SN 35.127 — SN 35:127 About Bhāradvāja | Bhāradvāja Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

About Bhāradvāja

Bhāradvāja Sutta (SN 35:127)

On one occasion Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja was staying near Kosambī at Ghosita’s monastery. Then King Udena went to him and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After this exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, the king sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja: “What is the reason, Master Bhāradvāja, what is the cause why young monks—black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives?”

“Great king, this was said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘Come now, monks: with regard to women who are old enough to be your mother, establish the attitude you would have toward your mother. With regard to women who are old enough to be your sister, establish the attitude you’d have toward a sister. With regard to women who are young enough to be your daughter, establish the attitude you’d have toward a daughter.’ This is one reason, this is one cause, great king, why young monks—black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives.”

“The mind is unruly, Master Bhāradvāja. Sometimes thoughts of greed arise even for women who are old enough to be your mother… your sister… young enough to be your daughter. Is there another reason, another cause, why young monks… without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives?”

“Great king, this was said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘Come now, monks: reflect on this very body, from the soles of the feet on up, from the crown of the head on down, surrounded by skin, full of all sorts of unclean things: “In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, urine.”’ This too is a reason, this too is a cause, great king, why young monks—black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives.”

“For those who are developed in body,1 developed in virtue, developed in mind, developed in discernment, Master Bhāradvāja, that isn’t hard to do. But for those who are undeveloped in body, undeveloped in virtue, undeveloped in mind, undeveloped in discernment, that is hard to do. Sometimes when one thinks, ‘Let’s regard this as unattractive,’ it actually comes to be attractive. Is there another reason, another cause, why young monks… without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives?”

“Great king, this was said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘Come now, monks: Keep guarding the doors to your sense faculties. On seeing a form with the eye, do not grasp at any theme or variations by which—if you were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail you. Practice with restraint. Guard the faculty of the eye. Achieve restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye.

“‘On hearing a sound with the ear…

“‘On smelling an aroma with the nose…

‘“On tasting a flavor with the tongue…

‘“On feeling a tactile sensation with the body…

‘“On cognizing an idea with the intellect, do not grasp at any theme or variations by which—if you were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the intellect—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail you. Practice with restraint. Guard the faculty of the intellect. Achieve restraint with regard to the faculty of the intellect.’

“This too is a reason, this too is a cause, great king, why young monks—black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives.”

“Amazing, Master Bhāradvāja! Astounding! How well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened! This is the very reason, this the very cause, why young monks—black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—without having played with sensuality nevertheless follow the lifelong celibate life, perfect & pure, and make it last their entire lives. I myself, Master Bhāradvāja: Whenever I enter the inner apartments of the palace unguarded in body, unguarded in speech, unguarded in mind, with mindfulness unestablished and my senses unrestrained, I’m overcome with thoughts of greed. But whenever I enter the inner apartments of the palace guarded in body, guarded in speech, guarded in mind, with mindfulness established and my senses restrained, then I’m not.

“Magnificent, Master Bhāradvāja! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Bhāradvāja—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the Saṅgha of monks. May Master Bhāradvāja remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life.”

Note

1. According to MN 36, one is said to be “developed in body” when feelings of pleasure do not invade the mind and remain, and “developed in mind” when feelings of pain do not invade the mind and remain.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 54; SN 1:20; SN 27:1–10; AN 5:75-76; AN 5:114; AN 9:41; Thag 7:1