

Ālavaka Suttam

Discourse to Ālavaka the Demon

Evaṃ me sutam. Ekaṃ Samayaṃ Bhagavā Ālaviyaṃ viharati Ālavakassa yakkhassa bhavane. Atha kho Ālavako yakkho yena Bhagavā tenupasaṅkami. Upasaṅkamtivā Bhagavāntaṃ etada'voca.

Thus have I heard: On one occasion ♦ the Blessed One was living at Ālavi, ♦ in the abode of the demon Ālavaka. At that time, the demon Ālavaka approached the Blessed One, ♦ and on arrival, said to the Blessed One:

Nikkhama samaṇā'ti. Sādhā'vuso'ti Bhagavā nikkhami.

“Get out, you recluse.” Saying, “Very well, friend,” ♦ the Blessed One went out.

Pavisa samaṇā'ti. Sādhā'vuso'ti Bhagavā pāvisi.

“Come in, you recluse.” Saying, “Very well, friend,” ♦ the Blessed One went in.

Dutiyaṃ'pi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantaṃ etada'voca. Nikkhama samaṇā'ti. Sādhā'vuso'ti Bhagavā nikkhami.

“Get out, you recluse,” ♦ said the demon Ālavaka to the Blessed One a second time. Saying, “Very well, friend,” ♦ the Blessed One went out.

Pavisa samaṇā'ti. Sādhā'vuso'ti Bhagavā pāvisi.

“Come in, you recluse.” Saying, “Very well, friend,” ♦ the Blessed One went in.

Tatiyaṃ'pi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantaṃ etada'voca. Nikkhama samaṇā'ti. Sādhā'vuso'ti Bhagavā nikkhami.

“Get out, you recluse,” ♦ said the demon Ālavaka to the Blessed One a third time. Saying, “Very well, friend,” ♦ the Blessed One went out.

Pavisa samaṇā'ti. Sādhā'vuso'ti Bhagavā pāvisi.

“Come in, you recluse.” ♦ Saying, “Very well, friend,” ♦ the Blessed One went in.

Catuttham'pi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantaṃ etada'voca. Nikkhama samaṇā'ti. Nakhvā'haṃ āvuso nikkhamissāmi. Yan te karaṇīyaṃ taṃ karohī'ti.

“Get out, you recluse,” ♦ said the demon Ālavaka to the Blessed One a fourth time. “No, oh friend, ♦ I will not go out. Do what you will.”

Pañham taṃ samaṇa pucchissāmi. Sace me na vyākarissasi, cittaṃ vā te khipissāmi, hadayaṃ vā te phālessāmi, pādesu vā gahetvā pāragaṅgāyaṃ khipissāmi'ti.

“Oh recluse, I am going to ask you questions. If you do not answer me, ♦ I will drive you insane, ♦ or split your heart, or grab your feet ♦ and throw you across the river.”

Nakhvāhaṅtaṃ āvuso passāmi sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya yo me cittaṃ vā khipeyya, hadayaṃ vā phāleyya, pādessu vā gahetvā pāragaṅgāya khipeyya, Apica tvaṃ āvuso puccha yadākaṅkhasī'ti.

“Well, oh friend, ♦ I do not see anyone in this world with its devās, ♦ with its Māras and Brahmas, ♦ in this generation with its recluses and brāhmins, ♦ with its devās and humans, ♦ who could either drive me insane, ♦ or split my heart, or grab my feet ♦ and throw me across the river. Nevertheless, friend, ask what you will.”

Atha kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam gāthāya ajjhabhāsi.

Then the demon Ālavaka addressed the Blessed One in verse:

1. Kimsū'dha vittaṃ purisassaseṭṭham? – Kimsū suciṇṇo sukhamā'vahāti?

Kimsū have sādhutaram rasānam? – Katham jīvim jīvitamāhu seṭṭham'ti?

What wealth here is best for man? What well practiced will bring happiness? What is the sweetest of all tastes? How lived is the life they say is best?

(The Buddha:)

2. Saddhī'dha vittaṃ purisassaseṭṭham

Dhammo suciṇṇo sukhamā'vahāti

Saccam have sādhutaram rasānam

Paññājīvim jīvitamāhu seṭṭham'ti.

Faith is the wealth here best for man; ♦ Dhamma well practised shall bring happiness; ♦ truth indeed is the sweetest of all tastes; ♦ one living life with wisdom, they say is best.

(Ālavaka:)

3. Kathamsu taratī ogham? – Kathamsu taratī aṇṇavam?

Kathamsu dukkham acceti? – Kathamsu parisujjhati?

How does one cross over the flood? How does one cross over the ocean? How does one overcome suffering? How is one's life purified?

(The Buddha:)

4. Saddhāya taratī ogham – Appamādena aṇṇavam

Viriyena dukkham acceti – Paññāya parisujjhati

By faith one crosses over the flood; ♦ by diligence is the ocean crossed; by effort one overcomes suffering; ♦ by wisdom one's life is purified.

(Ālavaka:)

5. Kathamsu labhate paññam? – Kathamsu vindate dhanam?

Kathamsu kittim pappoti? – Katham mittāni ganthati?

Asmā lokā param lokam – Katham pecca na socati?

How does one gain wisdom? How does one obtain wealth? How does one achieve fame? How does one win many friends? When passing from this world to the next, ♦ how does one not sorrow?

(The Buddha:)

6. Saddahāno arahatam – Dhammam Nibbānapattiyā

Sussūsā labhate paññam – Appamatto vicakkhaṇo

When Arahants teach the Dhamma leading to Nibbāna, ♦ if one listens to that Dhamma ♦ with close attention and confident mind, ♦ and investigates that Dhamma diligently, ♦ then, in this way, one wins wisdom.

7. Patirūpakārī dhuravā – Uṭṭhātā vindate dhanam

Saccena kittim pappoti – Dadam mittāni ganthati

Doing what is proper, being dutiful, ♦ and exerting effort, one obtains wealth. By truthfulness one achieves fame; ♦ by giving gifts one wins many friends.

8. Yasse'te caturo dhammā – Saddhassa gharamesino

Saccam damo dhitī cāgo – Sa ve pecca na socati

If a faithful householder is truthful, ♦ wise, energetic, and fond of giving, ♦ by virtue of these four qualities, ♦ he will not sorrow when he passes on.

9. Ingha aññe'pi pucchassū – Puthu samaṇabrāhmaṇe

Yadi saccā damā cāgā – Khantiyā bhiyyo na vijjati

If you wish, ♦ ask of other recluses and brāhmins, ♦ if there is anything better in this world ♦ than truth, self-control ♦ generosity, and patience.

(Ālavaka:)

10. Kathannu'dāni puccheyyam – Puthu samaṇabrāhmaṇe

So'ham ajja pajānāmi – Yo attho samparāyiko

Why should I now ask ♦ other recluses and brāhmins, ♦ when today I learned of all factors ♦ that lead to happiness in this life and the next?

11. Atthāya vata me Buddho – Vāsāyā'lavimāgamī

So'ham ajja pajānāmi – Yattha dinnam mahapphalam

Indeed, out of compassion for me, ♦ the Buddha came to my dwelling at Ālavi. On this day, ♦ I learned to whom a gift should be given ♦ to gain the highest fruit.

12. So'ham vicarissāmi – gāmā gāmaṃ purā puram

Namassamāno Sambuddham – Dhammassa ca sudhammatan'ti.

From village to village and town to town, ♦ I shall now travel about ♦ worshipping the Supreme Buddha ♦ and praising the excellence of the Dhamma.

Evaṃ vutte Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam etada'voca. Abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama, abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama, Seyyathāpi bho Gotama nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya, paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya, mūlhasa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya, andhakāre vā telapajjotaṃ dhāreyya cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhintī'ti. Evaṃevaṃ bhotā Gotamena anekapariyāyena Dhammo pakāsito. Esā'ham bhavantaṃ Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi. Dhammañca Bhikkhusaṅghaṇca. Upāsakaṃ maṃ bhavaṃ Gotamo dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gatan'ti.

Having thus spoken, the demon Ālavaka said to the Blessed One: ♦ “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! ♦ Just as a man were to set upright ♦ what was overturned, ♦ to reveal what was hidden, ♦ to show the way to one who was lost, ♦ or to carry a lamp into the dark ♦ so that those with eyes could see forms, ♦ in the same way the Dhamma has been made clear ♦ in many ways by the Master Gotama. I go for refuge to the Master Gotama, ♦ to the Dhamma, and to the community of monks. May the Venerable Gotama accept me ♦ as a lay follower ♦ who has gone for refuge to the Triple Gem, ♦ from today onwards, ♦ for as long as life lasts.”

Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!