

(Pindapataparisuddhi Sutta)

The Purification of Almsfood

Archery

Excerpt from A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya

by Bhikkhu Bodhi

At Savatthi. Sitting to one side, King Pasenadi of Kosala said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, where should a gift be given?" Wherever one's mind has confidence, great king. (Give to whichever person one's mind has confidence in.)?

"But venerable sir, where does what is given become of great fruit?" This is one question, great king, 'where should a gift be given? And this another, Where does what is given become of great fruit?' What is given to one who is virtuous, great king, is of great fruit, not so what is given to an immoral person. Now then, great king, I will question you about this same point. Answer as you see fit. What do you think, great king? Suppose you are at war and a battle is about to take place. Then a khattiya youth would arrive, one who is untrained, unskillful, unpracticed, inexperienced, timid, petrified, frightened, quick to flee. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?" "Surely not, venerable sir.?"

"Then a brahmin youth would arrive..., a vessa youth..., a sudda youth... who is untrained, unskillful, unpracticed, inexperienced, timid, petrified, frightened, quick to flee. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?" "Surely not, venerable sir.?"

"What do you think, great king? Suppose you are at war and a battle is about to take place. Then a khattiya youth would arrive, one who is trained, skillful, practiced, experienced, brave, courageous, bold, ready to stand his place. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?" "Surely I would, venerable sir.?"

"What do you think, great king? Suppose you are at war and a battle is about to take place. Then a brahmin youth would arrive..., a vessa youth..., a sudda youth... who is trained, skillful, practiced, experienced, brave, courageous, bold, ready to stand his place. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?" "Surely I would, venerable sir.?"

"So too, great king, when a person has gone forth from the household life into homelessness, no matter from what clan, if he has abandoned five factors and possesses five factors, then what is given to him is of great fruit. What five factors have been abandoned? Sensual desire has been abandoned, ill will has been abandoned, sloth and torpor have been abandoned; restlessness and remorse have been abandoned; doubt has been abandoned. What five factors does he possess? He possesses the aggregate of virtue of one beyond training, the aggregate of concentration of one beyond training, the aggregate of wisdom of one beyond training, the aggregate of liberation of one beyond training, the aggregate of the knowledge and vision of liberation of one beyond training. He possesses these five factors, Thus what is given to one who has abandoned five factors and who possesses five factors is of great fruit.?"

As a king intent on waging war

Would employ a youth skilled with the bow,

One endowed with strength and vigor,

But not the coward on account of his birth--

So even though he be of low birth,

One should honor the person of noble conduct,

The sagely man in whom are established

The virtues of patience and gentleness.

One should build delightful hermitages

And invite the learned to dwell in them;

One should build water tanks in the forest

And causeways over rough terrain.

With a confident heart one should give,

To those of upright character:

Give food and drink and things to eat,

Clothing to wear and beds and seats.

For as the rain-cloud, thundering,

Wreathed in lightning, with a hundred crests,

Pours down its rain upon the earth,

Flooding both the plain and valley--

So the wise man, faithful, learned,

Having had a meal prepared,

Satisfies with food and drink,

The mendicants who live on alms.

Rejoicing, he distributes gifts,

And proclaims, "Give, give.?"

For that is his thundering

Like the sky when it rains.

That shower of merit, so vast,

Will pour down on the giver.