

## TRUTH ENLIGHTENS

### 1 (8) The Story of Monk Sāriputta (Verses 11 & 12) (cont'd)

One day, the wandering ascetic Upatissa saw the Monk Assaji. Upatissa said to him, "Calm and serene, brother, are your organs of sense; clean and clear is the hue of your skin. For whose sake, brother, did you retire from the world? And who is your teacher? And whose doctrine do you profess?" "Brother, I am as yet a mere novice; its not long since I have been a monk; but recently did I approach Buddha's doctrine and discipline." Said the ascetic, "I am Upatissa; say much or little according to your ability; I will understand the meaning in a hundred ways or a thousand ways." At what Monk Assaji said Upatissa received higher excellence. Upatissa next saw his friend Kōlita and informed him that he has attained deathless. He pronounced the same stanza Assaji had pronounced. Kōlita was established in the fruit of conversion. They decided to visit the Buddha. They thought they should ask their former instructor Sanjaya to join them. "You may go; I cannot come," Sanjaya said, "In the past I have gone about as a teacher of the multitude. For me to become a pupil again would be absurd."

"Do not act thus, teacher," Upatissa said. "Teacher, from the moment of the Buddha's appearance in the world the populace has adored Him. Let's also go there. What do you intend to do now?" Sanjaya replied, "Friends, which are more numerous in this world, the stupid or the wise?" "Teacher, the stupid are many, the wise are few." Sanjaya said: "Well then, friends, let the wise men go to the wise Monk Gōtama and let the stupid come to stupid me." Upatissa and Kōlita departed. About two hundred and fifty wandering ascetics of Sanjaya's group also joined the two friends.

Then Kōlita and Upatissa saw the Buddha and became his chief disciples. Upatissa became Sāriputta, and Kōlita became Moggallāna. They informed the Buddha how Sanjaya would not come to see the Buddha.

#### Explanatory Translation (Verse 11)

*asārē saramatinō sārē ca asāradassinō micchāsankappagōcarā tē saram na adhigacchanti*

*asārē*: what are not values; *saramatinō*: if seen as values; *sārē cā*: and what are values; *asāradassinō*: if seen as not values; *micchāsankappagōcarā*: given to wrong aspirations; *tē*: those (ignorant people); *saram*: to the values; *na adhigacchanti*: do not attain.

A person interested in spiritual progress must be aware of spiritual values. It is true that material things are also necessary. But they are not the values to be sought after for spiritual progress. If people were to give prominence to material values they cannot attain any spiritual heights.

#### Explanatory Translation (Verse 12)

*saram sātō ca asaram asātō ca nātva sammā sankappa gōcarā tē saram adhigacchanti.*

*saram*: the true values; *sātō ca*: as true values; *asaram*: what are not values; *asātō ca*: as not values; *nātva*: having understood; *sammā sankappa gōcarā*: blessed with right aspirations; *tē*: those (wise individuals); *saram*: true values; *adhigacchanti*: attain to.

The wise person who is able to recognize the true values leading to spiritual attainments, is capable of attaining to spiritual heights. Such a person is possessed of right views.

#### Commentary

This pair of verses stresses the importance of a proper 'sense of values' which is essential to the practice of the spiritual path. Our sense of values is what gives direction to our lives. The purity and richness of our lives depend on our sense of values. In fact, our judgement of superiority and inferiority, and our happiness and sense of achievement, are also dependent on this sense of values.

Those who have a wrong understanding of values have wrong aspirations, and they never attain the true riches of life.