

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Sakyan country at Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha's Park.

2. Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī took a new pair of cloths and went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to him, she sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, this new pair of cloths has been spun by me, woven by my, especially for the Blessed One. Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept it from me out of compassion."

When this was said, the Blessed One told her: "Give it to the Sangha, Gotamī. When you give it to the Sangha, both I and the Sangha will be honored."

A second time and a third time she said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir,...accept it from me out of compassion."

A second time and a third time the Blessed One told her: "Give it to the Sangha, Gotamī. When you give it to the Sangha, both I and the Sangha will be honored."

3. Then the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept the new pair of cloths from Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has been very helpful to the Blessed One, venerable sir. As his mother's sister, she was his nurse, his foster mother, the one who gave him milk. She suckled the Blessed One when his own mother died. The Blessed One too has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, venerable sir. It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wine, liquor, and intoxicants, which are the basis of negligence. It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī possesses perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and that she possesses the virtues loved by noble ones. It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is free from doubt about suffering, about the origin of suffering, about the cessation of suffering, and about the way leading to the cessation of suffering. The Blessed One has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.

4. "That is so, Ānanda, that is so! When one person, owing to another, has gone for refuge to

the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal requisites.

“When one person, owing to another, has come to abstain from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wine, liquor, and intoxicants, which are the basis of negligence, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him...and medicinal requisites.

“When one person, owing to another, has come to possess perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and possesses the virtues loved by noble ones, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him...and medicinal requisites.

“When one person, owing to another, has become free from doubt about suffering, about the origin of suffering, about the cessation of suffering, and about the way leading to the cessation of suffering, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him...and medicinal requisites.

5. “There are fourteen kinds of personal offerings, Ānanda. One gives a gift to the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened; this is the first kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a paccekabuddha; this is the second kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to an arahant disciple of the Tathāgata; this is the third kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of arahantship; this is the fourth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a non-returner; this is the fifth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of non-return; this is the sixth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a once-returner; this is the seventh kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of once-return; this is the eighth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a stream-enterer; this is the ninth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry; this is the tenth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one outside [the Dispensation] who is free from lust for sensual pleasures; this is the eleventh kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a virtuous ordinary person; this is the twelfth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to an immoral ordinary person; this is the thirteenth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to an animal; this is the fourteenth kind of personal offering.

6. “Herein, Ānanda, by giving a gift to an animal, the offering may be expected to repay a hundredfold. By giving a gift to an immoral ordinary person, the offering may be expected to repay a thousandfold. By giving a gift to a virtuous ordinary person, the offering may be expected to repay a hundred-thousandfold. By giving a gift to one outside [the Dispensation] who is free from lust for sensual pleasures, the offering may be expected to repay a hundred-thousand times a hundred-thousandfold.

“By giving a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry, the offering may be expected to repay incalculably, immeasurably. What, then, should be said about giving a gift to a stream-enterer? What should be said about giving a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of once-return...to a once-returner...to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of non-return...to a non-returner... to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of arahantship...to an arahant...to a paccekabuddha? What should be said about giving a gift to a Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened?

7. “There are seven kinds of offerings made to the Sangha, Ānanda. One gives a gift to a Sangha of both [bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs] headed by the Buddha; this is the first kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift to a Sangha of both [bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs] after the Tathāgata has attained final Nibbāna; this is the second kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift to a Sangha of bhikkhus; this is the third kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift to a Sangha of bhikkhunīs; this is the fourth kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift, saying: ‘Appoint so many bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs for me from the Sangha’; this is the fifth kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift, saying: ‘Appoint so many bhikkhus for me from the Sangha’; this is the sixth kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift, saying: ‘Appoint so many bhikkhunīs for me from the Sangha’; this is the seventh kind of offering made to the Sangha.

8. “In future times, Ānanda, there will be members of the clan who are ‘yellow-necks,’ immoral, of evil character. People will give gifts to those immoral persons for the sake of the Sangha. Even then, I say, an offering made to the Sangha is incalculable, immeasurable. And I say that in no way is a gift to a person individually ever more fruitful than an offering made to the Sangha.

9. “There are, Ānanda, four kinds of purification of offering. What four? There is the offering that is purified by the giver, not by the receiver. There is the offering that is purified by the receiver, not by the giver. There is the offering that is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver. There is the offering that is purified both by the giver and the receiver.

10. “And how is the offering purified by the giver, not by the receiver? Here the giver is virtuous, of good character, and the receiver is immoral, of evil character. Thus the offering is purified by the giver, not by the receiver.

11. “And how is the offering purified by the receiver, not by the giver? Here the giver is immoral, of evil character, and the receiver is virtuous, of good character. Thus the offering is purified by the receiver, not by the giver.

12. “And how is the offering purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver? Here the giver is immoral, of evil character, and the receiver is immoral, of evil character. Thus the offering is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver.

13. “And how is the offering purified both by the giver and by the receiver? Here the giver is virtuous, of good character, and the receiver is virtuous, of good character. Thus the offering is purified both by the giver and by the receiver. These are the four kinds of purification of offering.”

14. That is what the Blessed One said. When the Sublime One had said that, the Teacher said further:

“When a virtuous person to an immoral person gives

With trusting heart a gift righteously obtained,

Placing faith that the fruit of action is great,

The giver’s virtue purifies the offering.

When an immoral person to a virtuous person gives

With untrusting heart a gift unrighteously obtained,

Nor places faith that the fruit of action is great,

The receiver's virtue purifies the offering.

When an immoral person to an immoral person gives

With untrusting heart a gift unrighteously obtained,

Nor places faith that the fruit of action is great,

Neither's virtue purifies the offering.

When a virtuous person to a virtuous person gives

With trusting heart a gift righteously obtained,

Placing faith that the fruit of action is great,

That gift, I say, will come to full fruition.

When a passionless person to a passionless person gives

With trusting heart a gift righteously obtained,

Placing faith that the fruit of action is great,

That gift, I say, is the best of worldly gifts.”

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Majjhima Nikāya 142

Part Three— The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipaṭṭi āsapāṭi)

The Division of Expositions (Vibhangavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

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