

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in Sāvattihī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus." -- "Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Bhikkhus, be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things. out of compassion for you I have thought: 'How shall my disciples be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things?'" If you are my heirs in material things, not my heirs in Dhamma, you will be reproached thus: 'The Teacher's disciples lives as his heirs in material things, not as heirs in Dhamma'; and I will be reproached thus: 'The Teacher's disciples live as his heirs in material things, not as his heirs in Dhamma.'

"If you are my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things, you will not be reproached [as it will be said]: 'The Teacher's disciples live as his heirs in Dhamma, not as his heirs in material things'; and I will not be reproached [as it will be said]: 'The Teacher's disciples live as his heirs in Dhamma, not as his heirs in material things.' Therefore, bhikkhus, be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things. Out of compassion for you I have thought: 'How shall my disciples be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things?'

3. "Now bhikkhus, suppose that I had eaten, refused more food, had my fill, finished, had enough, had what I needed, and some almsfood was left over to be thrown away. Then two bhikkhus arrived hungry and weak, and I told them: 'Bhikkhus, I have eaten...had what I needed, but there is this almsfood of mine left over to be thrown away. Eat if you like; if you do not eat then I shall throw it away where there is no greenery or drop it into water where there is no life.' Then one bhikkhu thought: 'The Blessed One has eaten...had what he needed, but there is this almsfood of the Blessed One left over to be thrown away; if we do not eat it the Blessed One will throw it away...But this has been said by the Blessed One: "Bhikkhus, be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things." Now this almsfood is one of the material things. Suppose that instead of eating this almsfood I pass the night and day hungry and weak.' And instead of eating that almsfood he passed that night and day hungry and weak. Then the second bhikkhu thought: 'The Blessed One has eaten...had what he needed, but there is this almsfood of the Blessed One left over to be thrown away...Suppose that I eat this almsfood and pass the night and day neither hungry nor weak.' And after eating that almsfood he passed the night and day neither hungry nor weak. Now although that bhikkhu by eating that almsfood passed the night and day neither hungry nor weak, yet the first bhikkhu is more to be respected and commended by me. Why is that? Because that will for long conduce to his fewness of wishes, contentment, effacement, easy support, and arousal of energy. Therefore, bhikkhus, be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things. Out of compassion for you I have thought: 'How shall my disciples be my heirs in Dhamma, not my heirs in material things?'"

4. That is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Sublime One rose from his seat and went into his dwelling. Soon after he had left, the venerable Sāriputta addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Friends, bhikkhus.” -- “Friend,” they replied. The venerable Sāriputta said this:

5. “Friends, in what way do disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded not train in seclusion? And in what way do disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded train in seclusion?”

“Indeed, friend, we would come from far away to learn from the venerable Sāriputta the meaning of this statement. It would be good if the venerable Sāriputta would explain the meaning of this statement. Having heard it from him the bhikkhus will remember it.”

“Then friends, listen and attend closely to what I shall say.”

“Yes, friend,” the bhikkhus replied. The venerable Sāriputta said this:

6. “Friends, in what way do disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded not train in seclusion? Here disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded do not train in seclusion; they do not abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon; they are luxurious and careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion.

“In this the elder bhikkhus are to be blamed for three reasons. As disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded they do not train in seclusion: they are to be blamed for this first reason. They do not abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon: they are to be blamed for this second reason. They are luxurious and careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion: they are to be blamed for this third reason. The elder bhikkhus are to be blamed for these three reasons.

“In this the middle bhikkhus are to be blamed for three reasons. As disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded they do not train in seclusion: they are to be blamed for this first reason. They do not abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon: they are to be blamed for this second reason. They are luxurious and careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion: they are

to be blamed for this third reason. The middle bhikkhus are to be blamed for these three reasons.

“In this the new bhikkhus are to be blamed for three reasons. As disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded they do not train in seclusion: they are to be blamed for this first reason. They do not abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon: they are to be blamed for this second reason. They are luxurious and careless, leaders in backsliding, neglectful of seclusion: they are to be blamed for this third reason. The new bhikkhus are to be blamed for these three reasons.

“It is in this way that disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded do not train in seclusion.

7. “In what way, friends, do disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded train in seclusion? Here disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded train in seclusion; they abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon; they are not luxurious and careless, they are keen to avoid backsliding, and are leaders in seclusion.

“In this the elder bhikkhus are to be commended for three reasons. As disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded they train in seclusion: they are to be commended for this first reason. They abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon: they are to be commended for this second reason. They are not luxurious and careless; they are keen to avoid backsliding and are leaders in seclusion: they are to be commended for this third reason. The elder bhikkhus are to be commended for these three reasons.

“In this the middle bhikkhus are to be commended for three reasons. As disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded they train in seclusion: they are to be commended for this first reason. They abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon: they are to be commended for this second reason. They are not luxurious and careless; they are keen to avoid backsliding and are leaders in seclusion: they are to be commended for this third reason. The middle bhikkhus are to be commended for these three reasons.

“In this the new bhikkhus are to be commended for three reasons. As disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded they train in seclusion: they are to be commended for this first reason. They abandon what the Teacher tells them to abandon: they are to be commended for this second reason. They are not luxurious and careless; they are keen to avoid backsliding and are leaders

in seclusion: they are to be commended for this third reason. The new bhikkhus are to be commended for these three reasons.

“It is in this way that disciples of the Teacher who lives secluded train in seclusion.

8. “Friends, the evil herein is greed and hate. There is a Middle Way for the abandoning of greed and hate, giving vision, giving knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. And what is that Middle Way? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is the Middle Way giving vision, giving knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

9-15. “The evil herein is anger and resentment...contempt and insolence...envy and avarice...deceit and fraud...obstinacy and rivalry...conceit and arrogance...vanity and negligence. There is a Middle Way for the abandoning of vanity and negligence, giving vision, giving knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. And what is that Middle Way? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

This is the Middle Way giving vision, giving knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.”

That is what the venerable Sāriputta said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the venerable Sāriputta’s words.

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Majjhima Nikāya 3

Part One – The Root Fifty Discourses (Mūlapaṭṭhāsapāṭi)

The Division of the Discourse on the Root (Mūlapariyāyavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi