

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

The Discourse at Catuma (Caatumasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was living in the Aamalaki forest in Catuma. At that time about five hundred bhikkhus had come to Catuma headed by venerable Saariputta and venerable Moggallana to see the Blessed One. While exchanging friendly greetings, arranging beddings, putting away bowls and robes, they made much noise. The Blessed One addressed venerable Ananda: ‘Ananda, who are those making such a noise, like fishermen hauling a catch of fish’ ‘Venerable sir, about five hundred bhikkhus, headed by Sariputta and Moggallana have arrived in Catuma to see the Blessed One. They exchanging friendly greetings with the resident bhikkhus, while arranging beddings, putting away bowls and robes are making much noise. Then Ananda, call those bhikkhus in my words’.. Venerable Ananda agreed, approached those bhikkhus and said. ‘Venerable ones, the Teacher calls you.’. Then those bhikkhus, agreeing approached the Blessed One, worshipped and sat on a side. The Blessed One addressed those bhikkhus. ‘Bhikkhus, why do you make such a big noise? It’s like fishermen hauling a catch of fish.’ ‘Venerable sir, about five hundred bhikkhus, headed by Sariputta and Moggallana have arrived in Catuma to see the Blessed One. Exchanging friendly greetings, with the the resident bhikkhus, arranging beddings, putting away bowls and robes they are making much noise’. ‘Go! Bhikkhus, I turn you away, you should not stay close to me’. Those bhikkhus, agreed, worshipped the Blessed One circumambulated the Blessed One and taking their bowls and robes left the presence of the Blessed One.

At that time the Sakyas of Catuma had assembled in the assembly hall for some matter. The Sakyas of Catuma saw the bhikkhus going away in the distance, approaching them said thus: ‘Venerable Ones, why do you go away?’ ‘The Blessed One has turned out the Community of bhikkhus’. Then venerable ones wait a moment, perhaps I would be able to win over the Blessed One’ Then those bhikkhus listened to the words of the Sakyas of Catuma and waited. The Sakyas of Catuma

approached the Blessed One worshipped the Blessed One and sitting on a side said thus: ‘Let, the Blessed One take pleasure in the Community of bhikkhus. May, the Blessed One welcome, the community of bhikkhus, As the Blessed One showed compassion to the community in the past, let compassion be shown now too. Venerable sir, here, there are new bhikkhus, those gone forth recently. If they do not get a chance to see the Blessed One, they would change their minds. Like small plants that die in want of water. Venerable sir, if these bhikkhus recently come to the dispensation do not get a chance to see the Blessed One they would change their minds. Like the calf that would be disturbed not seeing the mother. Venerable sir, in the same manner if these bhikkhus recently come to the dispensation do not get a chance to see the Blessed One they would change their minds. May the Blessed One take pleasure in the Community of bhikkhus. May the Blessed One welcome the community of bhikkhus, As the Blessed One showed compassion to the community in the past, let there be compassion now too.’

Then Brahma Sahampati knowing the Blessed One’s thoughts, as a strong man would stretch his bent arm, or bend his stretched arm in that manner disappearing from the world of Brahma appeared before the Blessed One. Brahma Sahamapathy arranging his shawl on one shoulder and clasping hands towards the Blessed One said ‘Let the Blessed One take pleasure in the Community of bhikkhus. May the Blessed One welcome the community of bhikkhus, As the Blessed One showed compassion to the community in the past, let compassion be shown now too. Venerable sir, here, there are new bhikkhus, those gone forth recently. If they do not get a chance to see the Blessed One, they would change their minds, like small plants that die in want of water. Venerable sir, if these bhikkhus recently come to the dispensation do not get a chance to see the Blessed One they would change their minds. Like the calf that would be disturbed not seeing the mother. Venerable sir, in the same manner if these bhikkhus recently come to the dispensation do not get a chance to see the Blessed One they would change their minds. Let the Blessed One take pleasure in the Community of bhikkhus. May the Blessed One welcome the community of bhikkhus, As the Blessed One showed compassion to the community in the past, let compassion be shown now too.’

The Sakyas of Catuma and Brahma Sahampati could win over the Blessed One with the comparison of the plants and the calf. Then venerable Mahamoggallana addressed the bhikkhus: 'Friends, get up, take your bowls and robes, it was possible for the Sakyas of catuma and Brahma Sahampati to win over the Blessed One with the comparison of the plants and the calf'. Those bhikkhus agreeing got up from their seats and taking bowls and robes, approached the Blessed One, worshipped and sat on a side. Then the Blessed One spoke to venerable Sariputta. 'Sariputta, when I turned away the Community of bhikkhus, what occurred to you?' 'Venerable sir, it occurred to me. The Blessed One will abide in pleasantness here and now, unconcerned, I too will abide in pleasantness here and now, unconcerned. Come! Sariputta, you should not arouse such a thought in the future' Then the Blessed One addressed venerable Mahamoggallana: 'Moggallana, when I turned away the Community of bhikkhus, what occurred to you?'. 'Venerable sir, it occurred to me thus: The Blessed One will abide in pleasantness here and now unconcerned, I and venerable Sariputta will lead the Community of bhikkhus.' 'Good! Moggallana, either I or Sariputta and Moggallana should lead the Community of bhikkhus'.

Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus: 'Bhikkhus, four fears should be expected by one descending to water: What four? Fear of, waves, crocodiles, whirl pools and alligators. Bhikkhus, these four fears should be expected by one entering water. In the same manner four fears should be expected by a person leaving the household to become a homeless. What four?. The fear of waves, fear of crocodiles, fear of whirlpools and fear of alligators.

Bhikkhus, what is the fear of waves? Bhikkhus, a certain son of a clansman out of faith goes forth from a household. He becomes a homeless thinking am overcome by birth, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. There's only a few who could declare the complete ending of this unpleasantness. The co-associates in the holy life, advise him. You should go forward like this, turn and go like this, Look on, like this and look this and other side like this. Thus you should bend your limbs and stretch you limbs. Thus you should bear the three robes and bowl. Then it occurs to him: When I was a householder, I advised others, here I have to abide by the advice of

those who are like my sons and grand sons. Then he gives up robes and becomes a layman, out of fear for waves, it is said. Bhikkhus, fear of waves is a synonymn for anger and aversion.

Bhikkhus, what is the fear of crocodiles?.Bhikkhus, a certain son of a clansman out of faith goes forth from a household. He becomes a homeless thinking, I'm overcome by birth, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. There are only a few who could declare the complete ending of this unpleasantness. The co-associates in the holy life, advise him. You should eat this, should not eat this. You should partake thus, not partake thus, You should taste thus and not taste thus. You should drink thus, and not drink thus. You should drink the suitable and avoid the unsuitable. Eat, partake and taste the suitable and avoid the unsuitable. You should eat and partake at the right time, avoid eating food at untimely hours. Then it occurs to him. When I was a householder, I ate what I liked, and not what I disliked, Partook what I liked and not what I disliked. Drank what I liked and not what I disliked. I ate, partook, tasted and drank the suitable and the unsuitable. I partook, tasted and drank at timely hours and at untimely hours. Householders offer us nourishing food and drinks out of faith during the day time, when it is not the correct time. I think it is a restriction for the mouth. Then he gives up robes and becomes a layman. He gives up robes and becomes a layman, out of fear for crocodiles it is said. Crocodiles is asynonymn for, greed for food.

Bhikkhus, what is the fear for whirl pools? Bhikkhus, a certain son of a clansman out of faith goes forth from a household and becomes a homeless thinking I'm overcome by birth, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. He thinks there's only a few who could declare the complete ending of this unpleasantness. He gone forth thus, putting on robes in the morning, takes bowl and robes and goes the alms round, in the village or hamlet controlled in body and speech, mindfulness not established and mental faculties not protected. In the village he sees a householder or the son of a householder partaking the five strands of sensual pleasures, possessed and provided with them. Then it occurs to him, when I was a householder, I too partook these five strands of sensual pleasures, possessed and provided. I have wealth in my clan, to enjoy these sensual pleasures. I could do merit, too. Then he gives up robes and becomes a layman. He gives up robes and becomes

a layman out of fear for whirlpools, it is said. Bhikkhus, fear for whirlpool is a synonym for, the five strands of sensual pleasures.

Bhikkhus, what is the fear for alligators? .Bhikkhus, a certain son of a clansman out of faith goes forth from a household. He becomes a homeless thinking I'm overcome by birth, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. There are only a few who could declare the complete ending of this unpleasantness. He gone forth thus, putting on robes in the morning, taking bowl and robes goes the alms round, in the village or hamlet controlled in body and speech, mindfulness not established and mental faculties not protected. In the village he sees a woman not well covered and dressed. Seeing her in that manner, greed assails his mind and with a mind assailed by greed he gives up robes and becomes a layman. He gives up robes and becomes a layman out of fear for alligators. Bhikkhus, fear for alligators is a synonym for women.

Bhikkhus, these are the four fears, that should be expected by a certain person who goes forth as a homeless, in this dispensation of the Discipline.

The Blessed One said thus and those bhikkhus delighted in the words of the Blessed One.

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