Ud 3.9 — Professions

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Text

Heartfelt Sayings 3.9

Professions

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now at that time, after the meal, on return from almsround, several mendicants sat together in the pavilion and this discussion came up among them: "Who knows a craft? Who is studying which craft? Which is the best craft?"

In answer, some said that elephant-craft is the best of crafts. Others said that the best craft is horse-craft, or chariot-craft, or archery, or swordsmanship, or arithmetic, or accounting, or calculating, or writing, or poetry, or cosmology, or geomancy. At that point the conversation among those mendicants was left unfinished.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and went to the assembly hall. He sat down on the seat spread out, and addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?"

So the mendicants told him what they had been talking about when the Buddha arrived. The Buddha said,

"Mendicants, it is not appropriate for you gentlemen who have gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness to talk about such things. When you're sitting together you should do one of two things: discuss the teachings or keep noble silence."

Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

"Living without a craft, light, wanting what is best,

with senses controlled, everywhere free;

a migrant with no bastion, unselfish, with no need for hope,

having given up conceit, wandering alone: that is a mendicant."