SN 16.10 — The Nuns' Quarters

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/sn16.10/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Linked Discourses 16.10

1. Kassapa

The Nuns' Quarters

So I have heard. At one time Venerable Mahākassapa was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Mahākassapa and said, "Come, Honorable Kassapa. Let's go to one of the nuns' quarters."

"You go, Reverend Ānanda. You're the one with many duties and responsibilities."

And a second time …

And a third time, Ānanda said, "Come, Honorable Kassapa. Let's go to one of the nuns' quarters."

Then Venerable Mahākassapa robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went with Venerable Ānanda as his second monk to one of the nuns' quarters, where he sat down on the seat spread out. And then several nuns went up to Mahākassapa, bowed, and sat down to one side. Mahākassapa educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired those nuns with a Dhamma talk, after which he rose from his seat and left.

But the nun Thullatissā was upset and blurted out, "What is the venerable Mahākassapa thinking, that he'd teach Dhamma in front of the venerable Ānanda, the Videhan sage? He's like a needle peddler who thinks they can sell a needle to a needle maker!"

Mahākassapa heard Thullatissā say these words, and he said to Ānanda, "Is that right, Reverend Ānanda? Am I the needle peddler and you the needle maker? Or am I the needle maker and you the needle peddler?"

"Forgive her, sir. The lady's a fool."

"Hold on, Reverend Ānanda! Don't make the Saṅgha investigate you further!

What do you think, Reverend Ānanda? Was it you who the Buddha brought up before the Saṅgha of mendicants, saying: 'Mendicants, whenever I want, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. And so does Ānanda'?"

“No, sir.”

“I was the one the Buddha brought up before the Saṅgha of mendicants, saying: ‘Mendicants, whenever I want, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. And so does Kassapa. …’

(The nine progressive meditations and the five insights should be told in full.)

What do you think, Reverend Ānanda? Was it you who the Buddha brought up before the Saṅgha of mendicants, saying: ‘I have realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And I live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. And so does Ānanda’?”

“No, sir.”

“I was the one the Buddha brought up before the Saṅgha of mendicants, saying: ‘I have realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And I live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. And so does Kassapa.’

Reverend, you might as well think to hide a bull elephant that’s three or three and a half meters tall behind a palm leaf as to hide my six insights.”

But the nun Thullatissā fell from the spiritual life.