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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa

Summary

This sutta was translated by Sister M. Uppalawanna and offered to the Buddhist Discussion Centre Australia during her visit to Australia in 1999.

It describes an occasion when King Pasenadi of Kosala visited the Buddha and expressed to the Buddha his deep admiration and respect for the Buddha and His community of Monks and Nuns by recollecting the virtuous behaviour and exemplary conduct he had seen for himself when visiting the places where the Buddha resided.

The examples of good conduct spoken of by the King were subsequently referred to by the Buddha as monuments to the Dhamma.

Dhammacetiya Sutta – Monuments to the Teaching

Translated from Pali by Sister M. Uppalawanna. Reprinted with permission.

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was living with the Saakyas in a hamlet of the Saakyas named Medhalumpa. At that time King Pasenadi of Kosala, had come to Nangaraka for some purpose, and he said to Diigha Kaaraayana, 'Friend Kaaraayana, yoke good carriages we like to tour the parklands and see the good soil.' He agreed, and yoking suitable carriages, informed King Pasenadi of Kosala. 'Great king the carriages are yoked, it is time to do what is fit.' King Pasenadi of Kosala ascended a suitable carriage and left Nangaraka in great splendour, going as far as the carriages could go, descended from the carriages and entered the parklands. King Pasenadi of Kosala walking about in the parklands, saw the roots of trees that were pleasing, noiseless, away from humans, and suitable for seclusion and thought of the Blessed One. He thought, on account of these roots of trees that are pleasing, noiseless, away from humans and suitable for seclusion, I should associate the Blessed One, perfect and rightfully enlightened.

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala addressed Digha Kaaraayana. ‘Friend Kaaraayana, these roots of trees, that are pleasing, noiseless, away from humans, and suitable for seclusion recall to me the Blessed One, perfect and rightfully enlightened. Friend, where does he abide now?’ ‘Great king, there is a hamlet of the Sakyas, Medalumpa, the Blessed One, perfect and rightfully enlightened lives there now.’ ‘Friend, Kaaraayana, how far is Medalumpa from Nangaraka ?’ ‘It isn’t very far about one and twenty miles from here.’ ‘Could we reach there by night fall?’ ‘Then friend, Kaaraayana yoke suitable carriages, I want to see that Blessed One, perfect, rightfully enlightened.’ Then Digha Kaaraayana agreeing yoked suitable carriages and informed the king. ‘Great king, the carriages are yoked, it is the time to do the suitable.’ Then King Pasenadi of Kosala, ascended the well yoked carriages and left Nangaraka, to reach the hamlet Medalumpa of the Sakyas. When it was dark, they reached Medalumpa. Going in the carriage as far as it could reach, descending from the carriages came to the monastery grounds.

At that time many bhikkhus, were doing the walking meditation in the open and King Pasenadi of Kosala approached them and asked. ‘Venerable sirs, where is the Blessed One at this time, we like to see that Blessed One perfect and rightfully enlightened?’ ‘Great king the door of the living house is closed, approach it quietly, without intruding, step up to the terrace cough and knock on the cross bar. The Blessed One will open the door. At that point the King of Kosala, gave the sword and crown to Digha Kaaraayana, and it occurred to him, the king wishes to be alone. I should not proceed. King Pasenadi of Kosala quietly approached the closed door of the living house without intruding stepped on the terrace, coughed and knocked on the cross bar. The Blessed One opened the door. King Pasenadi of Kosala, entered the living house, placed his head at the feet of the Blessed One kissed the feet and stroked them with his hands. Then he announced, venerable sir, I’m King Pasenadi of Kosala.’

‘Great king, seeing what good, do you show highest reverence and make these friendly offerings to this body?’

‘Venerable sir, I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One’s Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path. Venerable sir, I see recluses and Brahmins, who lead the holy life for ten, twenty, thirty or even forty years. Later I see them having bathed and decorated themselves, with hair and beard shortened, partaking of sensual pleasures, well provided. Here I see bhikkhus leading the holy life complete and pure until the end of life, until they breathe their last breath. Venerable sir, on account of this too I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One’s Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path.

Again venerable sir, kings dispute with kings, warriors with warriors, Brahmins with Brahmins, householders with householders, the mother with the son, the son with the mother, the father with the son, the son with the father, brother with brother, brother with sister, the sister with the brother, friend with friend. Here, venerable sir, I see bhikkhus united and friendly, without a dispute, mixing like milk and water, abide seeing each other with friendly eyes. Venerable sir, on account of this too I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One's Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path.

Again, venerable sir, I wander from one monastery to the other, from one park to the other, there I see certain recluses and Brahmins wasted, unpleasant, discoloured with jaundice, with protruding veins, not attractive to the eyes. Then it occurs to me. Indeed, these venerable ones live the holy life not attached to it. Or they have some undisclosed demerit. On account of which they are wasting, unpleasant, discoloured with jaundice, are with protruded veins, not attractive to the eyes.

I approach them and ask. 'Why are the venerable ones wasting, unpleasant, discoloured with jaundice, with protruding veins, not attractive to the eyes?' They tell me. 'Great king, we suffer from jaundice.' 'Venerable sir, here we see bhikkhus, pleased, in good spirits, pleasant to the sight with satisfied mental faculties, leading a carefree life, without fear and ready to help, abiding with the mind of a wild animal. Venerable sir, it occurs to me 'Indeed these venerable ones, see some gradual distinction in themselves, that they are pleased, in good spirits, pleasant to the sight, are with satisfied mental faculties, leading a carefree life, without fear are ready to help, abide with minds like those of wild animals. Venerable sir, on account of this too I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One's Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path.

Again, venerable sir, as a head anointed warrior king, I have power in my kingdom, to kill, destroy or banish, those who need to be killed, destroyed or banished. Yet when I sit for jurisdiction, I find it impossible to do justice as various interruptions come to me. I even tell them, good sirs, do not interrupt me, wait till I finish, my talk. Venerable sir, when the Blessed One is teaching various hundreds of bhikkhus, even the sound of a sneeze or a cough is not heard. Once it happened, that the Blessed One was teaching a gathering of some hundreds. Then a certain disciple of the Blessed One coughed and another disciple of the Blessed One nudged him on the knee, to say, make no noise, the Blessed One is teaching. Venerable sir, then it occurred to me, it is amazing the gathering is well behaved, without, stick or weapon. Venerable sir, I have not seen a disciplined gathering like this anywhere else. On account of this too I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One's Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the

Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path.

Again, venerable sir, I see a certain wise, clever, warrior disputant, going about thinking to pull down wise ones and their views. Hearing that the recluse Gotama has visited a certain village or hamlet, they concoct a question. We will approach the recluse Gotama and ask this question when he explains it, we will draw him to a dispute. When they approach, the Blessed One advises them, incites them and makes their hearts light. Advised, incited and made the hearts light, they do not even ask the question, how is a dispute to come up? They become all round disciples of the Blessed One On account of this too I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One's Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path.

Again, venerable sir, I see a certain wise, clever Brahmin,re... a householder, re.... a recluse, disputant going about thinking to pull down wise ones and their views. Hearing that the recluse Gotama has visited a certain village or hamlet, they concoct a question. We will approach the recluse Gotama and ask this question. He will explain it thus and we will draw him to a dispute. When they approach, the Blessed One advises them, incites them and makes their hearts light. Advised, incited and made the hearts light, they do not even ask the question, how is a dispute to come up? They become all round disciples of the Blessed One On account of this too I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One's Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path.

Again, venerable sir, the master builders, Isiidatta and Puraana, were brought up by me, given life by me, raised to that state by me. Yet these two do not show that same reverence to me, that they give to the Blessed One. Venerable sir, in the past, when the army was marching against me, it happened that I went to a difficult dwelling of the master builders Isiidatta and Puraana, they advised me late into the night. They told that they sleep, placing their heads towards where the Blessed One was, and their feet towards me. Then it occurred to me. It is wonderful and surprising, the master builders Isiidatta and puraana were brought up by me, given life by me, raised to that state by me. Yet these two do not show that same reverence to me, that they give to the Blessed One. Indeed, these venerable ones see some gradual distinction in themselves. On account of this too I have come to the main drift of the Blessed One's Teaching. The Blessed One is rightfully enlightened, the Teaching of the Blessed One is well proclaimed. The disciples of the Blessed One have come to the right path.

Again, venerable sir, I'm a warrior, a man of Kosala eighty years old, the Blessed One too is a warrior, of Kosala and is eighty years of age. On account of this, too I show highest reverence and make these friendly

offerings to this body. Venerable sir, now we go, there is much work to be done.

‘Great king do, as you think fit.’

King Pasenadi of Kosala got up from his seat, worshipped and circumambulated the Blessed One and went away.

Soon after King Pasenadi of Kosala had gone, the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus. ‘Bhikkhus, King Pasenadi of Kosala made monuments of the Teaching. Bhikkhus, learn those monuments to the Teaching. They are conducive to good and belong to the fundamentals of the holy life.’

The Blessed One said that and those bhikkhus delighted in the words of the Blessed One.