AN 5.194 — With Kāraṇapālī

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Text

Numbered Discourses 5.194

20. Brahmins

With Kāraṇapālī

At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

Now at that time the brahmin Kāraṇapālī was working for the Licchavis. He saw the brahmin Piṅgiyānī coming off in the distance and said to him, “So, Piṅgiyānī, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?”

“I’m coming, worthy sir, from the presence of the ascetic Gotama.”

“What do you think of the ascetic Gotama’s lucidity of wisdom? Do you think he’s astute?”

Worthy sir, who am I to judge the ascetic Gotama’s lucidity of wisdom? You’d really have to be on the same level to judge his lucidity of wisdom.”

Worthy Piṅgiyānī praises the ascetic Gotama with high praise indeed.”

“Who am I to praise the ascetic Gotama? He is praised by the praised as the first among gods and humans.”

“But for what reason are you so devoted to the ascetic Gotama?”

“Suppose a person was completely satisfied by the best tasting food. They wouldn’t be attracted to anything that tasted inferior. In the same way, when you hear the worthy Gotama’s teaching— whatever it may be, whether statements, mixed prose & verse, discussions, or amazing stories— then you’re not attracted to the doctrines of the various ascetics and brahmins.

Suppose a person who was weak with hunger was to obtain a honey-cake. Wherever they taste it, they would enjoy a sweet, delectable flavor. In the same way, when you hear the worthy Gotama’s teaching— whatever it may be, whether statements, mixed prose & verse, discussions, or amazing stories— then you get a sense of uplift, a confidence of the heart.

Suppose a person were to obtain a piece of sandalwood, whether yellow or red. Wherever they smelled it— whether at the root, the middle, or the top— they’d enjoy a delectable fragrance. In the same way, when you hear the worthy Gotama’s teaching— whatever it

may be, whether statements, mixed prose & verse, discussions, or amazing stories— then you become filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose there was a person who was sick, suffering, gravely ill. A good doctor would cure them on the spot. In the same way, when you hear the worthy Gotama's teaching— whatever it may be, whether statements, mixed prose & verse, discussions, or amazing stories— then you make an end of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

Suppose there was a lotus pond with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. They'd plunge into the lotus pond to bathe and drink. And all their stress, weariness, and heat exhaustion would die down. In the same way, when you hear the worthy Gotama's teaching— whatever it may be, whether statements, mixed prose & verse, discussions, or amazing stories— then all your stress, weariness, and exhaustion die down."

When this was said, the brahmin Kāraṇapālī rose from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and expressed this heartfelt sentiment three times:

"Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

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Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

Excellent, worthy Piṅgiyānī! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, the worthy Piṅgiyānī has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Piṅgiyānī remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."