

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

To the King's son Abhaya (Abhayaraajakumaarasutta)

I heard thus.

At One time the Blessed One was living in the squirrels' sanctuary in the bamboo grove in Rajagaha. Then the king's son Abhaya approached Niganthanataputta worshipped and sat on a side. Niganthanataputta said to the king's son: "Come! Prince, arouse a dispute with the recluse Gotama. When you argue with a person like the recluse Gotama, so powerful and so majestic, your fame will spread." "Venerable sir, how could I arouse a dispute with the recluse Gotama, so powerful and so majestic?" "Come prince, approach the recluse Gotama and ask. Venerable sir, does the Thus Gone One say, such words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others?" When asked thus if, the recluse Gotama replies. "Yes, prince, the Thus Gone One, says words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others." Then you should say. "Venerable sir, what is the difference between you and the ordinary one? The ordinary one says words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others." If he says, "Prince, the Thus Gone One does not say words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others." Then you should say. "Venerable sir, why did you say these words to Devadadtta? Devadatta is in loss, in hell in much difficulty, till the end of the world cycle? On account of those words Devadatta was displeased." When this forked question, is asked, he would not be able to swallow it or spit it out. A man with an iron ring stuck in the throat would not be able to swallow or spit it out. In the same manner when this forked question is asked, he would not be able to swallow it or spit it out.'

Prince Abhaya agreed with the words of Niganthanataputta, got up from his seat, worshipped, circumambulated Niganthanataputta and approached the Blessed One. Worshipping the Blessed One he sat on a side. The prince considered the time, and thought it is not the proper time to arouse a dispute with the Blessed One. He thought, I will invite the Blessed One for tomorrow's meal and arouse the dispute at home. He said. 'May the Blessed One, accept tomorrow's meal with three others.' The Blessed One accepted in silence and the prince knowing that the Blessed One had

accepted the invitation, got up from his seat worshipped, circumambulated the Blessed One and went away. The Blessed One at the end of that night, putting on robes in the morning, taking bowl and robes approached the dwelling of the prince, and sat on the prepared seat. Prince Abhaya with his own hands served the nourishing eatables and drinks, and after the meal was over, took a low seat and sat on a side

Prince Abhaya then, said to the Blessed. ‘One.Venerable sir, does the Thus Gone One say words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others?’ ‘Prince, in certain respects I do not’.’Venerable sir we heard this from the nigantas’. ‘Prince, why do you say, we heard this from the nigantas?’ ‘Here venerable sir, I approached Niganthanaataputta worshipped him and sat on a side. Then Niganthanaataputta said to me. Come prince, approach the recluse Gotama and ask. Venerable sir, does the Thus Gone One say, words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others? When asked thus if the recluse Gotama replies. The Thus Gone One says words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others. Then you say. If that is so venerable sir, what is the difference between you and the ordinary one? The ordinary one says words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others. If he says, Prince, the Thus Gone One does not say words that are disagreeable and distasteful to others. Ask him, venerable sir, why did you say these words to Devadatta? Devadatta is in loss, in hell, in much difficulty till the end of the world cycle. On account of those words Devadatta was displeased. When this forked question is asked, he would not be able to swallow it or spit it out. Like a man with an iron ring stuck in the throat would not be able to swallow or spit it out. In the same manner when this forked question is asked, he would not be able to swallow it or spit it out’.

At that time a baby boy, a toddler was seated on the lap of prince Abhaya, the Blessed One said.‘Prince, on account of some negligence of yours or the nurse, if this baby swallows a piece of stick or a stone, what would you do?’ ‘Venerable sir, I will pull it out. If I could not take it out quickly, taking hold of the head with the left hand, would pull it out with the finger of the right hand, even while blood is spilt. What is the reason? Venerable sir, there is my compassion for the baby’.

‘Prince, in the same manner, when the Thus Gone One knows that words are not true, not conducive to good, and are disagreeable and distasteful to others, the Thus Gone One does not say those words.

When the Thus Gone One knows that words are not true, not conducive to good, disagreeable and distasteful to others, the Thus Gone One does not say those words. When the Thus Gone One knows that the words are true, are conducive to good, disagreeable and distasteful to others, the Thus Gone One waits for the right time to explain those words. When the Thus Gone one knows that the words are true, conducive to good, agreeable and tasteful to others, the Thus Gone One does not say those words. When the Thus Gone One knows that the words are true, not conducive to good, agreeable and tasteful to others, the Thus one does not say those words. When the Thus Gone One knows that the words are true conducive to good, agreeable and tasteful to others the Thus Gone One waits for the right time to explain those words. What is the reason: Prince there is compassion for beings in the Thus Gone One’.

‘Venerable sir, wise, warriors, or brahmins, or householders, or recluses concoct a question, approach the Thus Gone One and question him. Venerable sir, does the Blessed One, know before hand, they would approach me and ask these questions? Does it occur to the Thus Gone One, when asked thus I will reply thus? Or does the reply at that moment occur to the Thus Gone One?’ ‘Then prince, I will ask a question from you on this, you may reply, as it pleases you. Prince, are you clever about the large and small parts of a chariot?’ ‘Yes, venerable sir, I’m clever in the large and small parts of a chariot. Prince, if someone approaches you and asks, about the large and small parts of the chariot, would you before hand know these people will approach me and ask about these parts of the chariot, and when asked this and other thing I will reply thus and thus?’ ‘Venerable sir, I’m a charioteer and I’m clever in the large and small parts of the chariot. When asked the reply occurs to me that moment.’ ‘Prince, in the same manner, these wise, warriors, brahmins, householders, and recluses concoct a question and approach the Thus Gone One, and question him. The answer occurs to the Thus Gone One instantly. What is the reason?: The element of the Teaching is thoroughly known to the Thus Gone One. So the reply to the question occurs to the Thus Gone One that moment.’

When this was said, prince Abhaya said thus to the Blessed One. ‘Now I understand it, venerable sir. It is as though something over turned is reinstated. Something covered is made manifest. As though the path was told to someone who had lost his way. It is like an oil lamp lighted in the dark,

for those who have sight to see forms. In various ways the Blessed One has explained the Teaching. Now I take refuge in the Blessed One, in the Teaching and the Community of bhikkhus. May I be remembered as a lay disciple who has taken refuge from today until life lasts.

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