AN 2.38 — AN 2.38

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

38. Once, while the Venerable Kaccāna was living at Gundā's Park, the brahmin Kandarāyana approached, and after exchanging friendly greetings with the Venerable Kaccāna, he sat to one side and said:

"Good Sir, Kaccāna, I have heard the following report about you:

'The recluse Kaccāna does not pay homage to, nor worships, nor respects elders; he does not offer a seat nor stands out of respect, nor bows down to brahmin elders, who are advanced in years, burdened by age, having come to the end of their lives.'

"And now, I see that this indeed is true! For, the recluse Kaccāna does not pay homage to, nor worships, nor respects brahmin elders, as I see him not offering a seat nor standing out of respect, nor bowing down to brahmin elders, who are advanced in years, burdened by age, having come to the end of their lives.

"Now, Good Sir, Kaccāna, is this truly an appropriate behavior to show to an elder?"

"Brahmin, The Blessed One who knows and sees, The Arahant, The Supremely and Perfectly Self-Awakened Buddha, has clearly shown who truly is 'an Elder,' as distinguished from the foolish, undeveloped and 'juvenile person.'

"Brahmin, even though someone may be biologically old and with age, such as eighty, ninety, or even a hundred years advanced since birth, and yet if he still continues enjoying and being gratified by the pursuit of sensual stimulation and their pleasures; still delighting in being surrounded by them; possessing a heart full of passions for them, consumed by sensual thoughts; still feverish in his desire to go after and seek out more sensual stimulation, then he is identified as no more than a foolish, undeveloped, and juvenile person, and not much else!

"On the other hand, brahmin, there might be someone who is biologically young and in the prime of his physical life, still quite young, with dark black hair and without a single grey hair in sight, being in the youthful first stage of life.

“Now, this younger person, albeit possessing far fewer years in age, if he does not continue enjoying nor being gratified by the pursuit of sensual stimulations and their pleasures; if he has given up delighting in being surrounded by them, with a heart that is empty of passions for them; no longer consumed by sensual thoughts; no more feverish and without the desire to go after and

seek out more sensual stimulations, then he is identified as a wise Elder, the one who is truly deserving of respect.”

When this was said, the brahmin Kandarāyana got up from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder and by approaching the Venerable Kaccāna, lowered his head and with it touched the feet of the Venerable Kaccāna, and said:

“Truly, Good Sirs! You indeed are the ‘Elders!’ For, you are the ones who stand strong and wise on the side of maturity and respect, while we, on the other hand, the ‘juvenile youngsters,’ stand on the side of immaturity, surely and most definitely owing you our deepest respect!

“It is excellent, Master Kaccāna! It is marvelous, Master Kaccāna!

“I feel as though Master Kaccāna has turned upright what was overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the correct path to someone who was lost, as though one were to bring a lamp into the darkness for all those with eyesight to see.

“Master Kaccāna has made The Dhamma clear to me in many ways!

“I now go for refuge to The Blessed One, to The Dhamma, and to The Sangha of Bhikkhus. May Master Kaccāna recognize me as a lay disciple, who has taken refuge in The Blessed One, from today until the end of life.”