

Anagata-bhayani Suttas

The Discourses on Future Dangers

Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Future Dangers (II) Anguttara Nikaya AN V.77-80



Monks, Alms are Easy to get, work hard

Introduction – This sutta is about future danger to Buddha Sasana. Buddha in his prophecy said that his dispensation (**sasana**) will meet with five disappearances – and this was what he said – “**After my decease there will first be five disappearances. What five?**” \

1. The disappearance of attainment (in the Dispensation),
2. the disappearance of proper conduct,
3. the disappearance of learning,
4. the disappearance of the outward form,
5. the disappearance of the relics.

There will be these five disappearances. As the sasana year approaches 5,000, the entire Universe will be destroyed through the Volcanic destructive force – **Tejo Dat**. That will be the time when, no human being will revere the **Buddha relics** and that all the relics would be carried away to a place where it would be revered by Devas and Brahmas. (See Anagatavamsa Desana – Appendix. A)

Knowing that prophecy, King Asoka selected the “The Discourses on Future Dangers” **for Monk to remind himself of the future dangers**. There are five future dangers ahead, he should work hard of attaining the yet unattained.

- a. When he is still young
- b. When he is still healthy
- c. When foods are plentiful
- d. When lay people are in harmony
- e. When Sanghas are in harmony

The time will come when all of the above are in danger and in such an unfavorable condition; it is hard to attain the as yet unattained. Monk, be alert of the changes that might come in the future and to work hard while the conditions are still favorable.

Future Dangers (1I) Anguttara Nikaya AN V.77-80

Future Dangers: II

Monks, these five future dangers are just enough, when considered, for a monk -- heedful, ardent, and resolute -- to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. Which five?

1. Monk remind himself to make an effort while is young

There is the case where a monk reminds himself of this: **At present I am young, black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life.**

The time will come, though, when this body is beset by old age.

When one is overcome with old age and decay, it is not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It is not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that -- endowed with that Dhamma -- I will live in peace even when old.

This is the first future danger that is just enough, when considered, for a monk -- heedful, ardent, and resolute -- to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

2. Monk remind himself to work hard while he is healthy

Furthermore, the monk reminds himself of this: **At present I am free from illness and discomfort, endowed with good digestion: not too cold, not too hot, of medium strength and tolerance.**

The time will come, though, when this body is beset with illness.

When one is overcome with illness, it is not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It is not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that -- endowed with that Dhamma -- I will live in peace even when ill.

This is the second future danger that is just enough, when considered, for a monk -- heedful, ardent, and resolute -- to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

3. Monk remind himself to work hard when food is plenty

Furthermore, the monk reminds himself of this: **At present food is plentiful, alms are easy to come by.** It is easy to maintain oneself by gleanings and patronage.

The time will come, though, when there is famine:

Food is scarce, alms are hard to come by, and it is not easy to maintain oneself by gleanings and patronage. When there is famine, people will congregate where food is plentiful. There they will live packed and crowded together. When one is living packed and crowded together, it is not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It is not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that -- endowed with that Dhamma -- **I will live in peace even when there is famine.**

This is the third future danger that is just enough, when considered, for a monk -- heedful, ardent, and resolute -- to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

4. Monk Remind himself to work hard when people are in harmony

Furthermore, the monk reminds himself of this: At present people are in harmony, on friendly terms, without quarreling, like milk mixed with water, viewing one another with eyes of affection.

The time will come, though, when there is danger and an invasion of savage tribes.

Taking power, they will surround the countryside. When there is danger, people will congregate where it is safe. There they will live packed and crowded together. When one is living packed and crowded together, it is not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It is not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached,

the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that -- endowed with that Dhamma -- **I will live in peace even when there is danger.**

This is the fourth future danger that is just enough, when considered, for a monk -- heedful, ardent, and resolute -- to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

5. Monk remind himself to work hard when Sangha are in harmony.

Furthermore, the monk reminds himself of this: **At present the Sangha -- in harmony, on friendly terms, without quarreling** -- lives in comfort with a single recitation.

The time will come, though, when the Sangha splits.

When the Sangha is split, it is not easy to pay attention to the Buddha's teachings. It is not easy to reside in isolated forest or wilderness dwellings. Before this unwelcome, disagreeable, displeasing thing happens, let me first make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized, so that -- endowed with that Dhamma -- **I will live in peace even when the Sangha is split.**

This is the fifth future danger that is just enough, when considered, for a monk -- heedful, ardent, and resolute -- to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

These are the five future dangers that are just enough, when considered, for a monk -- heedful, ardent, and resolute -- to live for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized.

AN V.78

Appendix – A

('Anagatavamsa')

“ The Sermon of the Chronicle to be ”

Extracted from “ **Buddhist Texts Through the Ages**” – Translation by
Edward Conze.

Thus have I heard: At one time the Lord was staying near *Kapilvatthu* in the Banyan monastery on the bank of the river Rohani . Then the *Venerable Sariputta* questioned the Lord about the future :

Perfect Buddha, Conqueror:

*'The Hero that shall follow you,
The Buddha-of what sort will he be?
I want to hear of him in full.
Let the Visioned One describe him.'
When he had heard the Elder's speech
The Lord spoke thus:
'I will tell you, Sariputta,
Listen to my speech.
In this auspicious aeon
Three leaders have there been:
Kakusandha, Konagamana
And the leader *Kassapa* too.
'I am now the perfect Buddha,
And there will be *Metteyya* [i.e., *Maitreya*] too
Before this same auspicious aeon
Runs to the end of its years.
'The perfect Buddha, *Metteyya*
By name, supreme of men.'*

(Then follows a history of the previous existence of Metteyya . . . and then the description of the gradual decline of the religion:)

'How will it occur? After my decease there will first be five disappearances. What five? The five are: - The disappearance of attainment (in the Dispensation); the disappearance of proper conduct; the disappearance of learning; the disappearance of the outward form; the disappearance of the relics. There will be these five disappearances.

'Here attainment means that for a thousand years only after the lord's complete Nirvana will monks be able to practice analytical insights. As time goes on and on these disciples of mine are nonreturners (Anagami) and once-returners

(Sadekagami) and stream-winners (Sotapanna). There will be no disappearance of attainment for these. **But with the extinction of the last stream-winner's life, attainment will have disappeared.**

'This, *Sariputta*, is the disappearance of attainment.

'The disappearance of proper conduct means that, being unable to Practice jhana, insight, the Ways and the fruits, they will guard no lore the four entire purities of moral habit. As time goes on and on they will only guard the four offences entailing defeat. While there are even a hundred or a thousand monks who guard and bear in mind the four offences entailing defeat, there will be no disappearance of proper conduct. With the breaking of moral habit by the last monk- or on the extinction of his life, proper conduct will have disappeared.

'This, *Sariputta*, is the disappearance of proper conduct.

'The disappearance of learning means that as long as there stand firm the texts with the commentaries pertaining to the word of the Buddha in the three Pitakas, for so long there will be no disappearance of learning. As time goes on and on there will be base-born kings, not Dhamma-men; (dharma) their ministers and so on will not be Dhamma-men, and consequently the inhabitants of the kingdom and so on will not be Dhamma-men. Because they are not Dhamma-men it will not rain properly. Therefore the crops will not flourish well, and in consequence the donors of requisites to the community of monks will not be able to give them the requisites. Not receiving the requisites the monks will not receive pupils. As time goes on and on learning will decay. In this decay the Great Patthana itself will decay first. In this decay also (there will be) Yamaka, Kathavatthu, Puggalapannati, Dhatukatha, Vibhanga and Dhammasangani. When the Abhidhamma Pitaka decays the Suttanta Pitaka will decay. When the Suttantas decay the Anguttara will decay first. When it decays the Samyutta Nikaya, the Majjhima Nikaya, the Digha Nikaya and the Khuddaka-Nikaya will decay. They will simply remember the jataka together with the Vinaya Pitaka. But only the conscientious (monks) will remember the Vinaya Pitaka. As time goes on and on, being unable to remember even the jataka, the Vessantara-jataka will decay first. When that decays the Apannaka-jataka will decay. When the jatakas decay they will remember only the Vinaya-Pitaka. As time goes on and on the Vinaya-Pitaka will decay. While a four-line stanza still continues to exist among men, there will not be a disappearance of learning. When a king who has faith has had a purse containing a thousand (coins) placed in a golden' casket on an elephant's back, and has had the drum (of proclamation) sounded in the city up to the second or third time, to the effect that: "Whoever knows a stanza uttered by the Buddha, let him take these thousand coins together with the royal elephant"-but yet finding no one knowing a four-line stanza, the purse containing the thousand (coins) must be taken back into the palace again-then will be the disappearance of learning.

'This, *Sariputta*, is the disappearance of learning.

'As time goes on and on each of the last monks, carrying his robe, bowl, and tooth-pick like Jain recluses, having taken a bottle-gourd and turned it into a bowl for alms food, will wander about with it in his forearms or hands or hanging from a piece of string. As time goes on and on, thinking: 'What's the good of this yellow robe?' and cutting off a small piece of one and sticking it on his nose or ear or in his hair, he will wander about supporting wife and children by agriculture, trade and the like. Then he will give a gift to the Southern community for those (of bad moral habit). I say that he will then acquire an incalculable fruit of the gift. As time goes on and on, thinking: "What's the good of this to us?", having thrown away the piece of yellow robe, he will harry beasts and birds in the forest. At this time the outward form will have disappeared.

'This, *Sariputta*, is called the disappearance of the outward form.

'Then when the Dispensation of the Perfect Buddha is 5,000 years old, the relics, not receiving reverence and honour, will go to places where they can receive them. As time goes on and on there will not be reverence and honour for them in every place. At the time when the Dispensation is falling into (oblivion), all the relics, coming from every place: from the abode of serpents and the deva-world and the Brahma-world, having gathered together in the space round the great Bo-tree, having made a Buddha-image, and having performed a "miracle" like the Twin-miracle, will teach Dhamma. No human being will be found at that place. All the devas of the ten-thousand world system, gathered together, will hear Dhamma and many thousands of them will attain to Dhamma. And these will cry aloud, saying: "Behold, devatas, a week from today our One of the Ten Powers will attain complete Nirvana." They will weep, saying: "Henceforth there will be darkness for us." Then the relics, producing the condition of heat, will burn up that image leaving no remainder.

'This, *Sariputta*, is called the disappearance of the relics.'

Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu