SN 42.6 — With Asibandhaka’s Son

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Text

Linked Discourses 42.6

1. Chiefs

With Asibandhaka’s Son

At one time the Buddha was staying near Nāḷandā in Pāvārika’s Mango Grove.

Then Asibandhaka’s son the chief went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, there are western brahmins garlanded with aquatic flowers who carry pitchers, immerse themselves in water, and serve the sacred flame. When someone has passed away, oh! they lift them up, send them well, and convey them to heaven. But what about the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha: is he able to ensure that the whole world will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm when their body breaks up, after death?”

“Well then, chief, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like.

What do you think, chief? Take a person who kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct. They use speech that’s false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they’re covetous, malicious, and have wrong view. A large crowd were to come together to offer up supplication and entreaty, circumambulating them with cupped palms and saying: ‘When this person’s body breaks up, after death, may they be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm!’ What do you think, chief? Would that person be reborn in heaven because of their supplications?”

“No, sir.”

“Chief, suppose a person were to throw a broad rock into a deep lake. And a large crowd were to come together to offer up supplication and entreaty, circumambulating it with cupped palms, and saying: ‘Rise, good rock! Float, good rock! Float to shore, good rock!’ What do you think, chief? Would that broad rock rise up or float because of their supplications?”

“No, sir.”

“In the same way, take a person who kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct. They use speech that’s false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they’re covetous, malicious, and have wrong view. Even though a large crowd were to come

together to offer up supplication and entreaty … when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

What do you think, chief? Take a person who doesn't kill living creatures, steal, or commit sexual misconduct. They don't use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. And a large crowd were to come together to offer up supplication and entreaty, circumambulating them with cupped palms and saying: 'When this person's body breaks up, after death, may they be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell!' What do you think, chief? Would that person be reborn in hell because of their supplications?"

"No, sir."

"Chief, suppose a person were to sink a pot of ghee or oil into a deep lake and break it open. Its shards and chips would sink down, while the ghee or oil in it would rise up. And a large crowd were to come together to offer up supplication and entreaty, circumambulating it with cupped palms and saying: 'Sink, good ghee or oil! Descend, good ghee or oil! Go down, good ghee or oil!' What do you think, chief? Would that ghee or oil sink and descend because of their supplications?"

"No, sir."

"In the same way, take a person who doesn't kill living creatures, steal, or commit sexual misconduct. They don't use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. Even though a large crowd were to come together to offer up supplication and entreaty … when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm."

When he said this, Asibandhaka's son the chief said to the Buddha, "Excellent, sir! … From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."