

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

To the Brahmin Sela (Selasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was touring the country of Anguttaraapa with a large community of bhikkhus, about one thousand two hundred and fifty and entered a hamlet named Aapana. The matted hair ascetic Keniya heard “The good recluse Gotama, son of the Saakyas touring the country of Anguttaraapa with a large community of bhikkhus, about one thousand two hundred and fifty bhikkhus have come to the hamlet Aapana. Of him, fame has spread, he is blessed, all knowing, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well gone, knows of the worlds, is incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, Teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed. He preaches to the world together with its gods Maaras, Brahmaas, the community of recluses and brahmins and gods and men, that Teaching by himself known and realized. That Teaching is good at the beginning, in the middle and the end. Is full of meaning even in the letter and it explains the complete and pure holy life. It is good to see such worthy ones.”

Then the matted hair ascetic Keniya approached the Blessed One, exchanged friendly greetings and sat on a side. The Blessed One addressed the matted hair ascetic instructing, advising inciting and making his heart light. The matted hair ascetic Keniya, instructed, advised, incited and made light hearted by the Blessed One said thus:”May the Blessed One accept tomorrow’s meal from me together with the community of bhikkhus”. When this was said the Blessed One said: “O! Keniya, the community of bhikkhus is too large about one thousand two hundred and fifty, are the brahmins pleased about this. For the second time Keniya said: “O! Gotama, even if there are one thousand two hundred and fiftybhikkhus, the brahmins are pleased. May the Blessed One accept tomorrow’s meal from me together with the community of bhikkhus.” For the second time the Blessed One said:”O! keniya, there are about one thousand two hundred and fifty bhikkhus, are the brahmins pleased about this?” For the third time Keniya said: “O! Gotama, whatever the number of bhikkhus,

even if, one thousand two hundred and fifty bhikkhus, the brahmins are pleased, may the Blessed One accept tomorrow's meal from me, together with the community of bhikkhus." The Blessed One accepted in silence.

Then Keniya the matted hair ascetic knew that the Blessed One had accepted, got up from his seat, went to his hermitage, addressed his friends and blood relations: "Good sirs, listen, I have invited the recluse Gotama for tomorrow's meal together with the community of bhikkhus, whatever work there is to be done, do them for me." They accepted, Keniya the matted hair ascetic's request and some of them dug furnaces, others axed wood. Some washed vessels, placed water vessels and some arranged seats. The matted hair ascetic Keniya himself arranged the circular hall .

At that time the brahmin Sela lived in Aapana perfect in the three Vedas, learned in the rites and rituals as officiating priest, learned in the phonology and etymology of words and the fivefold history in words and grammar, and learned in tracing the marks of a Great Man. And he taught these to three hundred young men orally.

At that time Keniya the matted hair ascetic was friendly with the brahmin Sela. The brahmin Sela accompanied by the three hundred young men, walking and wandering for exercise turned towards the hermitage of the matted hair ascetic. He saw the matted hair ascetics at work in the hermitage of Keniya, some digging furnaces, others axing wood to light fire, washing vessels, placing water vessels others arranging seats and Keniya the matted hair ascetic himself arranging the circular hall. He said to Keniya. "Keniya, will there be a woman brought here, or one given away, or will there be a great sacrifice, or is Seniya Bimbisara the king of Magadha invited for tomorrow's meal together with his army?." "Sela, to me there would not be, a woman brought nor given away, Seniya Bimbisara the king of Magadha is not invited for tomorrow's meal together with the army. Yet there is a great sacrifice for me the recluse Gotama son of the Saakyas, who has gone forth from the Saakya clan is touring Anguttaraapa with a large community of bhikkhus has come to Aapana. Of him such fame has spread, he is blessed, worthy, all knowing, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well gone, knows the worlds, the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, teacher of gods and men,

enlightened and blessed. I have invited him for tomorrow's meal together with the community of bhikkhus."

"Does good Keniya say enlightened" "Good Sela, I say enlightened". "Does, good Keniya say enlightened" "Good Sela, I say enlightened." Then it occurred to the brahmin Sela. "Even the sound 'Enlightened' is rare in the world. The sacred sayings handed down state thirty two marks of a Great Man, endowed with which there are only two courses of action for the Great Man, not another. If he leads a household life he becomes a universal monarch, a righteous king who would rule the four quarters endowed with the seven jewels. They are the jewels of the, wheel, elephant, horse, gem, woman, householder and advisor. He has more than a thousand sons, clever heroic figures who would defeat foreign armies. They would rule the country surrounded by the ocean righteously without weapons and punishments. If he leaves the household and goes forth, becomes worthy, all knowing rolls the veil away from the world..

"Good Keniya, where does the Enlightened One, worthy and all knowing live now" Keniya the matted hair ascetic stretched out his right hand and said "There! in the deep green forest".

Then the brahmin Sela with the three hundred young men approached the Blessed One, while going he addressed the young men. "Good sirs, come with little noise raising one foot after the other. Blessed Ones are far from noise and live alone like lions. While I am talking with the recluse Gotama, do not arouse conversations among yourselves and enter when our conversation ends."

Then the brahmin Sela approached the Blessed One, exchanged friendly greetings sat on a side, and examined the thirty two marks of a Great Man. He saw most of the marks of a Great Man, except two. Doubting whether the pudendum was encased and whether the tongue was large enough to cover the face, he was dissatisfied. Then it occurred to the Blessed One. The brahmin Sela sees most of the marks of a Great Man except two, he has doubts, as to whether the pudendum is encased and the tongue is large enough to cover the face. Then the Blessed One performed a psychic exercise so

that the brahmin Sela could see the Blessed One's pudendum encased and the large tongue. The Blessed One pulled out his tongue and with it, touched both ear lobes, nostrils and the whole forehead, and covered up the whole face with it.

Then it occurred to the brahmin Ssla, indeed the recluse Gotama is endowed with all the thirty two marks of a Great Man, yet we do not know whether he is enlightened. I have heard it said by learned aged brahmins, that Great Men when praised disclose what they are, whether they are worthy and enlightened What if I eulogize the recluse Gotama with meaningful verses and so he eulogized the Blessed One saying these verses.

548. "O! Blessed One, you are handsome, is pleasant,

Is well born, lovely to look at, has a golden hue, and strong white teeth..

549. To those born well, there are marks

All the marks of a Great Man are evident on your body.

550. You have pleasant eyes a beautiful mouth, a straight and majestic body

In the midst of the community you shine like the sun.

551. The bhikkhu with good looks is like a statue of gold

What is the use of your recluse-ship when so handsome?.

552. You should be a universal monarch, the leading charioteer

Winning over the four quarters, should be the monarch of Jambudviipa.

553. Should have warrior subordinate kings attached to you,

O! Gotama, king of kings, win over the humans and rule”.

554. The Blessed One said:

“Sela, I am the righteous king, incomparable,
Righteously I turn the wheel, not ever to be stopped.” ..

555. The brahmin Sela said:

“ Acknowledges, complete Knowledge, and incomparable righteous rulership
Says will turn the wheel of the Teaching righteously.

556. Who are the good one’s generals, the disciples following the Teacher,
For the wheel of the Teaching to roll on, who would roll it afterwards.”

557. The Blessed One said:

“Sela, this incomparable wheel of righteousness rolled by me,
Will be rolled afterwards by Saariputta, born after the Thus Gone One.

558. Brahmin, I realized what should be realized, developed what should be developed.
Dispelled what should be dispelled, therefore I’m enlightened.”

559. The brahmin Sela said:

“O! Brahmin, put an end to my doubts, and release me.
The presence of an enlightened one is very rare.”

560. “That which is rare in the world has appeared.

The all enlightened one, the incomparable surgeon.

561. Become Mahaa Brahmaa have destroyed the army of Death,

Winning over, all enemies, abides happily without fear.”

562. “Good sirs listen to what the wise one says,

The surgeon, the great hero, roars in the forest like a lion

563. Become Mahaa Brahmaa have destroyed the army of Death

Seeing him who would not be pleased except those with low birth

564. Those that wish to follow me, do so, the others could go

Now I go forth in the noble wise one’s dispensation..”

565. “If you, sir, like the dispensation of the all enlightened one,

We too will go forth in the noble wise one’s dispensation.” .

566. “O! Blessed One, these three hundred brahmins with clasped hands,

Beg for the going forth in your dispensation.”

567. The Blessed One said:

“Sela, the holy life is well proclaimed, is here and now and not a matter of time,

Here the not deluded go forth and train diligently”

The brahmin Sela together with his following obtained the going forth, as homeless and the higher ordination in the dispensation of the Blessed One.

Keniya, the matted hair ascetic at the end of that night prepared plenty of nourishing eatables and drinks in his hermitage and informed the Blessed One: “It is time venerable sir, the food is ready.”

The Blessed One put on robes in the morning, taking bowl and robes approached the matted hair ascetic’s hermitage and sat on the prepared seats together with the community of bhikkhus. Then Keniya, the matted hair ascetic with his own hands served and satisfied the community of bhikkhus headed by the Enlightened One with the nourishing eatables and drinks. When the Blessed One had finished partaking the meal, and had put the bowl away, Keniya took a low seat, sat on a side and the Blessed One addressed the thanks giving with these verses.

568. “Of sacrifices the fire sacrifice is the chief,

Of Vedic hymns Saavitti is the foremost.

The king is chief for humans,

The ocean is chief for all rivers.

569. To the constellation the moon is chief, to give warmth the Sun is chief,

To those desiring merit the Community of bhikkhus is the chief.”

The Blessed One did the thanks giving with these verses, got up from his seat and went away.

Then venerable Sela and his following, alone, withdrawn from the crowd and secluded abode diligently for dispelling. Before long, for whatever purpose sons of clansmen rightfully go forth

from a household, that highest end of the holy life, he here and now knew, realized and abode. He knew, birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived to the end, what should be done, is done, there is nothing more to wish. Venerable Sela and his following became arahants. Then venerable Sela approached the Blessed One together with his following. Arranging the robe on one shoulder, clasping hands towards the Blessed One addressed the Blessed One in verses.

570. “Wise One, this is the eighth day, after we took your refuge.

Within seven nights we are tamed in your dispensation.

571. You are enlightened, Teacher, the sage who has overcome Death,

You crossed, destroying the dormant tendencies and crosses over this populace.

572. Endearments overcome have destroyed desires,

Is like a lion without seizures, fears big and small overcome.

573. Here stand the three hundred bhikkhus with clasped hands

Hero, we worship your feet, Great Men worship the Teacher.

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