

The First Discourse on the Bases for Talk

(Paṭhamakathāvatthusuttaṃ AN 10.69)

Translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

At one time the Gracious One was dwelling near Sāvattḥī, in Jeta’s Wood, at Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.

Then at that time many monks, after returning from the alms-round after the meal, assembling together, and sitting in the attendance hall, dwelt engaged in countless kinds of animal-talk,¹ such as:

talk about kings, talk about thieves, talk about ministers,
talk about armies, talk about dangers, talk about wars,
talk about food, talk about drinks, talk about clothes, talk about beds,
talk about garlands, talk about incense, talk about relatives, talk about vehicles,
talk about villages, talk about towns, talk about cities, talk about states,
talk about women, talk about heros, talk about streets, talk about wells,
talk about the deceased, talk about diversity,
talk about nature, talk about oceans,
or talk about profit and loss.²

Then the Gracious One, having risen from seclusion in the evening time, went to the assembly hall, and after going, he sat down on the prepared seat.

Having sat down the Gracious One addressed the monks, (saying): “What is the talk about, monks, amongst those who have assembled together and are sitting here at present, and what is the conversation that you left unfinished?”

“Here, reverend Sir, after returning from the alms-round after the meal, assembling together, and sitting in the attendance hall, we dwelt engaged in countless kinds of animal-talk, such as:

¹ Comm: *aniyyānikattā saggamokkhamaggānaṃ tiracchānabhūtaṃ katham*; *animal(-like) talk which does not lead onwards along the Path to Heaven or Freedom.*

² The list summarises exactly the sort of material the media is full of: the main news (*kings, thieves, ministers, armies, dangers, wars*), home news (*food, drinks, clothes, beds, relatives, vehicles*), local news (*villages, towns, cities, states*), entertainment news (*garlands, incense, women, heros*), science news (*the deceased, diversity, nature, oceans*), and the business news (*profit and loss*).

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talk about armies, talk about dangers, talk about wars,
talk about food, talk about drinks, talk about clothes, talk about beds,
talk about garlands, talk about incense, talk about relatives, talk about vehicles,
talk about villages, talk about towns, talk about cities, talk about states,
talk about women, talk about heros, talk about streets, talk about wells,
talk about the deceased, talk about diversity,
talk about nature, talk about oceans,
or talk about profit and loss.”

“This is certainly not suitable, monks, for you sons of good family who through faith have gone forth from the home to homelessness, that you should dwell engaged in countless kinds of animal-talk, such as:

talk about kings, talk about thieves, talk about ministers,
talk about armies, talk about dangers, talk about wars,
talk about food, talk about drinks, talk about clothes, talk about beds,
talk about garlands, talk about incense, talk about relatives, talk about vehicles,
talk about villages, talk about towns, talk about cities, talk about states,
talk about women, talk about heros, talk about streets, talk about wells,
talk about the deceased, talk about diversity,
talk about nature, talk about oceans,
or talk about profit and loss.

There are these ten bases for talk, monks. Which ten?

Talk about wanting little, talk about contentment,
talk about seclusion, talk about disassociation,
talk about energy, talk about morality,
talk about concentration, talk about wisdom,
talk about liberation, talk about insight and knowledge of liberation.

These, monks, are the ten bases for talk.

If you, monks, were to speak concerning these ten bases for talk, even the glory of the Moon and the Sun, of such great power, of such great majesty, would be overcome by (your) glory, what to say about the wanderers of other sects!”