

## Cut off Desires with Desire

Hi everyone, this is Nancy. Today is Mar. 19th, 2022. How are you doing! As the sutra says cultivation is about removing the five desires and cultivating a heart of saint. The five desires are wealth, form, fame, eating and sleeping. Today, I would like to share with you how to remove desires. This is a conversation between Venerable Ananda and a Brahman.

Once, when Ananda lived in the South East of the City Kosambi, a Brahman came to ask him, "Hi, Ananda, what was your purpose of following the Buddha?"

Ananda answered, "To cut off desires."

The Brahman asked, "Is there a way to cut off desires?"

Ananda answered, "Yes, there is."

The Brahman continued to ask, "Ananda, what is the method?"

Ananda answered, "Brahman, with firm and perseverant desire to pursue, through diligence, managing the heart and observing the mind, bhikhus make efforts to cultivate and meditate. Then with the obtained Samadhi power, bhikhus develop supernatural powers beyond reach of common people. This way, bhikhus can cut off desires."

The Brahman said, "Ananda, based on what you said, won't the bhikhus fall into endless cycle? The desire to cultivate is also desire. Isn't this to cut off desires with the desire for love? This is nonsense."

Ananda said, "Brahman, let me ask you some questions. Please answer honestly."

The Brahman said, "Yes, I will."

Ananda asked the Brahman, "Brahman, before you came here, didn't you have the desire to come here first? But after you arrived, this desire was not necessary and so it disappeared, didn't it?"

The Brahman answered, "Yes, it did."

Ananda asked, "Before you came here, you were diligent in trying to get here. After you arrived, this diligence was not necessary anymore and so it disappeared, didn't it?"

The Brahman answered, "Yes, it did."

Ananda continued, "Before you came here, you had the thought to come here. Once you arrived, this thought was not necessary and so it disappeared, didn't it?"

The Brahman answered, "Yes, Ananda."

Ananda continued, "Before you came here, you contemplated whether you would come here, and after you arrived, this contemplation was not necessary and so it disappeared, didn't it?"

The Brahman answered, "Yes, it did."

Ananda continued, "The reasoning is the same. Brahman! A bhikhu who has obtained Arhat fruit has been completely swept away his annoyances; his life has been purified. What he was supposed to do has been don. He put down the heavy burden of

annoyances and reached his goal. He has completely destroyed the bond of transmigration, and has been liberated in the ultimate enlightenment. Now, his previous desire to obtain Arhatship disappeared; his previous risen diligence to become an Arhat disappeared; his previous thought to achieve Arhatship disappeared; his previous observance to reach Arhatship disappeared also. Brahman, do you think he will be stuck in endless cycling?"

The Brahman said, "Ananda, of course he will not. You are great. From now on, please witness my taking refuge in the Buddha with my whole life."

Amitabha! This is today's Dharma share. It is truly rare and cherishable to rise the desire to achieve in the right way. Thank you everyone for being here. I will see you next time. Bye.