

1.10. *Ālavaka*

Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One was staying at Ālavī, in the haunt of the yakkha Ālavaka. Then the yakkha Ālavaka went up to the Blessed One and said to him: 'Go out, ascetic.' 'Yes, sir', said the Blessed One, and went out. 'Go in, ascetic', (said the yakkha). 'Yes, sir', said the Blessed One, and went in. A second time the yakkha Ālavaka said this to the Blessed One: 'Go out, ascetic'. 'Yes, sir', said the Blessed One, and went out. 'Go in, ascetic'. 'Yes, sir', said the Blessed One, and went in. A third time the Yakkha Ālavaka said this to the Blessed One: 'Go out, ascetic'. 'Yes, sir', said the Blessed One, and went out. 'Go in, ascetic'. 'Yes, sir', said the Blessed One, and went in. A fourth time the yakkha Ālavaka said this to the Blessed One: 'Go out ascetic'. (32) 'Then I shall not go out, sir; do whatever you must'. 'I shall ask you a question, ascetic. If you do not answer me, I shall either strike down your mind or split your heart, or seize you by the feet and throw you over the Ganges.' 'I do not see anyone, sir, in the world, including the devas, Māra and Brahmā, among beings including ascetics and brahmins, devas and men, who could strike down my mind, or split my heart, or seize me by the feet and throw me over the Ganges. Nevertheless, ask what you wish.' Then the yakkha Ālavaka addressed the Blessed One with a verse.

181. 'What in this world is the best wealth for a man? What when well practised brings happiness? What indeed is the sweetest of flavours? Living in what way do they say one's life is best?'

182. 'Faith is the best wealth for a man in this world. [Righteousness] when well practised brings happiness. Truth is the sweetest of flavours. They say the life of one living by wisdom is best.'

183. 'How does one cross the flood? How does one cross the ocean? How does one go beyond misery? How is one purified?'

184. (33) 'By faith one crosses the flood, [by vigilance] the ocean. By energy one goes beyond misery. By wisdom one is purified.'

185. 'How does one obtain wisdom? How does one find wealth? How does one obtain fame? How does one bind friends (to oneself)? Having passed away from this world to the next world, how does one not grieve?'

186. 'Having faith in the doctrine of the arahats for the gaining

of [quenching], one obtains wisdom by willingness to hear, [never being negligent, clever.]

187. Doing what is fitting, bearing the yoke, exerting oneself one finds wealth. By truth one gains fame. Being generous one binds friends (to oneself).

188. Whatever faithful [house-seeker has these four things: truth, righteousness, firmness, generosity], he indeed does not grieve when he has passed away.

189. [Come now], ask others too, many ascetics and brahmins, if anything is found here greater than truth, (self-)control, generosity, and forbearance.'

190. 'How now could I possibly ask many ascetics and brahmins? [I now know what my future goal is.]

191. Truly for my sake the Buddha came to [Ālavī to stay.] I now know where (a gift), when given, bears great fruit.

192. I shall wander from village to village, from city to city, revering the fully-enlightened one and the essential rightness of the doctrine.'

182b. virtue

184b. by diligence

186b; d. nibbāna; being diligent, discerning

188b-c. seeker of a household(er's pleasures) has these four qualities: truth, virtue, courage, generosity

189a. if you wish

190c-d. I today comprehend what is good for (my) future

191b. visit Ālavī