SN 55.22 — Mahanama Sutta: To Mahanama (2)

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

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

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans near Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha's Park. Then Mahanama the Sakyan went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Lord, this Kapilavatthu is rich & prosperous, populous & crowded, its alleys congested. Sometimes, when I enter Kapilavatthu in the evening after visiting with the Blessed One or with the monks who inspire the mind, I meet up with a runaway elephant, a runaway horse, a runaway chariot, a runaway cart, or a runaway person. At times like that my mindfulness with regard to the Blessed One gets muddled, my mindfulness with regard to the Dhamma... the Sangha gets muddled. The thought occurs to me, 'If I were to die at this moment, what would be my destination? What would be my future course?"

"Have no fear, Mahanama! Have no fear! Your death will not be a bad one, your demise will not be bad. A disciple of the noble ones, when endowed with four qualities, leans toward Unbinding, slants toward Unbinding, inclines toward Unbinding. Which four?

"There is the case where the disciple of the noble ones is endowed with verified confidence in the Awakened One: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy and rightly self-awakened,

consummate in knowledge & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the Teacher of divine & human beings, awakened, blessed.'

"He/she is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma: 'The Dhamma is well-expounded by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the wise for themselves.'

"He/she is endowed with verified confidence in the Sangha: 'The Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples who have practiced well...who have practiced straight-forwardly...who have practiced methodically...who have practiced masterfully — in other words, the four types of noble disciples when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types — they are the Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples: worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.'

"He/she is endowed with virtues that are appealing to the noble ones: untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, leading to concentration.

"Suppose a tree were leaning toward the east, slanting toward the east, inclining toward the east. When its root is cut, which way would it fall?"

"In whichever way it was leaning, slanting, and inclining, lord."

"In the same way, Mahanama, a disciple of the noble ones, when endowed with four qualities, leans toward Unbinding, slants toward Unbinding, inclines toward Unbinding."

See also: SN 55.21; AN 6.16