meditates,
Aware of body as body,
Intent, fully aware and present.
Letting go of tension and distractions.⁵*

*As one meditates,
Aware of body as body,
Resting upon body.⁶*

*Bodily discomfort arises,
One’s mind becomes lazy,*

⁴ Sandassetvā samādapetvā samuttejetvā sampahaṃsetvā.

⁵ “The World” according to the Buddha is the six sense bases; The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind faculties.

⁶ Kāyārammaṇo vā

Or distracted outwardly.

[Natural Samādhi]

*Then, one should apply one's mind to an uplifting⁷ object.⁸
By doing so, gladness arises.*

*From gladness comes joy,
Joyful in mind, one's body is relaxed.
Relaxed in body, one experiences happiness.
And a happy mind becomes collected [naturally].⁹*

[Going Beyond Thoughts]

One reflects:

*"This is the reason why I have applied my mind,
My intention was accomplished,
I can now let it go."¹⁰*

One then lets it go and neither thinks nor imagines and one knows:

*"Not thinking nor imagining,
I am happy, present inwardly."¹¹*

⁷ The difficulty in translating this passage rests in the interpretation of the word 'pasāda,' which can be interpreted either as clarity, joy or calm. Interestingly, this triple meaning seems to come along, hand in hand, in the pāli scriptures. Readers can choose for themselves. Pasāda [fr. pa+asad, cp. Vedic prasāda] 1. clearness, brightness, purity. — 2. joy, satisfaction, happy or good mind, virtue, faith — 3. repose, composure, allayment, serenity.

⁸ Pasādanāye nimitte cittaṃ paṇidahitabbaṃ.

Paṇidahati: Apply, direct, intend; Pasāda: 2. joy, happy or good mind, virtue, faith. 3. repose, composure, serenity.

⁹ Pamuditassa pīti jāyati. Pīti manassa kāyo passambhati. Blissful in mind, his body is calmed. Passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedayati. Sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati. The Buddha here clearly demonstrates that it is by using an uplifting object that the mind becomes unified, by way of joy and calm. There are no mentions here about keeping the mind fixed on one object.

¹⁰ 'Yassa khvāhaṃ atthāya cittaṃ paṇidahiṃ, so me attho abhinipphanno. Handa dāni paṭisaṃharāmi'ti.

Paṭisaṃharati to draw back, withdraw, remove, take away, give up

¹¹ 'Avitakkomhi avicāro, ajjhattaṃ satimā sukhamasmī' ti pajānāti. Here we find unmistakable evidence that the Buddha speaks of the former 'uplifting object' as part of 'Thinking and reflection' (Vitakka and vicāra), particular aspects constituting the first jhāna. Here the Buddha speaks of going beyond this thinking and reflection, the second jhāna. Clearly explaining that one must let go of any object in order to progress in meditation, and to simply rest the mind upon the Four Resting Places of Awareness, as will be indicated further down. This practice can also be done using Mettā and the Brāhmvihāras.

[Sensations as Sensations]

On another occasion,

*One meditates,
Aware of sensations as sensations,
Intent, fully aware and present.
Letting go of tension and distractions.*

*As one meditates,
Aware of sensations as sensations,
Resting upon sensations:*

*Bodily discomfort arises
One's mind becomes lazy,
or distracted outwardly.*

[Natural Samādhi]

*Then, one should apply one's mind to an uplifting object.
By doing so, gladness arises.*

*From gladness comes joy.
Joyful in mind, one's body is relaxed.
Relaxed in body, one experiences happiness.
And a happy mind becomes collected [naturally].*

[Going Beyond Thoughts]

One reflects:

*"This is the reason why I have applied my mind,
My intention was fulfilled,
I can now let it go."*

One then lets it go and neither think nor imagine, and one knows:

*"Not thinking nor imagining,
I am happy, present inwardly."*

[Mind as mind]

*On another occasion,
One meditates,
Aware of mind as mind,
Intent, fully aware and present.
Letting go of tension and distractions.*

*As one meditates,
Aware of mind as mind,
Resting upon mind:*

*Bodily discomfort arises,
One's mind becomes lazy,
Or distracted outwardly.*

[Natural Samādhi]

*Then, one should apply one's mind to an uplifting object.
By doing so, gladness arises.*

*From gladness comes joy.
Joyful in mind, one's body is relaxed.
Relaxed in body, one experiences happiness.
And a happy mind becomes collected [naturally].*

[Going Beyond Thoughts]

One reflects:

*"This is the reason why I have applied my mind,
My intention has been fulfilled.
I can now let it go."*

One then lets it go and neither thinks nor imagine and one know:

*"Without thinking or imagining,
I am happy, present inwardly.*

[Mental States as Mental States]

*On another occasion,
One meditates,
Aware of mental states as mental states,*

*Intent, fully aware and present,
Letting go of tension and distractions.*

*As one meditates,
Aware of mental states as mental states,
Resting upon mental states;*

*Bodily discomfort arises,
One's mind becomes dull,
Or distracted outwardly.*

[Natural Samādhi]

*Then, one should apply one's mind to an uplifting object
By doing so, gladness arises.*

*From that gladness comes joy;
Joyful in mind, one's body is relaxed.
Relaxed in body, one experiences happiness.
And a happy mind becomes collected [naturally].*

[Going Beyond Thoughts]

One reflects:

*"This is the reason why I have applied my mind
My intention has been accomplished,
I can now let it go."*

One then lets it go and neither thinks nor imagine and one knows:

*"Without thinking nor imagining,
I am happy, present internally."*

This is how there is development by application Ānanda.

And how is there development without application?

[Development Without Application]

[Body as Body]

One does not apply one's mind outwardly.

One understands:

My mind is not applied outwardly.¹²

It is unconstricted, liberated, unapplied, before and after.¹³

*Meditating,
Aware of the body as body,
Intent, fully aware and present,
I am happy.¹⁴*

[Sensations as Sensations]

One does not apply one's mind outwardly.

One understands:

My mind is not applied outwardly.

It is unconstricted, liberated, unapplied, before and after.

*Meditating,
Aware of sensations as sensations,
Intent, fully aware and present,
I am happy.*

[Mind as Mind]

One does not apply one's mind outwardly.

One understands:

My mind is not applied outwardly.

It is unconstricted, liberated, unapplied, before and after.

*Meditating,
Aware of mind as mind,
Intent, fully aware and present,
I am happy.*

¹² 'Appaṇihitaṃ me bahiddhā cittaṃ' ti pajānāti.

¹³ Atha pacchāpure 'asaṅkhittaṃ vimuttaṃ appaṇihitaṃ' ti pajānāti.

¹⁴ Atha ca pana 'kāye kāyānupassī viharāmi ātāpī sampajāno satimā sukhamasmī' ti pajānāti.

[Mental States as Mental States]

One does not apply one's mind outwardly.

One understands:

My mind is not applied outwardly.

It is unconstricted, liberated, unapplied, before and after.

*Meditating,
Aware of mental states as mental states,
Intent, fully aware and present,
I am happy.*

This is how there comes to be development without application.

[The Teacher's Instruction]

"Ānanda,

I have taught you development by application,

And development without application.

What should be done by a teacher for his students,

Holding their best interest at heart,

Out of loving compassion,

That, I have done for you Ānanda.

There are these roots of trees Ānanda,

There are these empty huts;

Meditate Ānanda!

Do not be neglectful.

Lest you become remorseful

When the time has passed.

This is my advice to you."

This is what the Awakened One said.

*With an uplifted mind,
the Venerable Ānanda delighted in the Awakened One's words.*



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