SN 7.2 — With Bhāradvāja the Rude

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Text

Linked Discourses 7.2

1. The Perfected Ones

With Bhāradvāja the Rude

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

The brahmin Bhāradvāja the Rude heard a rumor that a brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan had gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in the presence of the ascetic Gotama. Angry and displeased he went to the Buddha and abused and insulted him with rude, harsh words. When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him:

"What do you think, brahmin? Do friends and colleagues, relatives and kin, and guests still come to visit you?"

"Sometimes they do, worthy Gotama."

"Do you then serve them with fresh and cooked foods and savories?"

"Sometimes I do."

"But if they don't accept it, brahmin, who does it belong to?"

"In that case it still belongs to me."

"In the same way, brahmin, when you abuse, harass, and attack us who do not abuse, harass, and attack, we don't accept it. It still belongs to you, brahmin, it still belongs to you!

Someone who, when abused, harassed, and attacked, abuses, harasses, and attacks in return is said to eat the food and have a reaction to it. But we neither eat your food nor do we have a reaction to it. It still belongs to you, brahmin, it still belongs to you!"

"The king and his retinue believe of the worthy Gotama, 'the ascetic Gotama is a perfected one'. And yet he still gets angry."

"Whence anger for one free of anger,

tamed, living justly,

freed by right knowledge,

peaceful and unaffected?

When you get angry at an angry person

you just make things worse for yourself.

When you don't get angry at an angry person

you win a battle hard to win.

When you know that the other is angry,

you act for the good of both

yourself and the other

if you're mindful and stay calm.

People inexpert in the teaching

consider one who heals both

oneself and the other

to be a fool."

When he had spoken, Bhāradvāja the Rude said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! … I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the worthy Gotama's presence?"

And the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Rude received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Bhāradvāja the Rude, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected.