

1. Thus have I heard. On once occasion the Blessed One was living at Rājahaga in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary.

2. Then, when it was morning, the venerable Bhūmija dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went to the house of Prince Jayasena and sat down on a seat made ready.

3. Then Prince Jayasena went to the venerable Bhūmija and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the venerable Bhūmija: "Master Bhūmija, there are some recluses and brahmins who make such assertions and hold such views as this: 'If one makes an aspiration and one leads the holy life, one is unable to procure any fruit; if one makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life, one is still unable to procure any fruit; if one both makes an aspiration and makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life, one is still unable to procure any fruit; if one neither makes an aspiration nor makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life, one is still unable to procure any fruit.' What does the venerable Bhūmija's teacher say here, what does he declare?"

4. "I have not heard and learned that from the Blessed One's own lips, prince. But it is possible that the Blessed One might say this: 'If one makes an aspiration and one leads the holy life unwisely, one is unable to procure any fruit; if one makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life unwisely, one is still unable to procure any fruit; if one both makes an aspiration and makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life unwisely, one is still unable to procure any fruit; if one neither makes an aspiration nor makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life unwisely, one is still unable to procure any fruit. However, if one makes an aspiration and one leads the holy life wisely, one is able to procure fruit; if one makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life wisely, one is still able to procure fruit; if one both makes an aspiration and makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life wisely, one is still able to procure fruit; if one neither makes an aspiration nor makes no aspiration and one leads the holy life wisely, one is still able to procure fruit.' I have not heard and learned this from the Blessed One's own lips, prince, but it is possible that the Blessed One would answer as I have stated."

5. "If Master Bhūmija's teacher speaks thus, if he declares thus, then it certainly seems that the venerable Bhūmija's teacher stands ahead of all the ordinary recluses and brahmins."

6. Then Prince Jayasena served the venerable Bhūmija from his own dish of milk rice.

7. Then, when the venerable Bhūmija had returned from his almsround after his meal, he went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and told the Blessed One what had occurred, adding: “Venerable sir, I hope that when I was asked such a question and answered thus, I said what has been said by the Blessed One and did not misrepresent him with what is contrary to fact. I hope I explained in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from my assertion.”

8. “Surely, Bhūmija, when you were asked such a question and answered thus, you said what has been said by me and did not misrepresent me with what is contrary to fact. You explained in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from your assertion.

9. “Whatever recluses and brahmins have wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration, if they make an aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are unable to procure any fruit; if they make no aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are still unable to procure any fruit; if they both make an aspiration and make no aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are still unable to procure any fruit; if they neither make an aspiration nor make no aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are still unable to procure any fruit. Why is that? Because that [wrong path] is not a proper method for procuring fruit.

10. “Suppose a man needing oil, seeking oil, wandering in search of oil, were to heap up gravel in a tub, sprinkle it all over with water, and press it. Then, if he made an aspiration and acted thus, he would be unable to procure any oil; if he made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be unable to procure any oil; if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be unable to procure any oil; if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be unable to procure any oil. Why is that? Because that [way of acting] is not a proper method for procuring oil. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have wrong view...they are still unable to procure any fruit. Why is that? Because that [wrong path] is not a proper method for procuring fruit.

11. “Suppose a man needing milk, seeking milk, wandering in search of milk, were to pull a recently-calved cow by her horn. Then, if he made an aspiration...if he made no aspiration...if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration...if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be unable to procure any milk. Why is that? Because

that [way of acting] is not a proper method for procuring milk. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have wrong view...they are still unable to procure any fruit. Why is that? Because that [wrong path] is not a proper method for procuring fruit.

12. "Suppose a man needing butter, seeking butter, wandering in search of butter, were to pour water into a churn and churn it with a churning-stick. Then, if he made an aspiration...if he made no aspiration...if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration...if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be unable to procure any butter. Why is that? Because that [way of acting] is not a proper method for procuring butter. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have wrong view...they are still unable to procure any fruit. Why is that? Because that [wrong path] is not a proper method for procuring fruit.

13. "Suppose a man needing fire, seeking fire, wandering in search of fire, were to take an upper fire-stick and rub a wet sappy piece of wood with it. Then, if he made an aspiration...if he made no aspiration...if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration...if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be unable to procure any fire. Why is that? Because that [way of acting] is not a proper method for procuring fire. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have wrong view...they are still unable to procure any fruit. Why is that? Because that [wrong path] is not a proper method for procuring fruit.

14. "Whatever recluses and brahmins have right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration, if they make an aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are able to procure fruit; if they make no aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are still able to procure fruit; if they both make an aspiration and make no aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are still able to procure fruit; if they neither make an aspiration nor make no aspiration and they lead the holy life, they are still able to procure fruit. Why is that? Because that [right path] is a proper method for procuring fruit.

15. "Suppose a man needing oil, seeking oil, wandering in search of oil, were to heap up sesame flour in a tub, sprinkle it all over with water, and press it. Then, if he made an aspiration and acted thus, he would be able to procure oil; if he made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be able to procure oil; if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be able to procure oil; if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be able to procure oil. Why is that? Because that [way of acting] is a proper method for procuring oil. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have right view...they are still able to procure fruit. Why is that? Because that [right path] is a proper method for procuring fruit.

16. “Suppose a man needing milk, seeking milk, wandering in search of milk, were to pull a recently-calved cow by her udder. Then, if he made an aspiration...if he made no aspiration...if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration...if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be able to procure milk. Why is that? Because that [way of acting] is a proper method for procuring milk. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have right view...they are still able to procure fruit. Why is that? Because that [right path] is a proper method for procuring fruit.

17. “Suppose a man needing butter, seeking butter, wandering in search of butter, were to pour curd into a churn and churn it with a churning-stick. Then, if he made an aspiration...if he made no aspiration...if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration...if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be able to procure butter. Why is that? Because that [way of acting] is a proper method for procuring butter. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have right view...they are still able to procure fruit. Why is that? Because that [right path] is a proper method for procuring fruit.

18. “Suppose a man needing fire, seeking fire, wandering in search of fire, were to take an upper fire-stick and rub a dry sapless piece of wood with it. Then, if he made an aspiration...if he made no aspiration...if he both made an aspiration and made no aspiration...if he neither made an aspiration nor made no aspiration and acted thus, he would still be able to procure fire. Why is that? Because that [way of acting] is a proper method for procuring fire. So too, whatever recluses and brahmins have right view...they are still able to procure fruit. Why is that? Because that [right path] is a proper method for procuring fruit.

19. “Bhūmija, if these four similes had occurred to you [with reference] to Prince Jayasena, he would have spontaneously acquired confidence in you, and being confident, would have shown his confidence to you.”

“Venerable sir, how could these four similes have occurred to me [with reference] to Prince Jayasena as they occur to the Blessed One, since they are spontaneous and have never been heard before?”

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Bhūmija was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

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Majjhima Nikāya 126

Part Three– The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipaṭṭhāsapāṭi)

The Division on Voidness (Suññatavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

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