AN 6.16 — Nakula’s Father

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 6.16

2. Warm-hearted

Nakula’s Father

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Bhaggas at Crocodile’s Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā’s Wood. Now at that time the householder Nakula’s father was sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then the housewife Nakula’s mother said to him:

“Householder, don’t pass away with concerns. Such concern is suffering, and it’s criticized by the Buddha. Householder, you might think: ‘When I’ve gone, the housewife Nakula’s mother won’t be able to provide for the children and keep up the household carpets.’ But you should not see it like this. I’m skilled at spinning cotton and carding wool. I’m able to provide for the children and keep up the household carpets. So householder, don’t pass away with concerns …

Householder, you might think: ‘When I’ve gone, the housewife Nakula’s mother will take another husband.’ But you should not see it like this. Both you and I know that we have remained chaste while at home for the past sixteen years. So householder, don’t pass away with concerns …

Householder, you might think: ‘When I’ve gone, the housewife Nakula’s mother won’t want to see the Buddha and his Saṅgha of mendicants.’ But you should not see it like this. When you’ve gone, I’ll want to see the Buddha and his mendicant Saṅgha even more. So householder, don’t pass away with concerns …

Householder, you might think: ‘The housewife Nakula’s mother won’t fulfill ethics.’ But you should not see it like this. I am one of those white-robed disciples of the Buddha who fulfills their ethics. For whoever doubts this, that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha is staying in the land of the Bhaggas at Crocodile’s Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā’s Wood. Let them approach him and ask. So householder, don’t pass away with concerns …

Householder, you might think: ‘The housewife Nakula’s mother doesn’t have internal serenity of heart.’ But you should not see it like this. I am one of those white-robed disciples of the Buddha who has internal serenity of heart. For whoever doubts this, that Blessed One is staying in the land of the Bhaggas at Crocodile’s Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā’s Wood. Let them approach him and ask. So householder, don’t pass away with concerns …

Householder, you might think: ‘The housewife Nakula’s mother has not found a footing, a firm footing, and solace in this teaching and training. She has not gone beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and gained assurance. And she’s not independent of others in the Teacher’s instructions.’ But you should not see it like this. I am one of those white-robed disciples of the Buddha who has found a footing, a firm footing, and solace in this teaching and training. I have gone beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and gained assurance. And I am independent of others in the Teacher’s instructions. For whoever doubts this, that Blessed One is staying in the land of the Bhaggas at Crocodile’s Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā’s Wood. Let them approach him and ask. So householder, don’t pass away with concerns. Such concern is suffering, and it’s criticized by the Buddha.”

And then, as Nakula’s mother was giving this advice to Nakula’s father, his illness died down on the spot. And that’s how Nakula’s father recovered from that illness. Soon after recovering, leaning on a staff he went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

“You’re fortunate, householder, so very fortunate, to have the housewife Nakula’s mother advise and instruct you out of kindness and sympathy.

She is one of those white-robed disciples of the Buddha who fulfills their ethics.

She is one of those white-robed disciples of the Buddha who has internal serenity of heart.

She is one of those white-robed disciples of the Buddha who has found a footing, a firm footing, and solace in this teaching and training. She has gone beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and gained assurance. And she is independent of others in the Teacher’s instructions.

You’re fortunate, householder, so very fortunate, to have the housewife Nakula’s mother advise and instruct you out of kindness and sympathy.”