

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering in the Kosalan country with a large Sangha of bhikkhus, and eventually arrived at a Kosalan village named Nagaravinda.

2. The brahmin householders of Nagaravinda heard: “The recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyans who went forth from a Sakyan clan, has been wandering in the Kosalan country with a large Sangha of bhikkhus and has come to Nagaravinda. Now a good report of Master Gotama has been spread to this effect: ‘That Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened...(*as Sutta 41, ¶2*)
...he reveals a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure.’ Now it is good to see such arahants.”

3. Then the brahmin householders of Nagaravinda went to the Blessed One. Some paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down at one side; some exchanged greetings with him, and when this courteous and amiable talk was finished, sat down at one side; some pronounced their name and clan in the Blessed One’s presence and sat down at one side; some kept silent and sat down at one side. When they were seated, the Blessed One said to them:

4. “Householders, if wanderers of other sects ask you thus: ‘Householders, what kind of recluses and brahmins should not be honored, respected, revered, and venerated?’ you should answer them thus: ‘Those recluses and brahmins who are not rid of lust, hate, and delusion regarding forms cognizable by the eye, whose minds are not inwardly peaceful, and who conduct themselves now righteously, now unrighteously in body, speech, and mind – such recluses and brahmins should not be honored, respected, revered, and venerated. Why is that? Because we ourselves are not rid of lust, hate, and delusion regarding forms cognizable by the eye, our minds are not inwardly peaceful, and we conduct ourselves now righteously, now unrighteously in body, speech, and mind. Since we do not see any higher righteous conduct on the part of those good recluses and brahmins, they should not be honored, respected, revered, and venerated.’

“Those recluses and brahmins who are not rid of lust, hate, and delusion regarding sounds cognizable by the ear...regarding odors cognizable by the nose...regarding flavors cognizable by the tongue...regarding tangibles cognizable by the body...regarding mind-objects cognizable by the mind, whose minds are not inwardly peaceful, and who conduct themselves now righteously, now unrighteously in body, speech, and mind...should not be honored...Since we do not see any higher righteous conduct on the part of those good recluses and brahmins, they should not be honored, respected, revered, and venerated.’ Being thus asked, householders,

you should answer those wanderers of other sects in this way.

5. “But, householders, if wanderers of other sects ask you thus: ‘Householders, what kind of recluses and brahmins should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated?’ you should answer them thus: ‘Those recluses and brahmins who are rid of lust, hate, and delusion regarding forms cognizable by the eye, whose minds are inwardly peaceful, and who conduct themselves righteously in body, speech, and mind – such recluses and brahmins should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated. Why is that? Because we ourselves are not rid of lust, hate, and delusion regarding forms cognizable by the eye, our minds are not inwardly peaceful, and we conduct ourselves now righteously, now unrighteously in body, speech, and mind. Since we see higher righteous conduct on the part of those good recluses and brahmins, they should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated.’

“‘Those recluses and brahmins who are rid of lust, hate, and delusion regarding sounds cognizable by the ear...regarding odors cognizable by the nose...regarding flavors cognizable by the tongue...regarding tangibles cognizable by the body...regarding mind-objects cognizable by the mind, whose minds are inwardly peaceful, and who conduct themselves righteously in body, speech, and mind...should be honored...Since we see higher righteous conduct on the part of those good recluses and brahmins, they should be honored, respected, revered, and venerated.’ Being thus asked, householders, you should answer those wanderers of other sects in this way.

6. “Householders, if wanderers of other sects ask you thus: ‘But what are your reasons and what is your evidence regarding those venerable ones whereby you say about them: “Surely these venerable ones are either rid of lust or are practicing for the removal of lust; they are either rid of hate or are practicing for the removal of hate; they are either rid of delusion or are practicing for the removal of delusion”?’ – being asked thus, you should answer those wanderers of other sects thus: ‘It is because those venerable ones resort to remote jungle-thicket resting places in the forest. For there are no forms cognizable by the eye there of a kind that they could look at and delight in. There are no sounds cognizable by the ear there of a kind that they could listen to and delight in. There are no odors cognizable by the nose there of a kind that they could smell and delight in. There are no flavors cognizable by the tongue there of a kind that they could taste and delight in. There are no tangibles cognizable by the body there of a kind that they could touch and delight in. These are our reasons, friends, this is our evidence whereby we say about those venerable ones: “Surely these venerable ones are either rid of lust, hate, and delusion, or are practicing for their removal.”’ Being thus asked, householders, you should answer those wanderers of other sects in this way.”

7. When this was said, the brahmin householders of Nagaravinda said to the Blessed One: “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the darkness for those with eyesight to see forms. We go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. From today let master Gotama accept us as lay followers who have gone to him for refuge for life.”

Majjhima Nikāya 150

Part Three– The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipāṭi āsāpāṭi)

The Division of Expositions (Vibhangavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

Contributed by Chris Burke