Snp 3.3 — Subhāsita Sutta — Well-Spoken Words

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.
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Text

Snp. 3.3

Subhāsita Sutta

“Well-Spoken Words”

I have personally heard this.

Once, The Blessed One was living in the monastery offered by the lay disciple Anāthapiṇḍika at Jeta's Park, in Sāvatthī. It was then that The Blessed One addressed the Bhikkhus, by saying:

“Bhikkhus!”

“Yes, Bhante!” replied the Bhikkhus.

“Bhikkhus, when the words you use possess within them four factors, they are then considered to be well-spoken indeed, faultless, well-uttered, and therefore, not to be criticized by the wise, as they would be blameless. What are these four?

“Here, the Bhikkhu speaks only well-spoken and appropriate words, and not what is unsuitable or poorly chosen for the occasion.

“He speaks virtuous words, and not those that lack any virtue.

“The Bhikkhu uses speech that is lovely, strewn with amiable words, and not the kind that is intended to harm, and with ugly words.

“He speaks words that are truth and not lies.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, when the words you use possess within them these four factors, they are then considered to be well-spoken indeed, faultless, well-uttered words, and therefore, not to be criticized by the wise, as they would be blameless.” This is what The

Blessed One said.

Then, The Blessed One uttered the following verses:

450. “The Noble Ones declare words that are well-spoken to be the most excellent, whereas avoiding non-virtuous words and only speaking those that are strewn with virtue, they considered as its second quality. Speaking lovely and amiable words happens to be the third, and not speaking any lies but only what is true, is its fourth quality.”

Then, the Venerable Vaṅgīsa arose from his seat, and by arranging his upper robe over one shoulder and bringing his hands together in front of his heart, directing them towards The Blessed One, he said the following words:

“O! Holy One! I find myself inspired. I feel it necessary for me to speak a few words, Bhante. If I may.”

The Blessed One replied, by saying:

“Speak then, Vaṅgīsa, whatever it is you feel inspired by!"

Then, the Venerable Vaṅgīsa spoke in verse, while sharing his heartfelt words, in praise of The Blessed One, and in His Presence:

451. “Only speak in a way that will not cause harm to either oneself or another. For such indeed is the nature of the well- spoken word.

452. “Only speak lovely and amiable words, because of which there occurs joy in the hearts of listeners, both during speech, and even much later. Therefore, speak words that do not cause evil to trail behind them.

453. “Truth is ‘the Deathless Word,’ and this itself is the eternal law. The Noble Ones being established in Truth themselves, declare it to be the very essence of the Holy Life.

454. “The words uttered by the Buddha lead one to true safety, for they are spoken for his attainment of Freedom and the realization of Nibbāna itself; they indeed take one to the end of suffering. Truly, this is the best kind of speech!”