

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Sakyan country at Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha's Park

2. Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and said: "Venerable sir, I have long understood the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One thus: 'Greed is an imperfection that defiles the mind, hate is an imperfection that defiles the mind, delusion is an imperfection that defiles the mind.' Yet while I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One thus, at times states of greed, hate, and delusion invade my mind and remain. I have wondered, venerable sir, what state is still unabandoned by me internally, owing to which at times these states of greed, hate, and delusion invade my mind and remain."

3. "Mahānāma, there is still a state unabandoned by you internally, owing to which at times states of greed, hate, and delusion invade your mind and remain; for were that state already abandoned by you internally you would not be living the home life, you would not be enjoying sensual pleasures. It is because that state is unabandoned by you internally that you are living the home life and enjoying sensual pleasures.

4. "Even though a noble disciple has seen clearly as it actually is with proper wisdom that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more, as long as he still does not attain to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, he may still be attracted to sensual pleasures. But when a noble disciple has seen clearly as it actually is with proper wisdom that sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering and despair, and that the danger in them is still more, and he attains to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, then he is no longer attracted to sensual pleasures.

5. "Before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I too clearly saw as it actually is with proper wisdom how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them, but as long as I still did not attain to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, I recognized that I still could be attracted to sensual pleasures. But when I clearly saw as it actually is with proper wisdom how sensual pleasures provide little gratification, much suffering, and much despair, and how great is the danger in them, and I attained to the rapture and pleasure that are apart from sensual

pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, or to something more peaceful than that, I recognized that I was no longer attracted to sensual pleasures.

6-14. "And what is the gratification in the case of sensual pleasures? Mahānāma, there are these five cords of sensual pleasure...(as Sutta 13, §§7-15)...Now this is a danger in the case of sensual pleasures, a mass of suffering in the life to come, having sensual pleasures as its cause, sensual pleasures as its source, sensual pleasures as its basis, the cause being simply sensual pleasures.

15. "Now, Mahānāma, on one occasion I was living at Rājagaha on the mountain Vulture Peak. On that occasion a number of Nigaṇṭhas living on the Black Rock on the slopes of Isigili were practicing continuous standing, rejecting seats, and were experiencing painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion.

16. "Then, when it was evening, I rose from meditation and went to the Nigaṇṭhas there. I asked them: 'Friends, why do you practice continuous standing, rejecting seats, and experience painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion?'

17. "When this was said, they replied: 'Friend, the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta is omniscient and all-seeing and claims to have complete knowledge and vision thus: "Whether I am walking or standing or asleep or awake, knowledge and vision are continuously and uninterruptedly present to me." He says thus: "Nigaṇṭhas, you have done evil actions in the past; exhaust them with the performance of piercing austerities. And when you are here and now restrained in body, speech, and mind, that is doing no evil actions for the future. So by annihilating with asceticism past actions and by doing no fresh actions, there will be no consequence in the future. With no consequence in the future, there is the destruction of action. With the destruction of action, there is the destruction of suffering. With the destruction of suffering, there is the destruction of feeling. With the destruction of feeling, all suffering will be exhausted." This is [the doctrine] we approve of and accept, and we are satisfied with it.'

18. "When this was said, I told them: 'But, friends, do you know that you existed in the past, and that it is not the case that you did not exist?'—'No, friend.'—'But, friends, do you know that you did evil actions in the past and did not abstain from them?'—'No, friend.'—'But, friends, do you know that you did such and such evil actions?'—'No, friend.'—'But, friends, do you know that so much suffering has already been exhausted, or that so much suffering has still to be exhausted, or that when so much suffering has been exhausted all suffering will have been

exhausted?'—'No, friend.'—'But, friends, do you know what the abandoning of unwholesome states is and what the cultivation of wholesome states is here and now?'—'No, friend.'

19. "So, friends, it seems that you do not know that you existed in the past and that it is not the case that you did not exist; or that you did evil actions in the past and did not abstain from them; or that you did such and such evil actions; or that so much suffering has already been exhausted, or that so much suffering has still to be exhausted, or that when so much suffering has been exhausted all suffering will have been exhausted; or what the abandoning of unwholesome states is and what the cultivation of wholesome states is here and now. That being so, those who are murderers, bloody-handed evil-doers in the world, when they are reborn among human beings, go forth into homelessness as Nigaṇṭha has.

20. "Friend Gotama, pleasure is not to be gained through pleasure; pleasure is to be gained through pain. For were pleasure to be gained through pleasure, then King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha would gain pleasure, since he abides in greater pleasure than the venerable Gotama.' "Surely the venerable Nigaṇṭha has have uttered those words rashly and without reflection. Rather it is I who ought to be asked: "Who abides in greater pleasure, King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or the venerable Gotama?"

"Surely, friend Gotama, we uttered those words rashly and without reflection. But let that be. Now we ask the venerable Gotama: Who abides in greater pleasure, King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or the venerable Gotama?"

21. "Then, friends, I shall ask you a question in return. Answer it as you like. What do you think, friends? Can King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha abide without moving his body or uttering a word, experiencing exclusively pleasure for seven days and nights?'—'No, friend.'—'Can King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha abide without moving his body or uttering a word, experiencing exclusively pleasure for six, five, four, three, or two days and nights?...for one day and night?'—'No, friend.'

22. "But, friends, I can abide without moving my body or uttering a word, experiencing exclusively pleasure for one day and night...for two, three, four, five, and six days and nights...for seven days and nights. What do you think, friends? That being so, who dwells in greater pleasure, King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or I?"

"That being so, the venerable Gotama abides in greater pleasure than King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha."

That is what the Blessed One said. Mahānāma the Sakyan was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

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Majjhima Nikāya 14

Part One – The Root Fifty Discourses (Mūlapaṇṇāsapāṇi)

The Division of the Lion's Roar (Sīhanādavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi