SN 41.3 — With Isidatta (2nd)

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 41.3

1. With Citta

With Isidatta (2nd)

At one time several senior mendicants were staying near Macchikāsaṇḍa in the Wild Mango Grove.

Then Citta the householder went up to them, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to them, “Sirs, would the senior monks please accept tomorrow’s meal from me?”

They consented with silence. Then, knowing that the senior mendicants had consented, Citta rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled them, keeping them on his right, before leaving.

Then when the night had passed, the senior mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their bowls and robes, went to Citta’s home, and sat down on the seats spread out.

So he went up to them, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to the senior venerable:

“Honorable Senior, there are many different views that arise in the world. For example: the cosmos is eternal, or not eternal, or finite, or infinite; the soul and the body are one and the same, or the soul is one thing, the body another; after death, a realized one still exists, or no longer exists, or both still exists and no longer exists, or neither still exists nor no longer exists. And also the sixty-two misconceptions spoken of in ‘The Divine Net’. When what exists do these views come to be? When what doesn’t exist do these views not come to be?”

When he said this, the senior venerable kept silent.

For a second time …

And for a third time, Citta said to him:

“Honorable Senior, there are many different views that arise in the world. … When what exists do these views come to be? When what doesn’t exist do these views not come to be?”

And a second time and a third time the senior venerable kept silent.

Now at that time Venerable Isidatta was the most junior mendicant in that Saṅgha. He said to the senior venerable, “Honorable Senior, may I answer Citta’s question?”

“Answer it, Reverend Isidatta.”

“Householder, is this your question: ‘There are many different views that arise in the world … When what exists do these views come to be? When what doesn’t exist do these views not come to be?’” “Yes, sir.”

“Householder, there are many different views that arise in the world. For example: the cosmos is eternal, or not eternal, or finite, or infinite; the soul and the body are one and the same, or the soul is one thing, the body another; after death, a realized one still exists, or no longer exists, or both still exists and no longer exists, or neither still exists nor no longer exists. And also the sixty-two misconceptions spoken of in ‘The Divine Net’.

These views come to be when substantialist view exists. When substantialist view does not exist they do not come to be.”

“But sir, how does substantialist view come about?”

“It’s when an unlearned ordinary person has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They’ve not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons.

They regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness.

That’s how substantialist view comes about.”

“But sir, how does substantialist view not come about?”

“It’s when a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They’ve seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons.

They don’t regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They don’t regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness.

That’s how substantialist view does not come about.”

“Sir, where has Master Isidatta come from?”

“I come from Avanti, householder.”

“Sir, there’s a friend of mine named Isidatta who I’ve never met. He’s gone forth from a good family in Avanti. Have you met him?”

“Yes, householder.”

“Sir, where is that venerable now staying?” When he said this, Isidatta kept silent.

“Sir, are you that Isidatta?”

“Yes, householder.”

“Sir, I hope Master Isidatta is happy here in Macchikāsaṇḍa, for the Wild Mango Grove is lovely. I’ll make sure that Master Isidatta is provided with robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.”

“That’s nice of you to say, householder.”

Then Citta, having approved and agreed with what Isidatta said, served and satisfied the senior mendicants with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods. When the senior mendicants had eaten and washed their hands and bowls, they rose from their seats and left.

Then the senior venerable said to Venerable Isidatta, “Isidatta, it’s good that you felt inspired to answer that question, because I didn’t. So when a similar question comes up, you should also answer it as you feel inspired.”

But Isidatta set his lodgings in order and, taking his bowl and robe, left Macchikāsaṇḍa, never to return.