Snp 3.1 — Going Forth

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Anthology of Discourses 3.1

Going Forth

“I shall extol going forth
with the example of the Clear-eyed One,
the course of inquiry that led to
his choice to go forth.
‘This life at home is cramped,
a realm of dirt.’
‘The life of one gone forth is like an open space.’
Seeing this, he went forth.
Having gone forth, he shunned
bad deeds of body.
And leaving verbal misconduct behind,
he purified his livelihood.
The Buddha went to Rājagaha,
the Mountainfold of the Magadhans.
He betook himself for alms,
replete with excellent marks.
Bimbisāra saw him
while standing atop his longhouse.
Noticing that he was endowed with marks,
he said the following:
‘Pay heed, sirs, to this one,

handsome, majestic, radiant;
accomplished in deportment,
he looks just a plough's length in front.
Eyes downcast, mindful,
unlike one from a low family.
Let the king's messengers run out,
and find where the mendicant will go.'
The messengers sent out
followed right behind, thinking
'Where will the mendicant go?
Where shall he find a place to stay?'
Wandering indiscriminately for alms,
sense doors guarded and well restrained,
aware and mindful,
his bowl was quickly filled.
Having wandered for alms,
the sage left the city.
He betook himself to Mount Paṇḍava,
thinking, 'Here is the place I shall stay.'
Seeing that he had arrived at a place to stay,
the messengers withdrew nearby,
but one of them returned
to inform the king.
'Great king, the mendicant
is on the east flank of Mount Paṇḍava.
There he sits, like a tiger or a bull,
like a lion in a mountain cave.'
Hearing the messenger's report,
the aristocrat set out

hurriedly in his fine chariot
toward Mount Paṇḍava.
He went as far as vehicles could go,
then dismounted from his chariot,
approached on foot,
and reaching him, drew near.
Seated, the king greeted him
and made polite conversation.
When the courtesies were over,
he said the following:
‘You are young, just a youth,
a lad in the prime of life.
You are endowed with beauty and stature,
like an aristocrat of good birth
in glory at the army’s head,
surrounded by a troop of elephants.
I offer you pleasures—enjoy them!
But please tell me of your birth.’
‘Up north, O King,
on the slopes of the Himalayas,
full of wealth and strength, lies the land
of one whose abode is among the Kosalans.
Their clan is named for the Sun,
they are Sakyans by birth.
I have gone forth from that family—
I do not yearn for sensual pleasure.
Seeing the danger in sensual pleasures,
seeing renunciation as sanctuary,
I shall go on to strive;

that is where my mind delights.’”