

**Dīgha,jānu Sutta**  
**The Discourse to Dīghajānu**  
 (Vyaggha,pajja Sutta or Discourse to Vyagghapajja)  
 The Layman's Welfare  
 (Aṅguttara Nikāya 8.54)

Translated & slightly abridged by Piya Tan ©2003

## Introduction

This sutta belongs to the well known group of discourses comprising the laity's way of life or lay discipline (*gihī,vinaya*). Amongst the best known discourses in this collection are:

Sigāl'ovāda Sutta	(D 31/3:180-193)	The layman's code of discipline.
Maṅgala Sutta	(Kh 2-3; Sn 258-269)	Blessings or the causes of one's success.
Parābhava Sutta	(Sn 91-115)	The causes of one's downfall.
Vasala Sutta	(Sn 116-142)	The ways of the evil.
Sappurisa Sutta II	(A 4:244)	The ways of the virtuous.
Hiri Sutta	(Sn 253-257)	True friendship.
Subhāsita Sutta	(S 1:189; Sn 450-454)	Right speech.
Dīgha,jānu Sutta	(A 4:280)	Worldly and spiritual welfare.
Ādiya Sutta	(A 3:44)	How to enjoy one's wealth.
Anna,nātha Sutta	(A 2:68)	Worldly happiness.
Salla Sutta	(Sn 574-593)	Drawing out the dart of suffering.
Ṭhāna Sutta	(A 3:54)	Being strong-willed.
Bhadd'eka,ratta Sutta	(M 130/3:187)	Living in the present.
Ālavaka Sutta	(S 1:213; Sn 181-192)	True happiness and spirituality.

These are the titles, selected by the wellknown Thai scholar monk, Prayudh Payutto, comprising the booklet *Buddhism: A Layman's Guide to Life* published by the Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University (1966 mimeo, 1969; various reprints).

The name Dīgha,jānu means “the one with long knees”. This is obviously a nickname<sup>1</sup> which commonly used in the Buddha's time. Other nicknames include Anātha,piṇḍika (“the alms-giver to the destitute”, original name Sudatta, V 2:154 ff, M 143), Oṭṭh'addha (“hare-lipped”, original name Mahāli, D 6), Kūṭa,danta (“sharp-toothed” or “buck-toothed”, D 5), and Dāru,pattika (“the one with the wooden bowl”, D 1:157). In many cases, we only know the person's nickname as his original name (*mūla,nāma*) is not mentioned.

The name Vyaggha,pajja or Byaggha,pajja means “tiger's foot”, which the Commentaries say was the name given to the city of the Koliyas because it was built on a tiger's track. So the Koliyas themselves came to be called by the same name (DA 1:262, SnA 1:356; cf Mvst 1:355). The Koliya capital was at Rāmagāma about 6.5 km (4 miles) from Kapilavatthu, the capital of the Sakyas. The Koliyas were themselves of Sakya origin, but unlike the Sakyas who were a part of Kosala (under a monarchy), were members of the Vajjī confederacy or republic located to the north of Magadha.

The name Kakkara,patta means “jungle-cock's feather”.

<sup>1</sup> On the eight modes of addressing or referring to a person, see TW Rhys Davids introductory essay to Mahāli S (D:RD 1:193 f).

## The Discourse to Dīghajānu

[A 4:281]

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying amongst the Koliyas in their market town called Kakka-  
ra,putta. Then Dīghajānu, a native of Koliya,<sup>2</sup> approached the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down  
at one side. Sitting thus at one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

“Venerable sir, we are laymen<sup>3</sup> who enjoy the pleasures of the senses. We dwell in a home filled  
with children. We enjoy Kāsī sandalwood. We wear garlands, scents and make-up. We enjoy gold and  
silver. Venerable sir, to such as us let the Blessed One teach the Dharma, teach those things that lead  
to the welfare and happiness both in this life and in the hereafter.”

### (A) WORLDLY WELFARE

2 “These four things, Vyagghapajja, lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman in this  
very life. What are the four?”

- 3 (1) The achievement of diligence.  
(2) The achievement of watchfulness.  
(3) Spiritual friendship.  
(4) Balanced livelihood.

(1) What is the achievement of diligence?

4 Here, Vyagghapajja, by whatever means a clansman earns his living, whether by farming, by  
trading, by cattle-herding, by archery,<sup>4</sup> by serving in the civil service, or by any kind of craft—at that  
he is skillful and is not lazy. He has a sharp inquiring mind as to ways and means to accomplish his  
tasks.

This, Vyagghapajja, is called the achievement of diligence.

(2) What is the achievement of watchfulness?

5 Here, Vyagghapajja, whatever wealth [282] the clansman receives through work and zeal,  
gathers by the strength of his arms, earn by the sweat of his brow and justly obtains by right means—  
such he guards and watches over so that kings would not seize it, thieves would not steal it, fire would  
not burn it, water would not wash it away, nor unloving heirs take it away.

This, Vyagghapajja, is called the achievement of watchfulness.

(3) What is spiritual friendship?

6 Here, Vyagghapajja, in whatever village or market town the clansman dwells, he associates,  
converses, discusses with householders or householders’ sons, young men mature in virtue, or old  
men mature in virtue, endowed with **faith, moral virtue, charity and wisdom**.<sup>5</sup> He emulates the  
faith<sup>6</sup> of the faithful, the virtue of the virtuous, the charity of charitable, and the wisdom of the wise.

<sup>2</sup> *Koliya,putta*.

<sup>3</sup> *Gihī*.

<sup>4</sup> That is, archery as a science of arms and profession (CPD).

<sup>5</sup> These four are the conditions for spiritual welfare: see §11 below.

<sup>6</sup> “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlaka,saddhā*), baseless or  
irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravatī,saddhā*), faith founded on seeing  
(M 1:320,8 401,23); also called *avecca-p,pasāda* (S 12.41.11/2:69). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* =  
“not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Gethin** speaks of two kinds of faith: the  
cognitive and the affective (eg ERE: Faith & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:387):  
“Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does  
not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of  
knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith is its affective dimension is a more straightforward  
positive response to trust or confidence towards something or somebody...the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist  
writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.” (Gethin  
2001:207; my emphases).

This, Vyagghapajja, is called the achievement of spiritual friendship.

(4) What is balanced livelihood?

7 Here, Vyagghapajja, the clansman, knowing his income and expenses, lives within his means, being neither extravagant nor stingy, considering thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

Just as a scalesman,<sup>7</sup> or his apprentice, knows, on holding up the scales, that by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has tilted up—even so, a clansman, knowing his income and expenses, lives within his means, being neither extravagant nor stingy, considering thus his income [283] will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

If, Vyagghapajja, a clansman with little income leads a luxurious life, there will be those who say, ‘This clansman enjoys his wealth like a fig-eater!’<sup>8</sup> If, Vyagghapajja, a clansman with a large income leads a mean life, there will be those who say, ‘This clansman will die of starvation!’

This, Vyagghapajja, is called balanced livelihood.<sup>9</sup>

### How wealth can be lost

8 These are the four sources of loss of the wealth thus built up:<sup>10</sup>

- (1) Womanizing.
- (2) Addiction to drinking.
- (3) Addiction to gambling.
- (4) Bad company.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and four outlets, if a man were to close the inlets and open the outlets and there were to be no proper rainfall, a loss is to be expected in the tank, not a gain. Even so, Vyagghapajja, there are these four sources of loss of wealth: womanizing, addiction to drinking, addiction to gambling, bad company.

9 These are the four sources of the growth of the wealth thus built up:

- (5) Not womanizing.
- (6) Not addicted to drinking. [284]
- (7) Not addicted to gambling.
- (8) Spiritual friendship.

Just as a great tank with four inlets and four outlets, and a man were to open the inlets and close the outlets and there were to be proper rainfall—a gain is to be expected in the tank, not a loss. Even so, Vyagghapajja, there are these four sources of the growth of wealth: not womanizing, not addicted to drinking, not addicted to gambling, spiritual friendship.

These are the four things that lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman here and now.

### (B) SPIRITUAL WELFARE

10 These four things, Vyagghapajja, lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman in the world to come. What are the four?

<sup>7</sup> *Tulā, dhāra*, lit “scale-bearer”.

<sup>8</sup> “Fig-eater”, *udumbara, khādika*. Comy explains that when one, desiring to eat figs, shakes the tree, but much fruit falls and a large amount is wasted.

<sup>9</sup> These 4 worldly happiness are linked with the 4 joys of a layman (*gihi, sukha* A 2:69) thus:

- |                                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) The achievement of diligence:    | The joy of ownership.     |
| (2) The achievement of watchfulness: | The joy of enjoyment.     |
| (3) Spiritual friendship:            | The joy of blamelessness. |
| (4) Balanced livelihood:             | The joy of debtlessness.  |

<sup>10</sup> The Sigāl’ovāda S gives 6 sources by which wealth may be lost: (1) drunkenness; (2) hanging about the streets at unseasonable times; (3) frequenting fairs; (4) gambling; (5) bad company; (6) habitual laziness (D 31.7 /3:182 f).

- 11 (1) Achievement of faith.  
 (2) Achievement of moral virtue.  
 (3) Achievement of charity.  
 (4) Achievement of wisdom.

12 (1) What is the achievement of faith?

Here, Vyagghapajja, the clansman has (wise) faith.<sup>11</sup> He has faith in the Buddha's enlightenment thus: 'The Blessed One is an Arhant, the fully self-enlightened one, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable people, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'

This, Vyagghapajja, is called the achievement of faith.

(2) What is the achievement of moral virtue?

13 Here, Vyagghapajja, the clansman abstains from harming life, from taking the not-given, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, from strong drinks, distilled drinks, fermented drinks and that which causes heedlessness.

This, Vyagghapajja, is called the achievement of moral virtue.

(3) What is the achievement of charity?

14 Here, Vyagghapajja, the clansman dwells at home with a heart free of stinginess, devoted to charity, open-handed, delighting in giving, devoted to alms-giving, delighting to have a share in giving.

This, Vyagghapajja, is called the achievement of charity.

(4) What is the achievement of wisdom? [285]

15 Here, Vyagghapajja, the clansman is wise, endowed with wisdom that understands the rise and fall of things, and with noble penetrating insight that leads to the destruction of suffering.

This, Vyagghapajja, is called the achievement of wisdom.

These are the four things that lead to the welfare and happiness of a clansman in the world to come.

Industrious, heedful, skilled in his work,  
 Living a balanced life, protecting his wealth,  
 Faithful, accomplished in virtue, generous, free from stinginess,  
 He forever clears his path to wellbeing hereafter.

Thus for the faithful householder, these eight things  
 Have been declared by the One called Truth to bring happiness in both worlds:  
 To welfare in this world and to happiness hereafter—  
 In this way the charity and merit of laymen grow.

— evaṃ —

v1.4  
 030715

<sup>11</sup> *Saddhā*, that is, *ākāravati saddhā*, faith founded on seeing; synonymous with *avecca, pasāda*, that is, faith through understanding. There are 2 kinds of faith: (1) "rootless faith (*amūlaka, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) "faith with a good cause" (*ākāravati, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8 401,23). M 1:401 AA 3/227 DhA 1/72 5/81 UA 369 (all Se). *Amūlaka* = "not seen, not heard, not suspected" (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy).