Snp 3.1 — Pabbajjā Sutta — On Going Forth

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.
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Text

Snp. 3.1

Pabbajjā Sutta

“On Going Forth”

405. “I will speak here in praise of going forth, as per the example of The One with the Eye of Wisdom, and the method of investigation He applied, which led to His decision in Going Forth.

406. “‘Living a householder’s life is very constricting, full of troubles and meaningless disturbances all around; one is always surrounded by circumstances that contaminate, and with the constant possibility for more. However, to ‘go forth’ means living life in the freedom of wide-open space.’ After reflecting in this manner, He made the decision and just went forth.

407. “Once gone forth, He abstained from doing any evil actions. And by abandoning the use of evil speech, He left behind misconduct in words, as He purified Himself.

408. “The Buddha, thus came to the mountains of the Magadhan people in Rājagaha. There, He went out to collect His alms food, bestowed with His excellent noble marks, for people to see.

409. “While standing on the veranda in the topmost level of his palace, King Bimbisāra saw Him. Observing the excellent noble marks on Him, the King commented to his advisors:

410. “‘Look over there, Good sirs! Pay attention to this one! Observe how he is handsome and pure in his disposition! You can clearly see he is so different in his demeanor. Indeed, he is most certainly endowed with good behavior! See how he does not even gaze up, being fixed in looking ahead, a yoke’s length in front of him.

411. “‘His eyes are deliberately lowered, so mindful in his every gesture! This one is most definitely not from a low-class upbringing! Send out the royal scout-messengers to

carefully watch and report back to us, where this Bhikkhu is going to next.'

412. "With the royal messengers dispatched, they followed close behind, observing attentively to find out as to where he was going next, eager to learn where he was dwelling.

413. "Being fully restrained in His behavior, and with His sense doors closely guarded, He continued on His alms round, quietly, and without any interruption in between. And when His bowl was quickly filled with food, His heart kept its tranquility; remaining fully alert and mindful.

414. "Once having collected his alms food, the Sage left the village, and proceeded towards the Paṇḍava Cliffs. Once there, he reflected: 'this is the place where I will be staying.'

415. "Meanwhile, the scouts were following closely, and on seeing him settle at His new dwelling, they retreated to a

safe distance and remained there, while one of them went back to the palace and informed the king:

416. "'O! Great King, the Bhikkhu whom you singled out, is residing on the Eastern side of the Paṇḍava Cliffs. He is now seated there, unmoved, just like a tiger or a bull. He sits there among the cliffs, as if He was a lion, in front of his mountain cave!'

417. "On hearing the words of his messenger, the warrior king quickly set out on his royal chariot, in the direction of the Paṇḍava Cliffs.

418. "Having gone as far as the terrain would allow for the chariots to go, the king and his men dismounted, and proceeded on foot the rest of the way, until finally they reached Him, and there, the king sat down.

419. "Once seated, the king then exchanged friendly greetings with Him, after which he continued by saying:

420. "'You are so young and youthful, still in the first stage, in the prime of your life. You are uniquely regal in your demeanor, and handsome. Surely, you must be of the finest of royal Khattiya lineages.'

421. "'You must look splendid spearheading an entire royal army, encircled by troops of elephants. I am ready to offer you my treasure houses, with limitless pleasures, all for your personal enjoyment, just tell me of your birth lineage!'

422. "'O! King, to the north of here, there is a kingdom that stretches into the Himālayas. There lies the prosperous territory of

the Kosalan people, where limitless treasures and resources are also to be found.

423. “There, one will find the Lineage of the Sun: the Khattiyas of the Sākyan Clan. It is from that family lineage that I went forth, as I became homeless, leaving behind me all sensual pleasures.

424. “‘By recognizing the many dangers in the pursuit of sensual pleasures, in contrast, I found safety in the giving up of such pleasures. Now, I continue training in my striving, for that is where I find tranquility and appeasement for the heart.’”