



Sandaka Sutta

Translated by Sister Upalavanna

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in Gosita's monastery in Kosambi. At that time the wandering ascetic Sandaka lived in a grove of fig trees with a large community of wandering ascetics about five hundred of them. Then venerable Ananda, getting up from his seclusion in the evening addressed the bhikkhus: 'Friends, let us go to the Devakata pool to see the caves,' Those bhikkhus agreed and venerable Ananda approached the Devakata pool with those bhikkhus. At that time, the wandering ascetic Sandaka was seated with a large gathering of wandering ascetics making much noise engaged in various kinds of childish talk. Such as talk about kings, robbers, chief ministers, the army, about fears, fights, eatables and drinks, dress, beds, flowers and scents, relations, conveyances, villages, hamlets, towns and states, women and heros, and gossip at the corner of the street and at the well, about those dead and gone, various other talk about the origin of the world and the ocean and of things that happened and did not happen. The wandering ascetic Sandaka saw venerable Ananda coming in the distance and silenced the gathering: 'Good sirs, make less noise, do not make such a noise. The recluse Ananda, a disciple of the recluse Gotama is coming. Of the disciples of recluse Gotama, residing in Kosambi this is one. These venerable ones make little noise, are trained to make little noise and they train others to make little noise. Thinking this gathering makes little noise may have thought to approach,' Then those wandering ascetics became silent Venerable Ananda approached the wandering ascetic, Sandaka. The wandering ascetic Sandaka said to venerable Ananda: 'Good Ananda, come! It is after a long time that good Ananda thought of coming. Sit good Ananda, the seat is ready,' Venerable Ananda sat on the prepared seat, and the wandering ascetic too sat on a side taking a low seat.

Then venerable Ananda, addressed the wandering ascetic Sandaka who was seated on a side; 'Sandaka, with what talk were you seated at this time, and what was your topic of conversation,' 'Let that talk be, good Ananda, with what we were sitting now. A talk, from good Ananda, we hear rarely. We would like to hear something concerning the Teaching of your Teacher,' 'If so Sandaka be attentive and listen carefully'. The wandering ascetic Sandaka agreed and venerable Ananda said. 'Sandaka, the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared four holy lives that should not be lived and four other unsatisfactory holy lives that should not be lived. Which the wise man if possible does not live, and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit,' 'Good Ananda, what are the four holy lives declared by the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened that should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit?'

'Sandaka, a certain Teacher upholds this view and declares it: There are no results for gifts, sacrifices and offerings. There are no results for good and bad actions, there is no this world, no other world, no mother, no father. There are no spontaneously arisen beings and no recluses and brahmins, who by themselves realising this world and the other world declare it. The man is made of the four primary elements and when he dies, earth, goes back to earth, water, to water, fire, to the fire, and air, to air. The mental faculties ascend the sky. Five people, carry the corpse in a decked chair, as far as the cemetery, the remains are grey bones. The burnt ashes become a

gift. Whoever says, there is something, talk useless words. The foolish and the wise after death get annihilated and destroyed, and there is nothing after death.

Sandaka a wise man reflects, this good teacher upholds this view and declares. There are no results for gifts...and there is nothing after death. If the words of these teachers are true, I should not do anything. I should not live the holy life. After death my teacher and I become equal in our recluseship. I who do not even believe it. We both get annihilated and destroyed after death. Unnecessarily these good teachers went naked and wore a knot on the head, did austerities yoked to standing and pulling out hairs of the head and beard. As for me, I lived surrounded by wife and children, enjoyed wearing Kashmire clothes, bearing flowers and scents, and earning gold and silver. I become equal with these good teachers after death. Knowing what and seeing what should I lead the holy life under these teachers. He knowing this is not a holy life turns away from it. Sandaka, this is the first holy life the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live, and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit.

Again, Sandaka a certain teacher upholds this view and declares The doer, and the subjected, the destroyer and destroyed, the tormentor and tormented, the griever and giver of grief, the frightened and the monster do no demerit. The killer, the taker of the not given, the one who cuts limbs, the plunderer, the prison keeper, the one waiting in ambush, the one going to others' wives, and the deceiver, do no demerit. If one was to roll a wheel with blades fixed to the rim, up to the southern bank of the Ganges, killing all beings and making it, a mass of flesh, the destroyer does not accumulate demerit, on account of it. If one goes up to the northern bank of the Ganges giving gifts and making others to give gifts, making sacrifices and making others to sacrifice, there is no merit accumulated on account of it.

Sandaka a wise man reflects. This good teacher upholds this view and declares. The doer and the subjected—there is no merit accumulated on account of it. If the words of this teacher are true, I should not do, anything. I should not live the holy life. My teacher and I become equal in our recluseship. I do not even believe it. We both do not accumulate demerit. Unnecessarily these good teachers led a holy life. As for me, I lived surrounded by wife and children, enjoyed wearing Kashmire clothes, bearing flowers and scents, and earning gold and silver. After death, I become equal with these good teachers. Knowing what and seeing what should I lead the holy life under these teachers. He knowing this is not a holy life turns away from it. : Sandaka, this is the second holy life the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live, and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit.

Again, Sandaka, a certain teacher upholds this view and declares it. Beings are made impure for no cause or reason, and purified for no cause or reason. There is no strength, no effort, no manly power, no manly courage, all beings, all living things, all born, are led to maturity and are born in the higher six and experience pleasantness and unpleasantness

Here, Sandaka a wise man reflects, this good teacher upholds this view and declares that beings are defiled—experience pleasantness and unpleasantness. If the words of these teachers are true, here I should not do, anything. I should not live the holy life. My teacher and I we both become equal in our recluseship, I who do not believe it. We both will be purified without a reason Unnecessarily these good teachers led a holy life. As for me, I lived surrounded by wife and children, enjoyed wearing Kashmire clothes, bearing flowers and scents, and earning gold and silver. After death, I become equal with these good teachers. Knowing what and seeing what should I lead the holy life under these teachers. He knowing this is not a holy life turns away from it. Sandaka, this is the third holy life the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live, and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit.

Again, Sandaka a certain teacher upholds this view and declares it. These seven bodies are not made nor created, are barren, immovable and stand like strong pillars. They don't move or change, or harm each other. One is not interested in the others pleasant, unpleasant or neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings. What are the seven? They are earth, water, fire, air,

pleasantness, unpleasantness, and the soul. Therefore there is no harming, or killing, hearing or making to hear, cognizing or making to cognize. If the head is cut with a sharp weapon, no life is destroyed. Only the seven bodies are dismantled. There are, fourteen hundred thousand important births, sixty thousand six hundred and five actions. Five hundred of four actions, three of four actions, one action, half an action and sixteen methods. Sixteen internal world cycles. Six high births, eight births of a prophet, four thousand nine hundred ascetic births, four thousand nine hundred wandering ascetic births, and four thousand nine hundred elephant births. Twenty hundred controlling powers, thirty hundred hells, six and thirty royal elements, seven perceptual births, seven non-perceptual births, seven niganta births, seven heavenly and seven human births, seven ghostly births and seven recollections. Seven higher recollections, seven hundred and seven falls, seven hundred and seven dreams. Faring on as fools or as wise, for eighty hundred thousand major and minor world cycles should end unpleasantness. It is not that by these virtues, observances, austerities, I will mature my immature actions, or while feeling I put an end to feelings. There are no measurements for pleasant or unpleasant feelings and not seeing an end to existences. There are no highs and lows. It is like being thrown into a disordered ball of thread and one has to find one's way to come out of it. Faring on as fools or as wise, for eighty hundred thousand major and minor, world cycles one should end unpleasantness.

Sandaka a wise man reflects. This good teacher upholds this view and declares it. These seven bodies-should end unpleasantness. If the words, of these teachers are true, I should not do anything. I should not live the holy life. My teacher and I are equal in our recluship, I who do not even believe it. We both will make an end of unpleasantness faring on in existences. Unnecessarily these good teachers led a holy life, going naked, wearing a knot on the head. Yoked to standing and pulling out hairs of head and beard. As for me, I lived surrounded by wife and children, enjoyed wearing Kashmire clothes, bearing flowers and scents, and earning gold and silver. After death I become equal with these good teachers. Knowing what and seeing what should I lead the holy life under these teachers. He knowing this is not a holy life turns away from it. : Sandaka, this is the fourth holy life the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live, and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit

Sandaka, these are the four holy lives, the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit. -Surprising and wonderful good Ananda, these four holy lives that the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightend has declared as should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit. Good Ananda what are the four holy lives, the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared as unsatisfactory and should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced, that it is merit.

‘Sandaka, a certain teacher acknowledges all pervading knowledge and vision constantly and continually, while, walking, standing, lying or awake. He enters an empty house and does not gain morsels. A dog bites him. He encounters an elephant in rut, a rough horse or a rough bull. Asks for the name and clan of a man or woman, or the name of a village or hamlet and how one should go there. When asked what it is. He would say, I entered an empty house, did not gain morsels and a dog bit me. I met, an elephant in rut, a rough horse, a rough bull. I had to ask the name and clan of a man, a woman, a village, a hamlet and how I should get there. Sandaka, a wise man should reflect. This good teacher acknowledges all pervading knowledge and vision, and—he asks the name and clan of a man, a woman. I should know and turn away from that holy life as unsatisfactory. Sandaka, this is the first holy life, the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared as unsatisfactory and should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced, that it is merit.

Again, Sandaka, a certain teacher goes by hearsay and takes it as the truth. To a teacher who

goes by hearsay, the tradition becomes the truth. He may have heard it correctly or may not have heard it correctly. It becomes the truth to him, the truth may be something else. Sandaka, a wise man should reflect. This teacher goes by hearsay. He preaches what has reached him by tradition and hearsay. What he has heard may be the truth or not. I, should know and turn away from that holy life as unsatisfactory. Sandaka, this is the second holy life, the Blessed One who knows, sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared as unsatisfactory and should not be lived. The wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced, that it is merit.

Again, Sandaka, a certain teacher goes by logic, arguing logically brings out a teaching by himself beaten out. In the teaching of a logical teacher, some arguments may be true and others may not be true. Sandaka, a wise man should reflect. This teacher goes by logic. He preaches what he has beaten out by logical conclusion. His arguments may be authentic or not, I should know and turn away from that holy life as unsatisfactory. Sandaka, this is the third holy life, the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared as unsatisfactory and should not be lived. The wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced, that it is merit.

Again Sandaka, a certain teacher is dull and bewildered, when a question is asked, he wriggles and sits on the fence. It does not occur to me thus, it does not occur to me otherwise, there is no other solution either and none of these are the solutions. Sandaka, a wise man should reflect. This teacher is dull and bewildered, when a question is asked he wriggles and sits on the fence. I should know and turn away from that holy life as unsatisfactory. Sandaka, this is the fourth holy life, the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared as unsatisfactory and should not be lived, which the wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced, that it is merit.

. Sandaka, these are the four holy lives the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened has declared as unsatisfactory and should not be lived,’ ‘Surprising and wonderful good Ananda, these four holy lives that the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightend has declared as unsatisfactory, which the wise man if possible does not live and even if he lives is not convinced that it is merit. Good Ananda what is the holy life, declared by the Blessed One who knows and sees, is perfect and rightfully enlightened as satisfactory and convincing in the noble Teaching, and is merit?’

‘Sandaka, the Thus Gone One is born in the world, perfect, rightfully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well gone, knower of the worlds, the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed. He proclaims to this world of gods and men, together with its Maras, Brahmas, the community of recluses, brahmins, gods and men, that Teaching good at the beginning, in the middle and in the end, full of meaning even in the letters declaring the complete and pure holy life. A householder, or the son of a householder or one born in some clan hears the Teaching and gains faith in the Thus Gone One. With that gain of faith reflects, the household life is full of difficulties, it is the path for defiling. Going forth is like open space. Living in a household it is not easy to lead a holy life complete and pure without being defiled. What if I shave, head and beard, put on yellow clothes and go forth homeless. At some suitable time he gives up a little wealth or a large mass of wealth, either leaving behind a small circle of friends, or a large circle of friends shaving head and beard and donning yellow clothes goes forth as a homeless.

Gone forth he becomes a trainer in the life of a bhikkhu, gives up hurting living things, throwing away stick and weapon, ashamed and compassion aroused, abides with compassion for all beings. Abstaining from taking what is not given, desires the given, the self made pure without thieving he abides. Abstaining from low sexual intercourse he leads the holy life. Abstaining from telling lies becomes reliable and trustworthy and abides without a dispute with the world. Giving up slander, hearing here does not say it elsewhere, to split these. Hearing elsewhere does not say it here to split those. Unites the split, promotes unity, fond of unity talks words to unite. Giving up rough words says pleasant words pleasing to the ears, and going straight to the heart of the populace at large. Abstains from frivolous talk. Says appropriate,

truthful, meaningful words in accordance with the Teaching and Discipline, those words that could be treasured.

Abstains from destroying seed groups and vegetable groups. Partaking one meal per day, abstains from food at night and at untimely hours. Abstains from dance, singing, music, decorations, flowers and scents, ointments and adornments. Abstains from high and stately beds. Abstains from accepting gold and silver, uncooked rice and uncooked flesh, Abstains from accepting women and girls, slaves, men or women, Abstains from accepting goats and cows, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares.

Abstains, from, accepting fields and wealth, doing the work of a messenger, buying and selling, and unfair ways of weighing and measuring. Abstains from cutting severing, destroying, highway robbery, and wrong ways of obtaining morsels.

Satisfied, covering the body with robes, and feeding the belly with morsels, goes with all the belongings when he goes. Like the birds small and large that go with the weight of their wings. Likewise satisfied covering the body with robes and feeding the belly with morsels goes with all the belongings when he goes. Endowed with this mass of virtues, he experiences the pleasure of blamelessness internally. Seeing a form with the eye, does not take the sign or the elements. Abiding with the mental faculty of the eye uncontrolled, demerit may seep, through covetousness and displeasure. He abides protecting the mental faculty of the eye. Hearing a sound with the ear.... Cognizing a smell with the nose.... tasting a taste with the tongue... Cognizing a touch with the body... Cognizing an idea with the mind, does not take the sign or the element. Abiding with the mental faculty of the mind uncontrolled, demerit may seep, through covetousness and displeasure. He abides protecting the mental faculty of the mind. Endowed with the noble ones' control of the mental faculties, he experiences the untouched pleasure of the mental faculties. Coming forward or turning back is aware. Looking on and looking aside is aware, bending and stretching is aware, bearing bowl and the three robes is aware. Tasting, drinking, eating and enjoying is aware. Going, standing, sitting, lying when awake, and keeping silence is aware. Endowed with this mass of virtues, with this control of the mental faculties of the noble ones, with the mindfulness of the noble ones he abides, in a secluded dwelling. Such as a forest, the root of a tree, a mountain grotto, a cave, a charnel ground, a jungle forest, an open space, or a heap of straw. Returning from the alms round and after the meal is over, he sits legs crossed, the body straight and mindfulness established in front.

Dispelling, covetousness for the world he abides, cleaning the mind of covetousness. He abides cleaning the mind of anger, compassion aroused for all born lives. Dispelling sloth and torpor he abides, mindful and aware of a perception of light and mindfully cleans sloth and torpor. Dispelling restlessness and worry he abides with a mind internally appeased, restlessness and worry dispelled. Abides doubts dispelled of merit that should be done and should not be done.

The bhikkhu dispelling the five hindrances and making the minor defilements weak, secludes the mind from sensual, angry and hurting thoughts. With thoughts and thought processes and with joy and pleasantness, born of seclusion, abides in the first jhana. Sandaka, when the noble disciple of the Teacher attains that noble distinction, he has wisely lived the holy life and is convinced of it as merit. Again the bhikkhu overcoming thoughts and thought processes, appeases the mind internally in a single point. Without thoughts and thought processes and with joy and pleasantness born of concentration abides in the second jhana. Sandaka, when the noble disciple of the Teacher has attained to that noble distinction, he has wisely lived the holy life and even while doing so is convinced of it, as merit. Again, the bhikkhu with equanimity to joy and detachment abides mindful and aware experiencing pleasantness with the body too, and attains to the third *jhāna*. The noble ones say this is abiding in pleasantness, mindful of equanimity. Again, the bhikkhu dispelling pleasantness and unpleasantness and earlier having dispelled pleasure and displeasure, and mindfulness purified with equanimity abides in the fourth jhana. Sandaka, when the noble disciple of the Teacher has attained to that noble distinction, he has wisely lived the holy life and even while doing so is convinced of it as merit.

When the mind is concentrated, pure, free from minor defilements, is malleable workable

not disturbed, he directs the mind for the knowledge of previous births. Recollects the manifold previous births, one birth, two births, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, innumerable forward cycles of births, innumerable backward cycles of births, innumerable forward and backward cycles of births. There I was of such name, clan, disposition, supports, experienced such pleasant and unpleasant feelings, in such a life span. Disappearing from there was born there with such name, clan, disposition, supports, experienced such pleasant and unpleasant feelings, in such a life span. Disappearing from there is born here. Thus with all modes and all details manifold previous births are recollected. Sandaka, when the noble disciple of the Teacher has attained to that noble distinction, he has wisely lived the holy life and even while doing so is convinced of it as merit.

When the mind is concentrated, pure, free from minor defilements malleable workable not disturbed, he directs the mind for the knowledge of the disappearing and appearing of beings. With the heavenly eye purified beyond human, he sees beings disappear and appear unexalted and exalted, beautiful and ugly, in good and bad states according to their actions. These good beings misbehaving by body, speech and mind, blaming noble ones, with the wrong view of actions, after death are born in loss, in decrease, in hell. As for these good beings, well behaved in body speech and mind, not blaming noble ones, with the right view of actions after death are born in heaven. Thus with the heavenly eye purified beyond human he sees beings disappearing and appearing. Sandaka, when the noble disciple of the Teacher has attained to that noble distinction, he has wisely lived the holy life and even while doing so is convinced of it as merit.

When the mind is concentrated, pure, free from minor defilements, malleable workable not disturbed, he directs the mind for the destruction of desires. Knows, this is unpleasant, this is the arising of unpleasantness, this is the cessation of unpleasantness and this is the path to the cessation of unpleasantness as it really is. Knows these are desires, this is the arising of desires, this is the cessation of desires and this is the path to the cessation of desires as it really is. He who knows and sees thus, is released from sensual desires, released from desires 'to be' and released from desires of ignorance. When released knows, I'm released, birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived. What should be done, is done, there is nothing more to wish. Sandaka, when the noble disciple of the Teacher has attained to that noble distinction, he has wisely lived the holy life and even while doing so is convinced of it as merit.'

'Good, Ananda, the bhikkhu, perfect, destroyed desires, has done what should be done, put down the weight, has come to the highest good does he partake sensuality?' 'Sandaka, the bhikkhu who is perfect, has destroyed desires, has done what should be done, put down the weight, has come to the highest good, has destroyed the desire 'to be', and is rightly knowing released, could not go beyond five things. It is not possible that the bhikkhu who has destroyed desires, with awareness, would destroy the life of living things, take what is not given, indulge in sexuality and tell lies. He would not amass things for sensual partaking as it was done when leading a household life. Sandaka, the bhikkhu who is perfect, destroyed desires, has done what should be done, put down the weight, has come to the highest good, would not do these five things, it is impossible that he should do them.

'Good Ananda, to a bhikkhu perfect, has destroyed desires, has done what should be done, put down the weight, come to the highest good, destroyed the desires 'to be' and is rightly knowing released, is knowledge and vision constantly and continually established, as my desires are destroyed?' 'Sandaka, I will give you a comparison, for some wise men understand when a comparison is given. Sandaka, a man's hands and feet are cut off. In whatever posture he may be he would know my hands and feet are cut and reflecting would know my hands and feet are cut. In like manner, the bhikkhu who is perfect, has destroyed desires, has done what should be done, put down the weight, has come to the highest good, has destroyed the desires 'to be' and is rightly knowing released, would know constantly and continually my desires are destroyed.'

'Good Gotama, about how many are led across in this Dispensation?' 'Sandaka, not one, not even one hundred, not two hundred, not three hundred, not four hundred, not five hundred yet many more are led across in this dispensation,' 'Wonderful and surprising good Ananda,

there was no praising of one's own teaching nor disparaging another's teaching, yet many are led across. As for these ascetics, they are the sons of dead women. They praise themselves, disparage others, and show only three as led across. They are Nanda Vaccha, Sankicca and Makkhali Gosala.'

Then the wandering ascetic Sandaka addressed his own gathering: 'Good sirs, lead the holy life in the dispensation of the recluse Gotama. Give up gain honour and fame. 'Thus the wandering ascetic Sandaka aroused interest in his gathering to lead the holy life in the dispensation of the Blessed One.