

Dīgha Nikāya -The Long Discourses

About Ambaṭṭha, Pride Humbled (Ambaṭṭha Sutta)

1.1 Thus have I heard. Once the Lord was touring Kosala with a large number of monks, some five hundred, and he came to a Kosalan Brahmin village called Icchānankala. And he stayed in the dense jungle of Icchānankala. At that time the Brahmin Pokkharasāti was living at Ukkhaṭṭha, a populous place, full of grass, timber, water and corn, which had been given to him by King Pasenadi of Kosala as a royal gift and with royal powers.

1.2 And Pokkharasāti heard say: ‘The ascetic Gotama, son of the Sakyans, who has gone forth from the Sakya clan,...is staying in the dense jungle of Icchānankala. And concerning that Blessed Lord a good report has been spread about: “This Blessed Lord is an Arahant, a fully-enlightened Buddha, perfected in knowledge and conduct, a Well-Farer, Knower of the worlds, unequalled Trainer of men to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, a Buddha, a Blessed Lord.” He proclaims this world with its gods, māras, Brahmas, the world of ascetics and Brahmins with its princes and people, having come to know it by his own knowledge. He teaches a Dhamma that is lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle, and lovely in its ending, in the spirit and in the letter, and he displays the fully-perfected, thoroughly purified holy life. And indeed it is good to see such Arahants.’

1.3 Now at that time Pokkharasāti had a pupil, the youth Ambaṭṭha, who was a student of the Vedas, who knew the mantras, perfected in the Three Vedas, a skilled expounder of the rules and rituals, the lore of sounds and meanings and, fifthly, oral tradition, complete in philosophy and in the marks of a Great Man, admitted and accepted by his master in the Three Vedas with the words: ‘What I know, you know; what you know, I know.’

1.4 And Pokkharasāti said to Ambaṭṭha: ‘Ambaṭṭha, my son, the ascetic Gotama...is staying in the dense jungle of Icchānankala. And concerning that Blessed Lord a good report has been spread about...Now you go to see the ascetic Gotama and find out whether this report is correct or not, and whether the Reverend Gotama is as they say or not. In that way we shall put the Reverend Gotama to the test.’

1.5 ‘Sir, how shall I find out whether the report is true, or whether the Reverend Gotama is as they say or not?’ ‘According to the tradition of our mantras, Ambaṭṭha, the great man who is possessed

of the thirty-two marks of a Great Man has only two courses open to him. If he lives the household life he will become a ruler, a wheel-turning righteous monarch of the law, conqueror of the four quarters, who has established the security of his realm and is possessed of the seven treasures. These are: the Wheel-Treasure, the Elephant-Treasure, the Householder-Treasure, the Jewel-Treasure, the Woman-Treasure, the householder-Treasure, and, as seventh, the Counselor-Treasure. He has more than a thousand sons who are heroes, of heroic stature, conquerors of the hostile army. He dwells having conquered this sea-girt land without stick or sword, by the law. But if he goes forth from the household life into homelessness, then he will become an Arahant, a full-enlightened Buddha, one who draws back the veil from the world. And, Ambaṭṭha, I am the passer-on of the mantras, and you are the receiver.'

1.6 'Very good, sir', said Ambaṭṭha at Pokkharasāti's words, and he got up, passed by Pokkharasāti with his right side, got into his chariot drawn by a mare and, accompanied by a number of young men, headed for the dense jungle of Icchānankala. He drove as far as the carriage would go, then alighted and continued on foot.

1.7 At that time a number of monks were walking up and down in the open air. Ambaṭṭha approached them and said: 'Where is the Reverend Gotama to be found just now? We have come to see the Reverend Gotama.'

1.8 The monks thought: 'This is Ambaṭṭha, a youth of good family and a pupil of the distinguished Brahmin Pokkharasāti. The Lord would not mind having a conversation with such a young man.' And they said to Ambaṭṭha: 'That is his dwelling, with the door closed. Go quietly up to it, go on to the verandah without haste, cough, and knock on the bolt. The Lord will open the door to you.'

1.9 Ambaṭṭha went up to the dwelling and on to the verandah, coughed, and knocked. The Lord opened the door, and Ambaṭṭha went in. The young men entered, exchanged courtesies with the Lord, and sat down to one side. But Ambaṭṭha walked up and down while the Lord sat there, uttered some vague words of politeness, and then stood so speaking before the seated Lord.

1.10 And the Lord said to Ambaṭṭha: 'Well now, Ambaṭṭha, would you behave like this if you were talking to venerable and learned Brahmins, teachers of teachers, as you do with me, walking and standing while I am sitting, and uttering vague words of politeness?' 'No, reverend Gotama. A Brahmin should walk with a walking Brahmin, stand with a standing Brahmin, sit with a sitting

Brahmin, and lie down with a Brahmin who is lying down. But as for those shaven little ascetics, menials, black scourings from Brahmā's foot, with them it is fitting to speak just as I do with the Reverend Gotama.'

1.11 'But, Ambaṭṭha, you came here seeking something. Whatever it was you came for, you should listen attentively to hear about it. Ambaṭṭha, you have not perfected your training. Your conceit of being trained is due to nothing but inexperience.'

1.12 But Ambaṭṭha was angry and displeased at being called untrained, and he turned on the Lord with curses and insults. Thinking: 'The ascetic Gotama bears me ill-will', he said: 'Reverend Gotama, the Sakyans are fierce, rough-spoken, touchy and violent. Being of menial origin, being menials, they do not honor, respect, esteem, revere or pay homage to Brahmins. With regard to this it is not proper...that they do not pay homage to Brahmins.' This was the first time Ambaṭṭha accused the Sakyans of being menials.

1.13 'But, Ambaṭṭha, what have the Sakyans done to you?' 'Reverend Gotama, once I went to Kapilavatthu on some business for my teacher, the Brahmin Pokkharasāti, and I came to the Sakyans' meeting-hall. And at that time a lot of Sakyans were sitting on high seats in their meeting-hall, poking each other with their fingers, laughing and playing about together, and it seemed to me that they were just making fun of me, and no one offered me a seat. With regard to this, it is not proper that they do not pay homage to the Brahmins.' This was the second time Ambaṭṭha accused the Sakyans of being menials.

1.14 'But Ambaṭṭha, even the quail, that little bird, can talk as she likes on her own nest. Kapilavatthu is the Sakyans' home, Ambaṭṭha. They do not deserve censure for such a trifle.' 'Reverend Gotama, there are four castes: the Khattiyas, the Brahmins, the merchants and the artisans. And of these four castes three- the Khattiyas, the merchants and the artisans – are entirely subservient to the Brahmin. With regard to this, it is not proper that they should not pay homage to the Brahmins.' This was the third time Ambaṭṭha accused the Sakyans of being menials.

1.15 Then the Lord thought: 'This young man goes too far in abusing the Sakyans. Suppose I were to ask after his clan-name?' So he said: 'Ambaṭṭha, what is your clan?' 'I am a Kaṇhāyan, Reverend Gotama.' 'Ambaṭṭha, in former days, according to those who remember the ancestral lineage, the Sakyans were the masters, and you are descended from a slave-girl of the Sakyans.

For the Sakyans regard King Okkāka, to whom his queen was dear and beloved, wishing to transfer the kingdom to her son, banished his elder brothers from the kingdom-Okkāma, Karaṇḍu, Hatthinīya and Sīnipura. And these, being banished, made their home on the flank of the Himālayas beside a lotus-pond where there was a big grove of teak-forest. And for fear of contaminating the stock they cohabited with their own sisters. Then King Okkāka asked his ministers and counselors: “Where are the princes living now?” and they told him. At this King Okkāka exclaimed: “They are strong as teak (sāka), these princes, they are real Sakyans!” And that is how the Sakyans got their well-known name. And the King was the ancestor of the Sakyans.

1.16 ‘Now Okkāka had a slave-girl called Disā, who gave birth to a black child. The black child, when it was born, exclaimed: “Wash me, mother! Bath me, mother! Deliver me from this dirt, and I will bring you profit!” Because, Ambaṭṭha, just as people today use the term hobgoblin (pisāca) as a term of abuse, so in those days they said black (Kaṇha). And they said: “As soon as he was born, he spoke. He is born a Kaṇha, a hobgoblin!” That is how in former days... the Sakyans were the masters, and you are descended from a slave-girl of the Sakyans.’

1.17 On hearing this, the young men said: ‘Reverend Gotama, do not humiliate Ambaṭṭha too much with talk of his being descended from a slave-girl: Ambaṭṭha is well-born, of a good family, he is very learned, he is well-spoken, a scholar, well able to hold his own in this discussion with the Reverend Gotama!’

1.18 Then the Lord said to the young men: ‘If you consider that Ambaṭṭha is ill-born, not of a good family, unlearned, ill-spoken, no scholar, unable to hold his own in this discussion with the ascetic Gotama, then let Ambaṭṭha be silent, and you conduct this discussion with me. But if you think he is... about to hold his own, then you be quiet, and let him discuss with me.’

1.19 ‘Ambaṭṭha is well-born, Reverend Gotama... We will be silent, he shall continue.’

1.20 Then the Lord said to Ambaṭṭha: ‘Ambaṭṭha, I have a fundamental question for you, which you will not like to answer. If you don’t answer, or evade the issue, if you keep silent or go away, your head will split into seven pieces. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Have you heard from old and venerable Brahmins, teachers of teachers, where the Kaṇhayans came from, or who was their ancestor?’ At this, Ambaṭṭha remained silent. The Lord asked him a second time. Again Ambaṭṭha

remained silent, and the Lord said: ‘Answer Ambaṭṭha, does not answer a fundamental question put to him by a Tathāgata by the third asking has his head split into seven pieces.’

1.21 And at that moment Vajirapāṇi the yakkha, holding a huge iron club, flaming, ablaze and glowing, up in the sky just above Ambaṭṭha, was thinking: ‘If this young man Ambaṭṭha does not answer a proper question put to him by the Blessed Lord by the third time of asking, I’ll split his head into seven pieces!’ The Lord saw Vajirapāṇi, and so did Ambaṭṭha. And at the sight, Ambaṭṭha was terrified and unnerved, his hairs stood on end, and he sought protection, shelter and safety from the Lord. Crouching down close to the Lord, he said: ‘What did the Reverend Gotama say? May the Reverend Gotama repeat what he said!’ ‘What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Have you heard who was the ancestor of the Kaṇhayans?’ ‘Yes, I have heard it just as the Reverend Gotama said, that is where the Kaṇhayans came from, he was their ancestor.’

1.22 Hearing this, the young men made a loud noise and clamor: ‘So Ambaṭṭha is ill-born, not of a good family, born of a slave-girl of the Sakyans, and the Sakyans are Ambaṭṭha’s masters! We disparaged the ascetic Gotama, thinking he was not speaking the truth!’

1.23 Then the Lord thought: ‘It is too much, the way these young men humiliate Ambaṭṭha for being the son of a slave-girl. I must get him out of this.’ So he said to the young men: ‘Don’t disparage Ambaṭṭha too much for being the son of a slave-girl! That Kaṇha was a mighty sage. He went to the south country, learnt the mantras of the Brahmins there, and then went to King Okkāka and asked for his daughter Maddarūpī. And King Okkāka, furiously angry, exclaimed: “So this fellow, the son of a slave-girl, wants my daughter!”, and put an arrow to his bow. But he was unable either to shoot the arrow or to withdraw it. Then the ministers and counselors came to the sage Kaṇha and said: “Spare the king, Reverend Sir, spare the king!” ‘ “The king will be safe, but if he looses the arrow downwards, the earth will quake as far as his kingdom extends.” ‘ “Reverend Sir, spare the kin, spare the land!” ‘ “The king and the land will be safe, but if he looses the arrow upwards, as far as his realm extends the god will not let it rain for seven years.” ‘ “Reverend Sir, spare the king and the land, and may the god let it rains!” ‘ “The king and the land will be safe, and the god will let it rain, but if the king points the arrow at the crown prince, the prince will be completely safe.” ‘Then the ministers exclaimed: “Let King Okkāka point the arrow at the crown price, the prince will be perfectly safe!” The kin did so, and the prince was unharmed. Then King Okkāka, terrified and fearful of divine punishment, gave away his daughter

Maddarūpī. So, young men, do not disparage Ambaṭṭha too much for being the son of a slave-girl. That Kaṇha was a mighty sage.’

1.24 Then the Lord said: ‘Ambaṭṭha, what do you think? Suppose a Khattiya youth were to wed a Brahmin maiden, and there was a son of the union. Would that son of a Khattiya youth and a Brahmin maiden receive a seat and water from the Brahmins?’ ‘He would, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Would they allow him to eat at funeral-rites, at rice-offerings, at sacrifices or as a guest?’ ‘They would, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Would they teach him mantras or not?’ ‘They would, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Would they keep their women covered or uncovered?’ ‘Uncovered, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘But would the Khattiyas sprinkle him with the Khattiya consecration?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Why not?’ ‘Because, Reverend Gotama, he is not well-born on his mother’s side.’

1.25 ‘What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose a Brahmin youth were to wed a Khattiya maiden, and there was a son of the union. Would that son of a Khattiya youth and a Brahmin maiden receive a seat and water from the Brahmins?’ ‘He would, Reverend Gotama.’ ...(as verse 24) But would the Khattiyas sprinkle him with the Khattiya consecration?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Why not?’ ‘Because, Reverend Gotama, he is not well-born on his father’s side.’

1.26 ‘So, Ambaṭṭha, the Khattiyas, through a man taking a woman or a woman taking a man, are senior to the Brahmins. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Take the case of a Brahmin who, for some reason, has had his head shaved by the Brahmins, has been punished with a bag of ashes and banished from the country or the city. Would he receive a seat and water from the Brahmins?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Would they allow him to eat...as a guest?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Would they teach him mantras, or not?’ ‘They would not, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Would they keep their women covered or uncovered?’ ‘Covered, Reverend Gotama.’

1.27 ‘What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Take the case of a Khattiya who...had his head shaved by the Khattiyas,...and has been banished from the country or the city. Would he receive a seat and water from the Brahmins?’ ‘He would, Reverend Gotama.’... (as verse 24) ‘Would they keep their women covered or uncovered?’ ‘Uncovered, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘But that Khattiya has so far reached the extreme of humiliation that he has...been banished from the country or the city. So even if a Khattiya has suffered extreme humiliation, he is superior and the Brahmins inferior.’

1.28 ‘Ambaṭṭha, this verse was pronounced by Brahmā Sanankumāra: “The Khattiya’s best among those who value clan; He with knowledge and conduct is best of gods and men.” ‘This verse was rightly sung, not wrongly, rightly spoken, not wrongly, connected with profit, not unconnected. And, Ambaṭṭha, I too say this: “The Khattiya’s best among those who value clan: He with knowledge and conduct is best of gods and men.”’

[End of first recitation-section]

2.1 ‘But, Reverend Gotama, what is this conduct, what is this knowledge?’ ‘Ambaṭṭha, it is not from the standpoint of the attainment of unexcelled knowledge-and-conduct that reputation based on birth and clan is declared, nor on the conceit which says: “you are worthy of me, you are not worthy of me!” For wherever there is a giving, a taking, or a giving and taking in marriage, there is always this talk and this conceit...But those who are enslaved by such things are far from the attainment of the unexcelled knowledge-and-conduct, which is attained by abandoning all such things!’

2.2 ‘But, Reverend Gotama, what is this conduct, what is this knowledge?’ ‘Ambaṭṭha, a Tathāgata arises in this world and Arahant, fully-enlightened Buddha, endowed with wisdom and conduct, Well-Farer, Knower of the worlds, incomparable Trainer of men to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, enlightened and blessed. He, having realized it by his own super-know-and blessed. He, having realized it by his own super-know-ledge, proclaims this world with its devas, māras and Brahmās, its princes and people. He preaches the Dhamma which is lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle, lovely in its ending, in the spirit and in the letter, and displays the fully-perfected and purified holy life. A disciple goes forth and practices the moralities(Sutta 2, verse 41-62); he guards the sense-doors, etc. (Sutta 2, verse 64-75); attains the four jhānas (Sutta 2, verse 75-82). Thus he develops conduct. He attains various insights(Sutta 2, verse 83-95), and the cessation of the corruptions(Sutta 2, verse 97)... And beyond this there is no further development of knowledge and conduct that is higher or more perfect.

2.3 ‘But, Ambaṭṭha, in the pursuit of this unexcelled attainment of knowledge and conduct there are four paths of failure. What are they? In the first place, an ascetic or Brahmin who has not managed to gain this unexcelled attainment, takes his carrying-pole and plunges into the depths of the forest thinking: “I will live on windfalls.” But in this way he only becomes an attendant on one

who has attained. This is the first path of failure. Again, an ascetic or Brahmin..., Being unable to live on windfalls, takes a spade and basket, thinking: “I will live on tubers and roots.”... This is the second path of failure. Again, an ascetic or Brahmin, being unable to live on tubers and roots, makes a fire-hearth at the edge of a village or small town and sits tending the flame... This is the third path of failure. Again, an ascetic or Brahmin, being unable to tend the flame, erects a house with four doors at the crossroads thinking: “Whatever ascetic or Brahmin arrives from the four quarters, I will honor to the best of my strength and ability.” But in this way he only becomes an attendant on one who has attained to unexcelled knowledge and conduct. This is the fourth path of failure.

2.4 ‘What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Do you and your teacher live in accordance with this unexcelled knowledge and conduct?’ ‘No indeed, Reverend Gotama! Who are my teacher and I in comparison? We are far from it!’ ‘Well then, Ambaṭṭha, could you and your teacher, being unable to gain this..., go with your carrying-poles into the depths of the forest, intending to live on windfalls?’ ‘No indeed, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Well then, Ambaṭṭha, could you and your teacher, being unable to gain this..., live on tubers and roots,...sit tending the flame, ...erect a house...?’ ‘No indeed, Reverend Gotama.’

2.5 ‘And so, Ambaṭṭha, not only are you and your teacher incapable of attaining this unexcelled knowledge and conduct, but even the four paths of failure are beyond you. And yet you and your teacher the Brahmin Pokkharasāti utter these words: “These shaven little ascetics, menials, black scrapings from Brahmā’s foot, what converse can they have with Brahmins learned in the Three Vedas?” – even though you can’t even manage the duties of one who has failed. See, Ambaṭṭha, how your teacher has let you down!

2.6 ‘Ambaṭṭha, the Brahmin Pokkharasāti lives by the grace and favor of King Pasenadi of Kosala. And yet the King does not allow him to have audience face to face. When he confers with the King it is through a curtain. Why should the King not grant audience face to face to one on whom he has bestowed a proper and blameless source of revenue? See how your teacher has let you down!

2.7 ‘What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose King Pasenadi was sitting on the neck of an elephant or on horseback, or was standing on the chariot-mat, conferring with his ministers and princes about something. And suppose he were to step aside and some workman or workman’s servant

were to come along and stand in his place. And standing there he might say: “This is what King Pasenadi of Kosala says!” Would he be speaking the King’s words, as if he were the King’s equal?’ “No indeed, Reverend Gotama.’

2.8 ‘Well then, Ambaṭṭha, it is just the same thing. Those who were, as you say, the first sages of the Brahmins, the makers and expounders of the mantras, whose ancient verses are chanted, pronounced and collected by the Brahmins of today- Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Angirasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, Bhagu – whose mantras are said to be passed on to you and your teacher: yet you do not thereby become a sage or one practiced in the way of a sage – such a thing is not possible.

2.9 ‘What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? What have you heard said by Brahmins who are venerable, aged, the teachers of teachers? Those first sages..., Aṭṭhaka,...Bhagu – did they enjoy themselves, well-bathed, perfumed, their hair and beards trimmed, adorned with garlands and wreaths, dressed in white cloths, indulging in the pleasures of the five senses and addicted to them, as you and your teacher do now?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’

1.10 ‘Or did they eat special fine rice with the black spots removed, with various soups and curries, as you and your teacher do no?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Or did they amuse themselves with women dressed up in flounces and furbelows, as you and your teacher do now?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘Or did they ride around in chariots drawn by mares with braided tails, that they urged on with long goad-sticks?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ Or did they have themselves guarded in fortified towns with palisades and barricades, by men with long swords...?’ ‘No, Reverend Gotama.’ ‘So, Ambaṭṭha, neither you nor your teacher are a sage or one trained in the way of a sage. And now, as for your doubts and perplexities concerning me, we will clarify these by your asking me, and by my answering your questions.’

2.11 Then, descending from his lodging, the Lord started to walk up and down, and Ambaṭṭha did likewise. And as he walked along with the Lord, Ambaṭṭha looked out for the thirty-two marks of a Great Man on the Lord’s body. And he could see all of them except for two. He was in doubt and perplexity about two of these marks: he could not make up his mind or be certain about the sheathed genitals or the large tongue.

2.12 And the Lord, being aware of his doubts, effected by his psychic power that Ambaṭṭha could see his sheathed genitals, and then, sticking out his tongue, he reached out to lick both ears and both nostrils, and then covered the whole circle of his forehead with his tongue. The Ambaṭṭha thought: ‘The ascetic Gotama is equipped with all the thirty-two marks of a Great Man, complete and with none missing.’ Then he said to the Lord: ‘Reverend Gotama, may I go now? I have much business, much to do.’ ‘Ambaṭṭha, do what you now think fit/’ So Ambaṭṭha got back into his chariot drawn by mares and departed.

2.13 Meanwhile the Brahmin Pokkharasāti had gone outside and was sitting in his park with a large number of Brahmins, just waiting for Ambaṭṭha. Then Ambaṭṭha came to the park. He rode in the chariot as far as it would go , and then continued on foot to where Pokkharasāti was, saluted him, and sat down to one side. Then Pokkharasāti said:

2.14 ‘Well, dear boy, did you see the Reverend Gotama?’ ‘I did, sir.’ ‘And was the Reverend Gotama such as he is reported to be, and not otherwise? And is he of such nature, and not otherwise?’ ‘Sir, he is as he is reported to be, and he is of such nature and not otherwise. He is possessed of the thirty-two marks of a Great Man, all complete, with none missing.’ ‘But was there any conversation between you and the ascetic Gotama?’ ‘There was, sir.’ ‘And what was this conversation about?’ So Ambaṭṭha told Pokkharasāti all that had passed between the Lord and himself.

2.15 At this Pokkharasāti exclaimed: ‘Well, you’re a fine little scholar, a fine wise man, a fine expert in the Three Vedas! Anyone going about his business like that ought when he dies, at the breaking-up of the body, to go to the downfall, to the evil path, to ruin, to hell! You have heaped insults on the Reverend Gotama, as a result of which he has brought up more and more things against us! You’re a fine little scholar...!’ He was so angry and enraged that he kicked Ambaṭṭha over, and wanted to start out at once to see the Lord.

2.16 But the Brahmins said: ‘It is far too late, sir, to go to see the ascetic Gotama today. The Reverend Pokkharasāti should go to see him tomorrow.’ Then Pokkharasāti, having had fine hard and soft food prepared in his own home, set out by the light of torches from Ukkatṭha from the jungle of Icchānankala. He went by chariot as far as possible, then continued on foot to where the Lord was. Having exchanged courtesies with the Lord, he sat down to one side and said:

2.17 ‘Venerable Gotama, did not our pupil Ambaṭṭha come to see you?’ ‘He did, Brahmin.’ ‘And was there any conversation between you?’ ‘There was.’ ‘And what was this conversation about?’ Then the Lord told Pokkharasāti all that had passed between him and Ambaṭṭha. At this, Pokkharasāti said to the Lord: ‘Reverend Gotama, Ambaṭṭha is a young fool. May the Reverend Gotama pardon him.’ ‘Brahmin, may Ambaṭṭha be happy.’

2.18-19 Then Pokkharasāti looked out for the thirty-two marks of a Great Man on the Lord’s body and he could see all of them except for two: the sheathed genitals and the large tongue; but the Lord set his mind at rest about these (as verse 11-12). And Pokkharasāti said to the Lord: ‘May the Reverend Gotama accept a meal from me today together with his order of monks!’ And the Lord consented by silence.

2.20 Seeing his acceptance, Pokkharasāti said to the Lord: ‘It is time, Reverend Gotama, the meal is ready.’ And the Lord, having dressed in the early morning and taken his robe and bowl, went with his order of monks to Pokkharasāti’s residence, and sat down on the prepared seat. Then Pokkharasāti personally served the Lord with choice hard and soft food, and the young men served the monks. And when the Lord had taken his hand from the bowl, Pokkharasāti sat down to one side on a low stool.

2.21 And as Pokkharasāti sat there, the Lord delivered a graduated discourse on generosity, on morality and on heaven, showing the danger, degradation and corruption of sense-desires, and the profit of renunciation. And when the Lord knew that Pokkharasāti’s mind was ready, pliable, free from the hindrances, joyful and calm, then he preached a sermon on Dhamma in brief: on suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. And just as a clean cloth from which all stains have been removed receives the dye perfectly, so in the Brahmin Pokkharasāti, as he sat there, there arose the pure and spotless Dhamma-eye, and he knew: ‘Whatever things have an origin must come to cessation.’

2.22 And Pokkharasāti, having seen, attained, experienced and penetrated the Dhamma, having passed beyond doubt, transcended uncertainty, having gained perfect confidence in the Teacher’s doctrine without relying on others, said: ‘Excellent, Lord, excellent! It is as if someone were to set up what had been knocked down, or to point out the way to one who had got lost, or to bring an oil-lamp into a dark place. So that those with eyes could see what was there. Just so the Blessed

Lord has expounded the Dhamma in various ways... I go with my son, my wife, my ministers and counselors for refuge to the Reverend Gotama, to the Dhamma and to the Sangha. May the Reverend Gotama accept me as a lay-follower who has taken refuge from this day forth as long as life shall last! And whenever the Reverend Gotama visits other families or lay-followers in Ukkatṭha, may he also visit the family of Pokkharasāti! Whatever young men and maidens are there will revere the Reverend Gotama and rise before him, will give him a seat and water and will be glad at heart, and that will be for their welfare and happiness for a long time.'

‘Well said, Brahmin!’

Translated by Maurice Walshe

Dīgha Nikāya 3

Division One – The Moralities

Contributed by Ariya Zhong

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