

# Vacchagottasutta

AN III 57 Discourse to Vacchagotta  
*Translated from the Pāli by Bhante Ānanda*  
*Revised Jan 2020 English*

Then, Vacchagotta the recluse approached where the Lord was;

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Having approached, he exchanged warm greetings with him.  
Once their amiable greetings, welcomings and courtesies were over, he sat down to one side.

Sitting close, Vacchagotta the recluse asked the Lord saying:

I have heard, Sir Gotama:

“The samaṇa<sup>1</sup> Gotama speaks in this way:

“To me only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else”;

“To my own disciples only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else’s disciples”;

“To me only is what is given bear great fruits, not to anybody else”;

“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.

[The Buddha]

Those who said:

“The samaṇa Gotama speaks in this way:

“To me only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else”;

“To my own disciples only are offerings properly given, not to anybody else’s disciples”;

“To me only is what is given bear great fruits, not to anybody else”;

“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.

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<sup>1</sup> **Samaṇa** [BSk. śramaṇa, fr. śram, but mixed in meaning with śam] a wanderer, recluse, religieux, monk.

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

What three?

He obstructs the donor from making merits;  
He obstructs the beneficiary from gaining a gift;  
And he has wounded and injured himself in the first place.

Vaccha, whoever prevents further offerings to be given 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 rinsings 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?

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?

Sensual gratification,  
Resentment,  
Laziness,  
Restlessness  
And Uncertainty.

These five things he has abandoned.<sup>2</sup>

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

What five qualities is he endowed with?

The Virtue of one who has mastered himself.  
The Samādhi of one who has mastered himself.  
The Wisdom of one who has mastered himself.  
The Liberation of one who has mastered himself.  
The Direct Experience of Liberation<sup>3</sup> 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.*

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 born<sup>4</sup>;  
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 scavenging outcasts.

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

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<sup>3</sup> **Vimutti-ñāṇa-dassana-kkhandhena:** The element of Knowledge-and-Vision-of-Liberation.

<sup>4</sup> The Buddha was a Taurus.

One who has left behind birth and death,  
Flawless in the Spiritual Life,  
Having laid down the burden, unyoked,  
Having fulfilled his duty, spill-free<sup>5</sup>.

Having crossed beyond all things  
Ungrasping and quenched;

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

The unknowing imprudents,  
Devoid of wisdom, uneducated  
Spend their offerings outside,  
Not supporting the peaceful ones.

But those who attend on the peaceful ones,  
Sagacious and esteemed as sage,  
Those, confident in the Sugato<sup>6</sup>,  
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.

Seventh

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<sup>5</sup> **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.

<sup>6</sup> An epithet of the Buddha, the well-gone, well-farer, the One Gone to Goodness.