

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

A discourse to Jeevaka the foster son of the Prince (Jiivakasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in Raajagaha, in the mango orchard of Jiivaka, the foster son of the prince. Jiivaka the foster son of the prince approached the Blessed One, worshipped, sat on a side and said: ‘I have heard this, venerable sir, that living things are killed on account of the recluse Gotama, and he partakes that knowing, it was killed on account of him. Venerable sir, those who say, that living things are killed on account of the recluse Gotama, and he partakes that, knowing, it was killed on account of him, are they saying the rightful words of the Blessed One and not blaming the Teaching?’

‘Jeevaka, those who say, that living things are killed on account of the recluse Gotama, and he partakes that knowing, because it was killed on account of him. They are not my words, and they blame me falsely. Jeevaka, I say that on three instances meat should not be partaken, when seen, heard or when there is a doubt. I say, that on these three instances meat should not be partaken. I say, that meat could be partaken on three instances, when not seen, not heard and when there is no doubt about it.

Jeevaka, the bhikkhu supported by a village or hamlet sits pervading one direction with thoughts of loving kindness, and also the second, third, fourth, above, below and across, in all circumstances, for all purposes, towards all. With that thought developed limitlessly and grown great without anger. Then a certain householder or the son of a householder approaches and invites him for the next day’s meal. If the bhikkhu desires he accepts and at the end of that night, putting on robes and taking bowl and robes, approaches the house of that householder or the son of the householder and sits on the prepared seat. That householder or his son serves him with the nourishing food with his own hands. It does not occur to him. This householder should offer me nourishing food in the future too. He partakes that morsel food, neither enslaved and swooned, nor guilty. Wisely reflecting the danger. Jeevaka, does this bhikkhu think to trouble himself, another or both at that moment?’ ‘No, venerable sir, he does not.’ ‘Jeevaka, isn’t this bhikkhu partaking this food without a blemish?’ ‘He is, venerable sir I have heard, that Brahma abides, in loving kindness. I witness it in the Blessed One.

The Blessed One abides in loving kindness.’ ‘Jeevaka, the Thus Gone One has dispelled that greed, hate and delusion, pulled it out with the roots, made palm stumps and made them not to grow again. If you say it, on account of that, I allow it.’ ‘Venerable sir, I say it, on account of that.’ ‘Jeevaka, the bhikkhu abides supported on a certain village or hamlet. He abides pervading one direction with thoughts of compassion....With thoughts of intrinsic joy...With equanimity and also the second, third, fourth, above, below and across, in all circumstances, for all purposes, towards all, equanimity grown great and developed limitlessly without anger. Then a certain householder or the son of a householder approaches him and invites him for the next day’s meal. If the bhikkhu desires he accepts the invitation. At the end of that night, putting on robes and taking bowl and robes, he approaches the house of that householder or the son of the householder and sits on the prepared seat. That householder serves the bhikkhu with the nourishing food with his own hands. It doesn’t occur to him, this householder should offer me nourishing food in the future too. He partakes that morsel food, not enslaved, not swooned, and without a guilt, wisely reflecting the danger. Jeevaka, does this bhikkhu think to trouble himself, another, or trouble both at that moment?’ ‘No, venerable sir, he does not.’ ‘Jeevaka, doesn’t this bhikkhu partake this food without a blemish?’ ‘Venerable sir, he partakes food without a blemish. I have heard, that Brahma abides in equanimity. I witness it, in the Blessed One. The Blessed One, abides in equanimity.’ ‘Jeevaka, the Thus Gone One is not troubled, is detached, and not averse to greed, hate and delusion (* 1), pulled it out with the roots, made palm stumps and made not to grow again. If it is said on account of that, I allow it.’ ‘Venerable sir, I say it, on account of that.’

‘Jeevaka, who ever destroys living things on account of the Thus Gone One or the disciples of the Thus Gone One, accumulate much demerit on five instances: If he said, go bring that living thing of such name. In this first instance he accumulates much demerit. If that living thing is pulled along, tied, with pain at the throat, feeling displeased and unpleasant (* 2). In this second instance he accumulates much demerit. If it was said, go kill that animal. In this third instance he accumulates much demerit..When killing if that animal feels displeased and unpleasant (* 2), in this fourth instance he accumulates, much demerit. When the Thus Gone One or a disciple of the Thus Gone tastes that unsuitabale food (* 2). In this fifth instance he accumulates much demerit. Jeevaka, if anyone destroys the life of a living thing on account of the Thus Gone One or a disciple of the Thus Gone One, he accumulates much demerit on these five instances.’ When this was said Jeevaka the

foster son of the prince said; ‘Wonderful venerable sir, the bhikkhus partake suitable faultless food. Now I understand venerable sir. It is as though something overturned was reinstated. Something covered was made manifest. As though the path was told to someone who had lost his way. As though an oil lamp was lighted, for those who have sight to see forms. In various ways the Teaching is explained. Now I take refuge in the Blessed One, in the Teaching and the Community of bhikkhus. May I be remembered as one who has taken refuge from today until life lasts.

Notes:

1. The Thus Gone One is not troubled, is detached, and not averse to greed hate and delusion.’yena kho Jeevaka raagena yena dosena yena mohena vihesavaa assa,arativaa assa pa.tighavaa assa so raago so doso so moho tathaagatassa pahino ucchinnamuulo taalavatthukato anabhaavakato aayati.m anuppaadadhammo‘ When equanimity is developed, that person’s nature is such, that he is not troubled, is detached and not averse to greed, hate and delusion.

2. The Blessed One shows five instances when it is demerit to offer meat to the bhikkhu. Those are when it is seen, heard, or known, that such and such an animal is killed. When it is ordered, kill this animal. When seen it, being pulled along to be killed. When seen it going along sad and unpleasant, and when the Thus Gone One or a disciple of the Thus Gone One tastes the unsuitable food. If we understand this correctly, it is feelings which matter.The Blessed One’s Teaching is completely based on feelings. Unpleasantness-‘dukkha’ is a feeling, and it is for its cessation that the Teaching is proclaimed..

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