

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

The Shorter Discourse to Saccaka (Cuulasaccakasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in a peaked hall, in the Great forest in Vesaali. At that time Saccaka, the son of Nigan.tha, a clever disputant, considered wise by many lived in Vesaali. He would go about Vesaali saying. I do not see a recluse, a brahmin, a leader of a crowd, a teacher of a crowd, or one acknowledging he is perfect and rightfully enlightened not shivering, trembling and sweating when invited to a dispute by me.. Even a lifeless pillar drawn to a dispute by me would shiver and tremble, so what of a human being. Then venerable Assaji putting on robes in the morning, taking bowl and robes entered Vsaali for alms. Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha walking and wandering for exercise saw venerable Assaji coming in the distance and approached venerable Assaji., exchanged friendly greetings and standing on a side said: "Good Assaji, how are the disciples of the recluse Gotama trained, and in what section are they given a lot of the training. Then venerable Assaji said, Aggivessana, the Blessed One gives his disciples a lot of advice and trains the disciples much in this section:"Bhikkhus, matter is impermanent. Feelings are impermanent. Perceptions are impermanent. Determinations are impermanent and consciousness is impermanent. Bhikkhus, matter is not self. Feelings are not self. Perceptions are not self. Determinations are not self, and consciousness is not self. All determinations are impermanent. All things are not self" (*1). Aggivessana, the Blessed One advises the bhikkhus much on this and the training is much on this..Good Assaji, we heard something that should not be heard. If the recluse Gotama is of this view, indeed we should meet him for a conversation on this. To dispel doubts on this view.

At that time about five hundred Licchavis were assembled in the assembly hall for some purpose. Then Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha approached them and said: Come Licchavis, today there is a dispute between me and the recluse Gotama, If the recluse Gotama affirms this view of his disciple bhikkhu Assaji, we will draw the recluse Gotama to a dispute, pulling him about and dragging him about. Like a strong man taking a sheep by its long fleece, would pull it and drag it about. Or like a strong brewer of liqueur submerging a huge crater in a deep pond, would shake it about, and holding it by the ears would shake it about. In the same manner we would pull and drag about the recluse Gotama in a dispute. Like an elephant of sixty cubits, descending a deep pond, would enjoy the

game of washing hemp. We would enjoy the game of washing hemp with the recluse Gotama. Come Licchavis, there will be a dispute between me and the recluse Gotama. Then a certain Licchavi would say. What has the recluse Gotama a dispute with Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha? Or is it that Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha has a dispute with the recluse Gotama? Another Licchavi would say. What, is resplendent Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha drawing the recluse Gotama for a dispute? Or is the recluse Gotama drawing Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha for a dispute? Then Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha approached the gabled hall in the Great forest followed by about five hundred Licchavis. At that time many bhikkhus were doing the walking meditation in the open. Then Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha approached those bhikkhus and asked. Where does good Gotama abide at this time, we like to see him. Aggivessana, the Blessed One has entered the great forest and is seated at the root of a tree to spend the day. Then Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha approached the Great forest and the Blessed One, exchanging friendly greetings with him sat on a side. Then some of those Licchavis worshipped the Blessed One and sat on a side. Some exchanged friendly greetings and sat on a side, some clasped their hands in the direction of the Blessed One and sat on a side, some voiced their names and clans and sat on a side, and others sat on a side silently.

Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha then said thus to the Blessed One. We would ask a certain question from good Gotama. If good Gotama would give us leave and would explain it to us. The Blessed One said, ask Aggivessana what you desire. How does good Gotama advise the disciples and in what sections are they given much training? Aggivessana, I advise and train my disciple much in this manner. "Bhikkhus, matter is impermanent. Feelings are impermanent. Perceptions and determinations are impermanent. Consciousness is impermanent. Bhikkhus, matter is not self. Feelings are not self. Perceptions and determinations are not self. Consciousness is not self. All determinations are impermanent. All things are not self. Aggivessana, I advise my disciples and train them much in this section. Good Gotama, a comparison occurs to me. Say it Aggivessana. Like these seed groups and vegetable groups that grow and develop, established and supported on earth. So also all powerful work, that has to be done, should be done, established and supported on earth. In the same manner this person, established in matter, with the material self accrues merit or demerit. This feeling person established in feelings accrues merit or demerit. The perceiving person established in perceptions accrues merit or demerit. The determining person established in determinations, accrues merit or demerit. The conscious person established in consciousness,

accrues merit or demerit..Aggivessana, do you say Matter is my self. Feelings are my self. Perceptions are my self. Determinations are my self. Consciousness is my self.? Good Gotama, I say. matter is my self. Feelings are my self. Perceptions are my self. Determinations are my self. Consciousness is my self, so also this large crowd says it. What does this large crowd say about your view? You should dispute on your view. Good Gotama, I say, matter is my self. Feelings are my self. Perceptions are my self. Determinations are my self, and consciousness is my self.

Then, I will cross question you on this and you may reply, as it pleases you..Aggivessana, do head anointed warrior kings like king Pasenadi of Kosala, king Ajaatasattu of Magadha wield power over their kingdoms, to execute those that have to be executed, to produce those that have to be produced, and to banish those that have to be banished?Yes, good Gotama, the head anointed warrior kings such as king Pasenadi of Kosala and king Ajaatasattu of Magadha wield power in their kingdoms to execute those that have to be executed, to produce those that have to be produced, and to banish those that have to be banished. Even the leaders, gathered here, of the Vajjis and Mallas, wield power in their kingdoms to execute those that have to be executed, to produce those that have to be produced and to banish those that have to be banished, so there are no doubts, about head anointed warrior kings, like king Pasenadi of Kosala and king Ajaatasattu of Magadha. Aggivessana, you say matter is your self, do you wield power over that matter, as may my matter be thus and not thus?..When this was said Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha became silent. For the second time, the Blessed One asked, Aggivessana, you say matter is your self, do you wield power over that matter, as may my matter be thus and not thus?.. For the second time Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha became silent. Then the Blessed One said, explain it, Aggivessana. It is not the time for you to be silent. If someone does not reply a rightful question asked by the Thus Gone One up to the third time, his head splits into seven pieces..At that moment Vajrapaani the demon was seen in space with a flaming thunderbolt in his hand, as though to split the head of Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha if he did not reply the rightful question asked up to the third time by the Thus gone One. Vajrapaani the demon was seen by the Blessed One and Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha. Then Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha frightened and with hairs standing on end, sought the refuge and protection of the Blessed One said, Good Gotama, ask me, I will explain.

Aggivessana, you that say, matter is your self, do you wield power over that matter, as may my matter be thus, and not otherwise? .No, good Gotama. Attend carefully and reply Aggivessana. What

you said earlier does not agree with what you say now. Aggivessana, you that say, feelings are your self, do you wield power over those feelings, as may my feelings be thus, and not otherwise? No, good Gotama. Attend carefully and reply Aggivessana. What you said earlier does not agree with what you say now. Aggivessana, you that say, perceptions are your self, do you wield power over those perceptions, as may my perceptions be thus and not otherwise? No, good Gotama. Attend carefully and reply Aggivessana. What you said earlier, does not agree with what you say now.. Aggivessana, you, that say, determinations are your self, do you wield power over those determinations, as may my determinations be thus and not otherwise. No, good Gotama. Attend carefully and reply Aggivessana. What you said earlier does not agree with what you say now. Aggivessana, you, that say, consciousness is your self, do you wield power over that consciousness, as may my consciousness be thus and not otherwise? No, good Gotama. Attend carefully and reply Aggivessana. What you said earlier does not agree with what you say now. What do you think, Aggivessana, is matter permanent or impermanent? Impermanent good Gotama. That impermanent thing, is it unpleasant or pleasant? Unpleasant good Gotama. That impermanent, unpleasant, changing thing, is it suitable to be considered; that is mine, that I be, that is my self? No good Gotama.. Aggivessana, are feelings—are perceptions,—are determinations,—is consciousness permanent or impermanent? Impermanent good Gotama. That impermanent thing is it unpleasant or pleasant? Unpleasant, good Gotama. That impermanent, unpleasant, changing thing, is it suitable to be considered, that is mine, that I be, that is my self? No, good Gotama.. Aggivessana, a certain one clinging to unpleasantness, over powered by it, pressed down by it and reflecting it's mine, would think it's my self. Would he accurately understand unpleasantness by himself or ward it off and abide? Good Gotama, how could it be. No, good Gotama, that would not happen.

Aggivessana, like a man, wandering in search of heartwood, would enter a forest with a dagger, seeing a tall, straight, new plantain tree he would cut its roots and top and felling it, would open up the sheaves, and would not come even to sapwood, so where is heartwood. In the same manner, Aggivessana, with your own dispute you being cross questioned, asked for reasons and we studying with you found you empty, useless and gone wrong. Have you said to these gatherings in Vesaali such a thing. I do not see a recluse, or brahmin, a leader of a crowd, a teacher of a crowd, or even one who acknowledges he is perfect and rightfully enlightened drawn into a dispute by me would not shiver tremble and sweat. Even a lifeless pillar drawn to a dispute by me would shiver and

tremble, so what of a human being. As for you Aggivessana, there is sweat trickling down your forehead and some drops of sweat have pierced your over shawl and has fallen on the ground, on my body at the moment there is no sweat. Saying that the Blessed One disclosed his golden hued body to that gathering. When this was said, Saccaka, the son of Nigantha became silent, confused, his form drooping, face turned down, unable to reply, sat down.

Then Dummukha the son of the Licchavis, saw Saccaka the son of Nigantha silent, confused, the form drooping, face turned down, unable to reply sitting. He said to the Blessed One; venerable sir, a comparison comes to me. The Blessed One said, say it Dummukha. Venerable sir, close to a village or hamlet, there's a pond, in it a crab lives. Then a lot of boys and girls approach the pond, descend it and pull out the crab on to dry land. Whenever the crab puts out a limb, a boy or a girl would cut it and destroy it, with a stick or a stone. Thus the crab with all his limbs destroyed, is unable to descend to the pond as before. In the same manner, the Blessed One has cut, broken and destroyed, all the distortions of views and the restlessness of Saccaka the son of Nigantha, and it is not possible that he should approach the Blessed One with the intention of a dispute. When this was said, Saccaka the son of Nigantha said thus to Dummukha the son of the Licchavis. Wait, Dummukha, we have to discuss with good Gotama

Good Gotama, this view of mine, is also the view of all other recluses and brahmins. I think it is idle talk. How do the disciples of good Gotama, do the work in the dispensation, follow the given advice, dispelling doubts, become confident, and abide not relying on a teacher, in the dispensation of the Teacher. Here, Aggivessana, my disciples see whatever matter, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-exalted or exalted, far or near, all that matter is not mine. I'm not that, it is not my self. This is seen with right wisdom, as it really is. Whatever feelings, whatever perceptions, whatever determinations, whatever consciousness, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-exalted or exalted, far or near, all consciousness is not mine. I'm not that, it is not my self. This is seen with right wisdom as it really is. Aggivessana, with this much, my disciples have done the work in my dispensation, followed the advice, dispelling doubts have become confident not relying on a teacher abide. Good Gotama, how does the bhikkhu become perfect with desires destroyed, the holy life lived having done what should be done, the weight put down, attained the highest good, the desire 'to be' destroyed, and rightly knowing released.. Here, Aggivessana, whatever matter, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-

exalted or exalted, far or near, all matter is not mine. I'm not that, it is not my self, This should be seen with right wisdom, as it really is, and the mind released without holdings (*2). Whatever feelings, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-exalted or exalted, far or near, all feelings are not mine. I'm not that, it's not my self. This should be seen with right wisdom, as it really is and the mind released without holdings..Whatever perceptions, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-exalted or exalted, far or near, all perceptions are not mine. I'm not that, it's not my self. This should be seen with right wisdom, as it really is, and the mind released without holdings.Whatever determinations, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-exalted or exalted, far or near, all determinations are not mine. I'm not that, it's not my self. This should be seen with right wisdom, as it really is, and the mind released without holdings. Whatever consciousness, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-exalted or exalted, far or near, all consciousness is not mine. I'm not that, it's not my self. This should be seen with right wisdom, as it really is, and the mind released without holdings.Aggivessana, when this much is done the bhikkhu is perfect with desires destroyed, the holy life lived, what should be done, done, the weight put down, come to the highest good, the desires 'to be' destroyed, and rightly knowing is released. Aggivessana, the mind of the bhikkhu so released is endowed with three nobilities: The nobility of vision, the nobility of method, and the nobility of release. Aggivessana, the bhikkhu so released honours, reveres, and esteems the Thus Gone One:.The Blessed One is enlightened, preaches for enlightenment, the Blessed One tamed preaches for taming, the Blessed One appeased preaches for appeasement. The Blessed One crossed over, preaches for crossing over, the Blessed One extinguished preaches for extinguishing.

When this was said Saccaka the son of Nigantha said thus to the Blessed One; We were bold and daring and thought should insult good Gotama with a dispute. One insulting a furious elephant would be safe, yet not a man insulting good Gotama. There is safety to a man disturbing a burning flame, but there is no safety to a man insulting good Gotama. A man insulting a venomous snake would find safety, yet one insulting good Gotama would not find safety. We were bold and daring and thought to insult good Gotama with a dispute. May good Gotama, accept tomorrow's meal from me together with the Community of bhikkhus. The Blessed One accepted in silence.

Then Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha knowing that the Blessed One had accepted addressed the Licchavis: Good Licchavis, listen. I have invited the Blessed One and the Community of bhikkhus for tomorrow's meal. Bring what ever you think is suitable. Then those Licchavis at the end of that night brought five hundred bowls filled with cooked rice. Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha too caused to prepare plenty of nourishing eatables and drinks in his own monastery, and informed the time to the Blessed One: Good Gotama, it is time, the food is ready. Then the Blessed One putting on robes in the morning and taking bowl and robes, approached the monastery of Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha and sat on the prepared seat together with the Community of bhikkhus. Then Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha with his own hands offered plenty of nourishing eatables and drinks to the Community of bhikkhus headed by the Enlightened One. Saccaka the son of Nigan.tha saw that the Blessed One had finished taking the meal and had put away the bowl, then he took a low seat sat on a side, and said to the Blessed One. May the excellent merits of this offering, be to those givers. Aggivessana, may merits accrued from offerings made to you, not free from greed, hate and delusion, be to the givers. May merits accrued from making offerings to me, free of greed, hate and delusion,(*3) be to you.. .

Notes

1. Bhikkhus, matter is impermanent. Feelings are impermanent. Perceptions are impermanent. Determinations are impermanent and consciousness is impermanent. Bhikkhus, matter is not self. Feelings are not self. Perceptions are not self. Determinations are not self, and consciousness is not self. All determinations are impermanent. All things are not self 'ruupa;.m bhikkhave anicca.m, vedanaa anicca, sa~n~naa anicca, sankhaaraa anicca, vi~n~naana.m anicca.m.ruupa.m bhikkhave anattaa, vedanaa anattaa, sa~n~naa anattaa, sankhaaraa anattaa, vi~n~naana.m anattaa, sabbe sankhaaraa anicca, sabbe dhamme anattaa.ti'. This is the quintessence of the Teaching of the Blessed One, to drive this home is the realization of the Teaching. These things, matter, feelings, perceptions, determinations and consciousness should be thoroughly understood first. It is for this purpose that the words of the Blessed One should be widely read, discriminatingly thought about and the essence taken.

2. Whatever matter, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or fine, un-exalted or exalted, far or near, all matter is not mine. I'm not that, it is not my self, This should be seen with right wisdom, as it really is, and the mind released without holdings 'yankinci ruupa.m atiitanaagata paccuppanna.m ajjhattha.m vaa bahiddhaa vaa olaarika.m vaa sukhuma.m vaa hiina.m vaa paniita.m vaa ya.m duure santike vaa, sabbam ruupa.m 'neta.m mama nesohamasmi nameso attaati eva.m eta.m yathaabhuuta.m sammappa~n~naaya disvaa anupaadaa vimutto hoti This selection shows how the mind is released from matter, and there are four more selections to show how the mind is released from feelings, perceptions, determinations and consciousness. These five together are the five holding masses which is equivalent to the self view. If someone makes an effort to undo his ties to at least one of these, he makes a steadfast attempt to lessen his self view. That is the training in the dispensation of the Blessed One. This kind of concentration is called 'vipassanaa' in Pali. The translation of which is "seeing with insight".

3. Merits accrued from making offerings to me, free from greed, hate and delusion.'maadisa.m dakkhineyya.m aagamma viitaraaga.m viitadosa.m viitamoha.m, ta.m tuyha.m bhavissati' The Blessed One tries to explain that offerings made to those free of greed, hate and delusion accrue the highest merit.

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