

Buddha's Discourse on Voidness

The Blessed One went to the dwelling of Ghāṭā the Sakyan, where Venerable Ānanda and the monks were busy making robes. He said, "Ānanda, a bhikkhu does not shine by delighting in company, he cannot be expected to attain bliss while delighting in society. I do not see any form, the alteration of which, would not give rise to grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair in one who delights in it. However, there is this abiding discovered by the Tathāgata: the abiding in voidness internally by giving no attention to signs. Thus, if I visit disciples, with my mind inclined towards seclusion, I invariably talk to them in a way dismissing them.

"Therefore, Ānanda, if a bhikkhu wishes to abide in voidness he should focus his mind by entering the *jhānas*, then give attention to voidness. If he inclines to walking, he walks thinking 'No unwholesome states will beset me.' Likewise when he inclines to sitting, standing, or lying down. If he inclines to talking, he resolves, 'I will avoid unbeneficial talk, and talk only about effacement and disenchantment.' A bhikkhu should constantly review his mind to see if sensual excitement still arises, and he is aware of that. When he contemplates the rise and fall of the aggregates, the conceit 'I am' is abandoned.

"What good, Ānanda, does a disciple see that he should seek the Teacher's company even if he is told to go away?"

"It would be good if the Blessed One would explain."

"Ānanda, a disciple should not seek the Teacher's company for the sake of discourses, stanzas, and expositions. Why is that? For a long time, Ānanda, you have learned the teachings, memorised them, examined them, and penetrated them with right view. But such talk as leads to disenchantment and nibbāna, that is talk on wanting little, contentment, seclusion, energy, virtue, concentration, wisdom, deliverance, knowledge and vision of deliverance, for such talk a disciple should seek the Teacher's company even if he is sent away.

"So, Ānanda, be friendly towards me, not hostile. When I teach Dhamma seeking your welfare, give ear and exert your mind to understand. This will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. I shall not treat you as the potter treats the unbaked pot. Repeatedly restraining you, I will speak to you Ānanda. Repeatedly admonishing you, I will speak to you Ānanda. The sound core will stand the test."