

Vacchagotta Sutta

AN III 57 Discourse to Vacchagotta

Translated by Ānanda

Revised Aug. 2020

Then,

*Vacchagotta the recluse approached where the Lord was;
Having approached,
He exchanged warm greetings with him
And sat down to one side.*

Then, Vacchagotta the recluse asked the Lord saying:

[Vacchagotta]

I have heard, Sir Gotama:

“The samaṇa¹ Gotama speaks in this way:

- (1) To me only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else;*
- (2) To my own disciples only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else’s disciples;*
- (3) To me only is what is given bear great fruits, not to anybody else;*
- (4) To my own disciples only do offerings bear great fruits, not to anybody else’s disciples.”*

*“I am unsure if that was truly the word of the good sir Gotama,
or if they accused the Lord Gotama with falsehood.”*

*“Was this declared in accordance with what is true?
Did those who come with these grounds for slander and criticism
Not speak in agreement with the truth?
It is not our intention to falsely accuse the Lord Gotama.”*

¹ *Samaṇa* [Bsk. śramaṇa, fr. śram, but mixed in meaning with śam] a wanderer, recluse, religieux, monk.

[The Buddha]

Those who said:

“The samaṇa Gotama speaks in this way:

- (1) To me only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else;*
- (2) To my own disciples only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else’s disciples;*
- (3) To me only is what is given bear great fruits, not to anybody else;*
- (4) To my own disciples only do offerings bear great fruits, not to anybody else’s disciples.”*

*“They are not repeating what was said by me.
They misrepresent me with what is not factual, and what is untrue.”*

*Vaccha, whoever prevents further offerings to be given
That person obstructs three persons,
He creates an obstacle for three persons.*

What three?

- (1) He obstructs the donor from making merits;*
- (2) He obstructs the beneficiary from gaining a gift;*
- (3) And he has wounded and injured himself in the first place.*

*Vaccha, whoever prevents further offerings to be given
That person obstructs three persons,
He creates an obstacle for these three persons.*

Vaccha, this is how I speak:

*Even when one goes to a pond or
A cesspool containing living beings,
And there, throws away dish rinsing thinking:*

“May all beings here thrive!”

*Even in this Vaccha,
I say one goes to the heart and merit accrues to him.*

What to say about [giving to] human beings?

[Giving to the Virtuous]

*But here, Vaccha,
I say that giving to the virtuous bears great fruits,*

Not so much to the unvirtuous,

*[The Virtuous] one who has abandoned five things
and who is endowed with five qualities.*

What are the five things he has abandoned?

- (1) Sensual gratification,*
- (2) Resentment,*
- (3) Laziness,*
- (4) Restlessness*
- (5) And Uncertainty.*

These five things he has abandoned.²

What five qualities is he endowed with?

- (1) The Virtue of one who has mastered oneself.*
- (2) The Samādhi of one who has mastered himself.*
- (3) The Wisdom of one who has mastered himself.*
- (4) The Liberation of one who has mastered himself.*
- (5) The Direct Experience of Liberation³ of one who has mastered himself.*

These are the five qualities he is endowed with.

*To one freed from these five things,
And endowed with these five qualities, I say,
What is given bears great fruits.*

² These are the five Hindrances to meditation or stillness of mind. (Samādhi)

³ Vimutti-nāṇa-dassana-kkhandhena: The element of Knowledge-and-Vision-of-Liberation.

*Thus black and white
Red or yellow
Spotted or flat,
Or even grey, a cow may be.*

*Among these many sorts of cattle
When a tamed bull is born⁴;
A load bearer, possessed of strength
Advancing with good pace;*

*By him, the burden can be taken on
Regardless of his appearance.*

*So it is for human beings
Regardless of their birth
Khattiyas, Brāhmanas, Vassas,
Suddas or foraging outsiders.*

*Among these many sorts of people,
A tamed aspirant can be born,
Firm in the Dhamma, Virtuous,
Humble, a truth speaker,*

*One who has left behind birth and death,
Flawless in the Spiritual Life,
Having laid down the burden, unyoked,
Having fulfilled his duty, free from mental movements⁵.*

*Having crossed beyond all things
Ungrasping and quenched;*

*Sown in this greedless field,
An offering is truly boundless.*

⁴ The Buddha was a Taurus.

⁵ Anāsava: Without āsava, Effluent, outflows of the mind. The three Āsavas are: Kāmāsava: Outflow towards sensual gratification, Bhavāsava: Outflow of Becoming, Avijjāsava: Outflow of Ignorance.

*[Those who have not tasted
The goodness of Dhamma]
Spend their offerings outside,
Not supporting the peaceful ones.⁶*

*But those who attend on the peaceful ones,
Sagacious and esteemed as sage,
Those, confident in the Sugato⁷,
With firmly planted roots;*

*Bound for the celestial realms they are,
Or here, take birth in good families;
Gradually, towards Nibbāna,
The sage ever goes.*

⁶ *Bālā ca avijānantā, dummedhā assutāvino; Bahiddhā denti dānāni, na hi sante upāsare.*

⁷ *An epithet of the Buddha, the well-gone, well-farer, the One Gone to Goodness.*

