Snp 2.14 — With Dhammika

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Text

Anthology of Discourses 2.14

With Dhammika

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then the lay follower Dhammika, together with five hundred lay followers, went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and addressed him in verse:

"I ask you, Gotama, whose wisdom is vast:

what does one do to become a good disciple,

both one who has left the home,

and the lay followers staying at home?

For you understand the course and destiny

of the world with all its gods.

There is no equal to you who sees the subtle meaning,

for you are the Buddha most excellent, they say.

Having experienced all knowledge,

you reveal the teaching out of sympathy for beings.

All-seer, you have cast off the veil,

and immaculate, you dazzle the whole world.

The dragon king Erāvaṇa, hearing you called 'Victor',

came into your presence.

He consulted with you then, having heard your words,

left consoled, saying 'Excellent!'

And King Kuvera Vessavaṇa also

approached to ask about the teaching.

You also answered him, O attentive one,

and hearing you he too was consoled.
Those monastics of other religions given to debate,
whether Ājīvakas or Jains,
all fail to overtake you in wisdom,
like a standing man next to a sprinter.
Those brahmins given to debate,
some of whom are quite senior,
all end up beholden to you for the meaning,
and others too who think themselves debaters.
So subtle and pleasant is the teaching
that is well proclaimed by you, Blessed One.
It's all we long to hear. So when asked,
O Best of Buddhas, tell us!
All these mendicants have gathered,
and the layfolk too are here to listen.
Let them hear the teaching the immaculate one discovered,
like gods listening to the fine words of Vāsava."
"Listen to me, mendicants, I will educate you
in the cleansing teaching; all bear it in mind.
A thoughtful person, seeing the meaning,
would adopt the deportment proper to a renunciate.
No way would a mendicant go out at the wrong time;
at the right time, they'd walk the village for alms.
For chains bind one who wanders at the wrong time,
which is why the Buddhas avoid it.
Sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches,
which drive beings mad—
dispel desire for such things,
and enter for the morning meal at the right time.

After receiving alms for the day,
on returning a mendicant would sit in private alone.
Inwardly reflective, they'd curb their mind
from outside things, keeping themselves collected.
Should they converse with a disciple,
with anyone else, or with a mendicant,
they'd bring up only the sublime teaching,
not dividing or blaming.
For some contend in debate,
but we praise not those of little wisdom.
In place after place they are bound in chains,
for they send their mind over there far away.
Alms, a dwelling, a bed and seat,
and water for rinsing the dust from the cloak—
after hearing the teaching of the Holy One,
a disciple of outstanding wisdom would use these after appraisal.
That's why, when it comes to alms and lodgings,
and water for rinsing the dust from the cloak,
a mendicant is unsullied in the midst of these things,
like a droplet on a lotus-leaf.
Now I shall tell you the householder's duty,
doing which one becomes a good disciple.
For one burdened with possessions does not get to realize
the whole of the mendicant's practice.
They'd not kill any creature, nor have them killed,
nor grant permission for others to kill.
They've laid aside violence toward all creatures
frail or firm that there are in the world.
Next, a disciple would avoid knowingly

taking anything not given at all,
they'd not get others to do it, nor grant them permission to steal;
they'd avoid all theft.
A sensible person would avoid the unchaste life,
like a burning pit of coals.
But if unable to remain chaste,
they'd not transgress with another's partner.
In a council or assembly,
or one on one, they would not lie.
They'd not get others to lie, nor grant them permission to lie;
they'd avoid all untruths.
A householder espousing this teaching
would not consume liquor or drink.
They'd not get others to drink, nor grant them permission to drink;
knowing that ends in intoxication.
For drunken fools do bad things,
and encourage other heedless folk.
Shun this field of demerit,
the maddening, deluding frolic of fools.
You shouldn't kill living creatures, or steal,
or lie, or drink liquor.
Be chaste, refraining from sex,
and don't eat at night, the wrong time.
Not wearing garlands or applying fragrance,
you should sleep on a low bed, or a mat on the ground.
This is the eight-factored sabbath, they say,
revealed by the Buddha, who has gone to suffering's end.
Then having rightly undertaken the sabbath
complete in all its eight factors

on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight,
as well as on the fortnightly special displays,
at daybreak after the sabbath
a clever person, rejoicing with confident heart,
would distribute food and drink
to the mendicant Saṅgha as is fitting.
One should rightfully support one’s parents,
and undertake a legitimate business.
A diligent layperson observing these duties
ascends to the gods named ‘self-radiant’.”