

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

2. Then, when it was morning, the venerable Ānanda dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Sāvattī for alms. When he had wandered for alms in Sāvattī and had returned from his almsround, after his meal he went to the Eastern Park, to the Palace of Migāra's Mother, for the day's abiding.

3. Now on that occasion King Pasenadi of Kosala had mounted the elephant Ekapuṇḍarīka and was riding out from Sāvattī at midday. He saw the venerable Ānanda coming in the distance and asked the minister Sirivaḥḥa: "That is the venerable Ānanda, is it not?" "Yes, sire, that is the venerable Ānanda."

4. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala told a man: "Come, good man, go to the venerable Ānanda and pay homage in my name with your head at his feet, saying: 'Venerable sir, King Pasenadi of Kosala pays homage with his head at the venerable Ānanda's feet.' Then say this: 'Venerable sir, if the venerable Ānanda has no urgent business, perhaps the venerable Ānanda would wait a moment, out of compassion.'"

5. "Yes, sire," the man replied, and he went to the venerable Ānanda, and after paying homage to him, he stood at one side and said to the venerable Ānanda: "Venerable sir, King Pasenadi of Kosala pays homage with his head at the venerable Ānanda's feet and he says this: 'Venerable sir, if the venerable Ānanda has no urgent business, perhaps the venerable Ānanda would wait a moment, out of compassion.'"

6. The venerable Ānanda consented in silence. Then King Pasenadi went by elephant as far as the elephant could go, and then he dismounted and went to the venerable Ānanda on foot. After paying homage to him, he stood at one side and said to the venerable Ānanda: "If, venerable sir, the venerable Ānanda has no urgent business, it would be good if he would go to the bank of the river Aciravatī, out of compassion."

7. The venerable Ānanda consented in silence. He went to the bank of the river Aciravatī and

sat down at the root of a tree on a seat made ready. Then King Pasenadi went by elephant as far as the elephant could go, and then he dismounted and went to the venerable Ānanda on foot. After paying homage to him, he stood at one side and said to the venerable Ānanda: “Here, venerable sir, is an elephant rug. Let the venerable Ānanda be seated on it.”

“There is no need, great king. Sit down. I am sitting on my own mat.”

8. King Pasenadi of Kosala sat down on a seat made ready and said: “Venerable Ānanda, would the Blessed One behave with the body in such a way that he could be censured by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“No, great king, the Blessed One would not behave with the body in such a way that he could be censured by wise recluses and brahmins.”

“Would the Blessed One, venerable Ānanda, behave with speech...behave with the mind in such a way that he could be censured by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“No, great king, the Blessed One would not behave with speech...behave with the mind in such a way that he could be censured by wise recluses and brahmins.”

9. “It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvellous! For what we were unable to accomplish with a question has been accomplished by the venerable Ānanda with the answer to the question. We do not recognize anything of value in the praise and blame of others spoken by foolish ignorant persons, who speak without having investigated and evaluated; but we recognize as valuable the praise and blame of others spoken by wise, intelligent, and sagacious persons who speak after having investigated and evaluated.

10. “Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior is censured by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“Any bodily behavior that is unwholesome, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior is unwholesome?”

“Any bodily behavior that is blameworthy, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior is blameworthy?”

“Any bodily behavior that brings affliction, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior brings affliction?”

“Any bodily behavior that has painful results, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior has painful results?”

“Any bodily behavior, great king, that leads to one’s own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both, and on account of which unwholesome states increase and wholesome states diminish. Such bodily behavior is censured by wise recluses and brahmins, great king.”

11. “Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of verbal behavior is censured by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“Any verbal behavior that is unwholesome...(complete as in §10, substituting “verbal behavior” for “bodily behavior”)...”

12. “Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of mental behavior is censured by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“Any mental behavior that is unwholesome...(complete as in §10, substituting “mental behavior” for “bodily behavior”)...”

13. “Now, venerable Ānanda, does the Blessed One praise only the abandoning of all unwholesome states?”

“The Tathāgata, great king, has abandoned all unwholesome states and he possesses wholesome states.”

14. “Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior is uncensored by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“Any bodily behavior that is wholesome, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior is wholesome?”

“Any bodily behavior that is blameless, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior is blameless?”

“Any bodily behavior that does not bring affliction, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior does not bring affliction?”

“Any bodily behavior that has pleasant results, great king.”

“Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior has pleasant results?”

“Any bodily behavior, great king, that does not lead to one’s own affliction, or to the affliction of others, or to the affliction of both, and on account of which unwholesome states diminish and wholesome states increase. Such bodily behavior, great king, is uncensored by wise recluses and brahmins.”

15. “Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of verbal behavior is uncensored by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“Any verbal behavior that is wholesome...(complete as in §14, substituting “verbal behavior” for “bodily behavior”)...”

16. “Now, venerable Ānanda, what kind of mental behavior is uncensored by wise recluses and brahmins?”

“Any mental behavior that is wholesome...(complete as in §14, substituting “mental behavior” for “bodily behavior”)...”

17. “Now, venerable Ānanda, does the Blessed One praise only the undertaking of all wholesome states?”

“The Tathāgata, great king, has abandoned all unwholesome states and possesses wholesome states.”

18. “It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvellous how well that has been expressed by the venerable Ānanda! And we are satisfied and pleased by what has been so well expressed by him. Venerable sir, we are so satisfied and pleased with what has been so well expressed by the venerable Ānanda that if the elephant-treasure were allowed to him, we would give it to him; if the horse-treasure were allowed to him, we would give it to him; if the boon of a village were allowed to him, we would give it to him. But we know, venerable sir, that these are not allowable for the venerable Ānanda. But there is this cloak of mine, venerable sir, which was sent to me packed in a royal umbrella case by King Ajātasattu of Magadha, sixteen hands long and eight hands wide. Let the venerable Ānanda accept it out of compassion.”

“It is not necessary, great king. My triple robe is complete.”

19. “Venerable sir, this river Aciravatī has been seen both by the venerable Ānanda and by ourselves when a great cloud has rained heavily on the mountains; then this river Aciravatī overflows both its banks. So too, venerable sir, the venerable Ānanda can make a triple robe for himself out of this cloak, and he can share out his old triple robe among his companions in the holy life. In this way, our offering will overflow. Venerable sir, let the venerable Ānanda accept the cloak.”

20. The venerable Ānanda accepted the cloak. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala said: “And now, venerable sir, we depart. We are busy and have much to do.”

“You may go, great king, at your own convenience.”

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Ānanda’s words, rose from his seat, and after paying homage to the venerable Ānanda, keeping him on his right, he departed.

21. Then soon after he had left, the venerable Ānanda went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side, related to him his entire conversation with King Pasenadi of Kosala, and presented the cloak to the Blessed One.

22. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus: “It is a gain, bhikkhus, for King Pasenadi of Kosala, it is a great gain for King Pasenadi of Kosala that he has had the opportunity of seeing and paying respect to Ānanda.”

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

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Majjhima Nikāya 88

Part Two – The Middle Fifty Discourses (Majjhimapaṭṭhāsapāṭi)

The Division on Kings (Rājavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṃ amoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

Contributed by Chris Burke