SN 22.2 — SN 22:2 At Devadaha | Devadaha Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

At Devadaha

Devadaha Sutta (SN 22:2)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans at a Sakyan town named Devadaha. Then a large number of monks headed for outlying districts went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there they said to the Blessed One, “Lord, we want to go to the countryside of the outlying districts and to take up residence there.”

“Have you informed Sāriputta?”

“No, lord, we haven’t informed Ven. Sāriputta.”

“Inform Sāriputta, monks. Sāriputta is wise, a great help to the monks who are his companions in the holy life.”

“As you say, lord,” the monks responded to the Blessed One.

At that time Ven. Sāriputta was sitting under a certain cassia tree not far from the Blessed One. Then the monks, delighting in & approving of the Blessed One’s words, rose from their seats and—bowing down to the Blessed One and circumambulating him, keeping him to their right—went to Ven. Sāriputta. On arrival, they exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, they sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they said to Ven. Sāriputta, “Friend Sāriputta, we want to go to the countryside of the outlying districts and to take up residence there. We have already informed the Teacher.”

“Friends, in foreign lands there are wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives—for the people there are wise & discriminating—who will question a monk: ‘What is your teacher’s doctrine? What does he teach?’ Have you listened well to the teachings—grasped them well, attended to them well, considered them well, penetrated them well by means of discernment—so that in answering you will speak in line with what the Blessed One has said, will not misrepresent the Blessed One with what is unfactual, will answer in line with the Dhamma, and no one whose thinking is in line with the Dhamma will have grounds for criticizing you?”

“We would come from a long way away to hear the explication of these words in Ven. Sāriputta’s presence. It would be good if Ven. Sāriputta himself would enlighten us as to their meaning.”

“Then in that case, friends, listen & pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, friend,” the monks responded to him.

Ven. Sāriputta said: “Friends, in foreign lands there are wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives—for the people there are wise & discriminating—who will question a monk: ‘What is your teacher’s doctrine? What does he teach?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘Our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire.’

“Having thus been answered, there may be wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives… who will question you further, ‘And your teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for what?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘Our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for form… for feeling… for perception… for fabrications. Our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness.’

“Having thus been answered, there may be wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives… who will question you further, ‘And seeing what danger does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for form… for feeling… for perception… for fabrications. Seeing what danger does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘When one is not free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for form, then from any change & alteration in that form, there arises sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, & despair. When one is not free from passion… for feeling… for perception… for fabrications… When one is not free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for consciousness, then from any change & alteration in that consciousness, there arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, & despair. Seeing this danger, our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for form… for feeling… for perception… for fabrications. Seeing this danger, our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness.’

“Having thus been answered, there may be wise nobles & brahmans, householders & contemplatives… who will question you further, ‘And seeing what benefit does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for form… for feeling… for perception… for fabrications. Seeing what benefit does your teacher teach the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness?’

“Thus asked, you should answer, ‘When one is free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for form, then with any change & alteration in that form, there does not arise any sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, or despair. When one is free from passion… for feeling… for perception… for fabrications… When one is free from passion, desire, love, thirst, fever, & craving for consciousness, then with any change & alteration in that consciousness, there does not arise any sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, or despair. Seeing this benefit, our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for form… for feeling… for perception… for fabrications. Seeing this benefit, our teacher teaches the subduing of passion & desire for consciousness.’

“Friends, if one who entered & remained in unskillful mental qualities were to have a pleasant abiding in the here & now—unthreatened, undespairing, unfeverish—and on the break-up of the body, after death, could expect a good destination, then the Blessed One would not advocate the abandoning of unskillful mental qualities. But because one who enters & remains in unskillful mental qualities has a stressful abiding in the here & now—threatened, despairing, & feverish—and on the break-up of the body, after death, can expect a bad destination, that is why the Blessed One advocates the abandoning of unskillful mental qualities.

“If one who entered & remained in skillful mental qualities were to have a stressful abiding in the here & now—threatened, despairing, & feverish—and on the break-up of the body, after death, could expect a bad destination, then the Blessed One would not advocate entering into skillful mental qualities. But because one who enters & remains in skillful mental qualities has a pleasant abiding in the here & now—unthreatened, undespairing,

unfeverish—and on the break-up of the body, after death, can expect a good destination, that is why the Blessed One advocates entering into skillful mental qualities."

That is what Ven. Sāriputta said. Gratified, the monks delighted in Ven. Sāriputta's words.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: DN 9; AN 2:19