AN 10.69 — AN 10:69 Topics of Conversation (1) | Kathāvatthu Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Topics of Conversation

Kathāvatthu Sutta (AN 10:69)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Now at that time a large number of monks, after the meal, on returning from their alms round, had gathered at the meeting hall and were engaged in many kinds of bestial topics of conversation: conversation about kings, robbers, & ministers of state; armies, alarms, & battles; food & drink; clothing, furniture, garlands, & scents; relatives; vehicles; villages, towns, cities, the countryside; women & heroes; the gossip of the street & the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity, the creation of the world & of the sea; talk of whether things exist or not.

Then the Blessed One, emerging from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to the meeting hall and, on arrival, sat down on a seat made ready. As he was sitting there, he addressed the monks: "For what topic of conversation are you gathered together here? In the midst of what topic of conversation have you been interrupted?"

"Just now, lord, after the meal, on returning from our alms round, we gathered at the meeting hall and got engaged in many kinds of bestial topics of conversation: conversation about kings, robbers, & ministers of state; armies, alarms, & battles; food & drink; clothing, furniture, garlands, & scents; relatives; vehicles; villages, towns, cities, the countryside; women & heroes; the gossip of the street & the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity, the creation of the world & of the sea; talk of whether things exist or not."

"It isn't right, monks, that sons of good families, on having gone forth out of faith from home to the homeless life, should get engaged in such topics of conversation, i.e., conversation about kings, robbers, & ministers of state… talk of whether things exist or not.

"There are these ten topics of (proper) conversation. Which ten? Talk on modesty, contentment, seclusion, non-entanglement, arousing persistence, virtue, concentration, discernment, release, and the knowledge & vision of release. These are the ten topics of conversation. If you were to engage repeatedly in these ten topics of conversation, you would outshine even the sun & moon, so mighty, so powerful—to say nothing of the wanderers of other sects."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 6:43; AN 8:30; AN 8:53; AN 9:1; Ud 2:2