SN 3.13 — A Bucketful of Rice

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 3.13

2. Childless

A Bucketful of Rice

At Sāvatthī.

Now at that time King Pasenadi of Kosala used to eat boiled rice by the bucketful. Then after eating King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha, huffing and puffing. He bowed and sat down to one side.

Then, knowing that King Pasenadi was huffing and puffing after eating, on that occasion the Buddha spoke this verse:

“When a man is always mindful,

knowing moderation in eating,

his discomfort fades,

and he ages slowly, taking care of his life.”

Now at that time the student Sudassana was standing behind the king. Then King Pasenadi addressed him, “Please, dear Sudassana, memorize this verse in the Buddha’s presence and recite it to me whenever I am served a meal. I’ll set up a regular daily allowance of a hundred dollars for you.”

“Yes, Your Majesty,” replied Sudassana. He memorized that verse in the Buddha’s presence, and then whenever the king was served a meal he would repeat it:

“When a man is always mindful,

knowing moderation in eating,

his discomfort fades,

and he ages slowly, taking care of his life.”

Then the king gradually got used to having at most a cup of rice. After some time King Pasenadi’s body slimmed right down. Stroking his limbs with his hands, at that time he expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

“In both ways the Buddha has sympathy for me: in the good of this life and the good of lives to come.”