1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Kusinārā, in the Grove of Offerings. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Bhikkhus.” “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. “What do you think about me, bhikkhus? That the recluse Gotama teaches the Dhamma for the sake of robes? Or that the recluse Gotama teaches the Dhamma for the sake of almsfood? Or that the recluse Gotama teaches the Dhamma for the sake of a resting place? Or that the recluse Gotama teaches the Dhamma for the sake of some better state of being?”

“We do not think thus about the Blessed One: ‘The recluse Gotama teaches the Dhamma for the sake of robes, or for the sake of almsfood, or for the sake of a resting place, or for the sake of some better state of being.’”

“So, bhikkhus, you do not think thus about me: ‘The recluse Gotama teaches the Dhamma for the sake of robes…or for the sake of some better state of being.’ Then what do you think about me?”

“Venerable sir, we think thus about the Blessed One: ‘The Blessed One is compassionate and seeks our welfare; he teaches the Dhamma out of compassion.’”

“So, bhikkhus, you think thus about me: ‘The Blessed One is compassionate and seeks our welfare; he teaches the Dhamma out of compassion.’

3. “So, bhikkhus, these things that I have taught you after directly knowing them that is, the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right kinds of striving, the four bases for spiritual power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven enlightenment factors, the Noble Eightfold Path in these things you should all train in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing.

4. “While you are training in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, two bhikkhus

might make different assertions about the higher Dhamma.

5. “Now if you should think thus: ‘These venerable ones differ about both the meaning and the phrasing,’ then whichever bhikkhu you think is the more reasonable should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones differ about both the meaning and the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is difference about the meaning and difference about the phrasing; let them not fall into a dispute.’ Then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable of those who side together on the opposite part should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones differ about the meaning and the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is difference about the meaning and difference about the phrasing; let them not fall into a dispute.’ So what has been wrongly grasped should be borne in mind as wrongly grasped. Bearing in mind what has been wrongly grasped as wrongly grasped, what is Dhamma and what is Discipline should be expounded.

6. “Now if you should think thus: ‘These venerable ones differ about the meaning but agree about the phrasing,’ then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones differ about the meaning but agree about the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is difference about the meaning but agreement about the phrasing; let them not fall into a dispute.’ Then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable of those who side together on the opposite part should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones differ about the meaning but agree about the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is difference about the meaning but agreement about the phrasing; let them not fall into a dispute.’ So what has been wrongly grasped should be borne in mind as wrongly grasped and what has been rightly grasped should be borne in mind as rightly grasped. Bearing in mind what has been wrongly grasped as wrongly grasped, and bearing in mind what has been rightly grasped as rightly grasped, what is Dhamma and what is Discipline should be expounded.

7. “Now if you think thus: ‘These venerable ones agree about the meaning but differ about the phrasing,’ then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones agree about the meaning but differ about the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is agreement about the meaning but difference about the phrasing. But the phrasing is a mere trifle. Let the venerable ones not fall into a dispute over a mere trifle.’ Then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable of those who side together on the opposite part should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones agree about the meaning but differ about the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is agreement about the meaning but difference about the phrasing. But the phrasing is a mere trifle. Let the venerable ones not fall into a dispute over a mere trifle.’ So what has been rightly grasped should be borne

in mind as rightly grasped and what has been wrongly grasped should be borne in mind as wrongly grasped. Bearing in mind what has been rightly grasped as rightly grasped, and bearing in mind what has been wrongly grasped as wrongly grasped, what is Dhamma and what is Discipline should be expounded.

8. “Now if you should think thus: ‘These venerable ones agree about both the meaning and the phrasing,’ then whichever bhikkhu you think is the more reasonable should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones agree about both the meaning and the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is agreement about both the meaning and the phrasing; let the venerable ones not fall into a dispute.’ Then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable of those who side together on the opposite part should be approached and addressed thus: ‘The venerable ones agree about both the meaning and the phrasing. The venerable ones should know that it is for this reason that there is agreement about both the meaning and the phrasing; let the venerable ones not fall into a dispute.’ So what has been rightly grasped should be borne in mind as rightly grasped. Bearing in mind what has been rightly grasped as rightly grasped, what is Dhamma and what is Discipline should be expounded.

9. “While you are training in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, some bhikkhu might commit an offence or a transgression.

10. “Now, bhikkhus, you should not hurry to reprove him; rather, the person should be examined thus: ‘I shall not be troubled and the other person will not be hurt; for the other person is not given to anger and resentment, he is not firmly attached to his view and he relinquishes easily, and I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome.’ If such occurs to you, bhikkhus, it is proper to speak.

11. “Then it may occur to you, bhikkhus: ‘I shall not be troubled, but the other person will be hurt, for the other person is given to anger and resentment. However, he is not firmly attached to his view and he relinquishes easily, and I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome. It is a mere trifle that the other person will be hurt, but it is a much greater thing that I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome.’ If such occurs to you, bhikkhus, it is proper to speak.

12. “Then it may occur to you, bhikkhus: ‘I shall be troubled, but the other person will not be

hurt; for the other person is not given to anger and resentment, though he is firmly attached to his view and he relinquishes with difficulty; yet I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome. It is a mere trifle that I shall be troubled, but it is a much greater thing that I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome.' If such occurs to you, bhikkhus, it is proper to speak.

13. "Then it may occur to you, bhikkhus: 'I shall be troubled and the other person will be hurt; for the other person is given to anger and resentment, and he is firmly attached to his view and he relinquishes with difficulty; yet I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome. It is a mere trifle that I shall be troubled and the other person hurt, but it is a much greater thing that I can make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome.' If such occurs to you, bhikkhus, it is proper to speak.

14. "Then it may occur to you, bhikkhus: 'I shall be troubled and the other person will be hurt; for the other person is given to anger and resentment, and he is firmly attached to his view and he relinquishes with difficulty; and I cannot make that person emerge from the unwholesome and establish him in the wholesome.' One should not underrate equanimity towards such a person.

15. "While you are training in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, there might arise mutual verbal friction, insolence in views, mental annoyance, bitterness, and dejection. Then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable of those who side together on the one part should be approached and addressed thus: 'While we were training in concord, friend, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, there arose mutual verbal friction, insolence in views, mental annoyance, bitterness, and dejection. If the Recluse knew, would he censure that?' Answering rightly, the bhikkhu would answer thus: 'While we were training…If the Recluse knew, he would censure that.'

"But, friend, without abandoning that thing, can one realise Nibbāna?' Answering rightly, the bhikkhu would answer thus: "Friend, without abandoning that thing, one cannot realise Nibbāna.'

16. "Then whichever bhikkhu you think is the most reasonable of those who side together on the opposite part should be approached and addressed thus: 'While we were training in concord, friend, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, there arose mutual verbal friction, insolence in views, mental annoyance, bitterness, and dejection. If the Recluse knew, would he censure that?' Answering rightly, the bhikkhu would answer thus: 'While we were training…If the

Recluse knew, he would censure that.'

"But, friend, without abandoning that thing, can one realise Nibbāna?' Answering rightly, the bhikkhu would answer thus: "Friend, without abandoning that thing, one cannot realise Nibbāna.'

17. "If others should ask that bhikkhu thus: 'Was it the venerable one who made those bhikkhus emerge from the unwholesome and established them in the wholesome?' answering rightly, the bhikkhu would answer thus: 'Here, friends, I went to the Blessed One. The Blessed One taught me the Dhamma. Having heard that Dhamma, I spoke to those bhikkhus. The bhikkhus heard that Dhamma, and they emerged from the unwholesome and became established in the wholesome.' Answering thus, the bhikkhu neither exalts himself nor disparages others; he answers in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from his assertion."

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Majjhima Nikāya 103
Part Three– The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipa□□āsapā□i)
The Division at Devadaha (Devadahavagga)
Translated by Bhikkhu Ñā□amoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
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