Snp 2.14 — Dhammika Sutta — The Disciple Dhammika

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Text

Snp. 2.14

Dhammika Sutta

“The Disciple Dhammika”

I have personally heard this.

Once, The Blessed One was living at the monastery offered by Anāthapiṇḍika in Jeta's Park, in the City of Sāvatthī. It was during that time, that Dhammika, the male lay disciple, went and approached The Blessed One, joined by five hundred other lay male disciples, who all together bowed and paid their respects and then sat to one side. Then, Dhammika, the lay male disciple, began addressing The Blessed One with the following verses:

376. “I would like to ask You, O! Gautama of Immeasurable Wisdom: What needs to be done by the good and upright disciple, whether one has gone forth from home life into homelessness, or those of us who are lay disciples, who continue to live the household life?

377. “I ask, because You indeed are the One, who knows fully the proclivities and future destinies of both worldly beings and of Devas, and no one is equal to You in knowing directly the subtle nuances and trajectories that remain

hidden to all of us, for You are The Buddha Supreme, as many have declared!

378. “Having access to all knowledge, You have revealed to us the perfect Dhamma, which You continue teaching, out of compassion for all beings. You rolled back the veil of deceit from our hearts. You, being the All-Seeing Immaculate One, shine brightly in all of the worlds.

379. “Having heard that You are the Great Conqueror, the Nāga King Erāvana came to you for an audience, and after consulting with You, he left with a contented heart, happily consoled by You, as he exclaimed: ‘O! Most Excellent!’

380. “Similarly, Vessavana, the king of the Kuveras, also approached You to ask his questions, which You answered as well, and in hearing Your words, O! Wise One, he too became happy and contented.

381. “And whatever heretical views are held by those who engage in unending disputes, whether from the Ājivaka or the Jains, all miserably fail in trying to surpass You in wisdom, as they always fall short, much like someone who lazily stands in place but while wanting to catch up to another, who is sprinting at lightning speed.

382. “All these brahmins, who are after one thing: arguing to win in debates; as well as those very old brahmins among them, who are very advanced in years; not to mention those, who think of themselves as masterful debaters, sooner or later, all come to You, in order to obtain the true and hidden meanings, in what it is they seek.

383. “All this, because this Dhamma, being so well- proclaimed by You, is so versatile, while at the same time, it brings such happiness to the heart! Therefore, O! Foremost of Buddhas, please speak to us that which we have eagerly come to hear!

384. “All these Bhikkhus seated here together, and us lay disciples too, have all come wanting to listen to this Dhamma, which has been revealed to us by the Spotless One. So, let us now hear it again, for we eagerly await, much like the Devas longing to hear the words of Vāsava.”

385. The Blessed One then said:

“Now, listen closely, O! Bhikkhus and pay heed to what I shall say. I will instruct you on this Dhamma that comes to shake off all evil from your hearts. By remembering my words, let all those intelligent among you, on seeing the subtle meaning of what’s being said, realize the good that it brings, and diligently cultivate the wise behavior that is truly suitable, for one who has gone forth.

386. “The Bhikkhu should never wander around at the wrong time, as he looks for alms in the village at untimely hours. For doing so will only bring him much sorrow, because trouble finds the one who wanders around, after dark. And for that very reason, even the Buddhas avoid traveling at the wrong time.

387. “Beings are intoxicated and become mad by the visible forms they see, the sounds they hear, the flavors, fragrances, and physical touches they experience. By cutting your ties to

them, banishing out from your heart any leftover longing you had for these things, only then you should set out to the village with your alms bowl, to obtain your morning meal.

388. “The Bhikkhu, once having received his alms food in the proper way, should then return back, alone, and sit in a secluded place, as he quietly eats his meal, with mental faculties pulled and turned inwards, away from all outside influences, while remaining

collected and fully present with the body.

389. “And in talking with others, whether they are a lay disciple or some other Bhikkhu, the topic of conversation must always be about the most excellent Dhamma, and not on creating division among people, blaming, or slandering others.

390. “While some enjoy being involved in disputes or arguments, We, on the other hand, do not praise such motives, nor those who conduct themselves in such a manner, as their level of wisdom is next to none. They seek out problems, as they go from place to place, near and far, fully bound up by stupidity, which is their primary occupation.

391. “The truly wise and excellent disciple, once having received his daily morsels of food, while having a place to stay, a bed and a seat, along with water to wash himself and clean his robes from dirt, should be dedicating his time only to the Practice, by constantly reflecting on the Dhamma taught by The Blessed One.

392. “Therefore, the Bhikkhu, in using the morsels of food, his bed and seat, along with the water for washing himself and the robes, makes sure he does not become stained or tainted due to clinging while using these resources, much like the drop of rain never grabs on to the lotus leaf, and instead simply slides off, unspoiled, the moment it lands.

393. “Now, I shall instruct on the proper way of practice for householders, as a result of which, good lay disciples too, can benefit greatly indeed. However, burdened by the responsibilities of household life, the Bhikkhu’s practice cannot be carried out by lay disciples, and for that reason, the benefits of experiencing the highest fruits of the Holy Life are not fully accessible to them.

394. “Walking away from violence by not harming nor killing living beings anymore, nor inflaming or provoking others to do harm or to kill, they have now put aside aggression of all kinds and towards all beings in the world, be they weak or strong and powerful.

395. “Such a disciple should refrain from knowingly taking what is not freely given to him, no matter how small or insignificant. In the same manner, he does not incite nor encourage others to take what is not freely given either. Thus, he never takes anything that is not offered or given.

396. “Avoiding to live the non-celibate or unholy life is what the wise disciple does, just like an intelligent person avoids accidentally stepping into the pit of burning hot coals. Yet, in being a householder, when one is unable to observe the Holy Life in remaining celibate, then he should, at the very least,

never cheat on one’s own mate, nor covet or go to another’s mate or wife.

397. “While conversing in a public gathering or an assembly, or whether talking in private, the disciple should not speak any lies, nor should he incite others to speak any lies. Thus, one should not speak what is false.

398. “And if this Dhamma is dear to any householder, then he should give up, altogether, the consuming of any kinds of intoxicating drinks or any types of mind-altering substances, nor should he influence or tempt others to take any kinds of intoxicating drinks, nor promote the providing of any types of mind-altering substances to others.

399. “This, because once intoxicated or under the influence of these substances, one becomes heedless and transforms into a befuddled fool, whereby one starts committing evil deeds oneself, as well as instigating others to engage in similar behavior; actions which they would not have done, had they not consumed those mind-altering substances.

“So, completely reject such insanity, which brings with it much suffering, caused by delusion, irresponsibility, and the careless behavior of utter stupidity.

400. “Refrain from destroying living beings and harming life; abstain from taking what is not freely given; from the telling of lies, and the consumption of intoxicants and mind-altering substances. Live celibate by leading the Holy Life, abstaining from sex and stop taking food at night, and at the wrong time.

401. “Stop wearing flower garlands, and abstain from using fragrant perfumes; learn to sleep on a low bed, or on the ground, on a mat spread on the floor.

“This is what is referred to as living the Eight Precepts’ Day of Fasting, ‘the Uposatha,’ as declared by The Buddha, who has ended suffering.

402. “In this way, by living the Uposatha fully, be it on the fourteenth, the fifteenth, or the eighth day of the waxing aspect of the month, observe the Eight Precepts’ Day of Fasting. Also, observe them on that additional special day of the month, every two weeks, all with a happy mind and a contented heart.

403. “Then, by getting up early in those mornings of Uposatha, the wise and diligent lay disciple comes to serve the Sangha of Bhikkhus by distributing to them nourishing food and drinks, sharing with them whatever he can, while doing so with a happy mind and a joyful heart.

404. “Furthermore, the disciple also tenderly looks after his mother and father, while earning an honest living, being engaged in a wholesome profession or trade. And when the time comes, such a diligent householder, who in life, having observed the practice and lived in a wholesome manner, will reappear in the company of the brilliant and Self-Radiant Devas, the Gods of Sayampabha Heaven.”