Cp 17 — Mātaṅga’s Conduct

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

The Conduct Leading to Buddhahood

The Chapter on an Elephant

The Perfection of Ethics (7th)

Mātaṅga’s Conduct

“Then again when I was

a matted-hair ascetic of severe penance,

Mātaṅga was my name,

I was virtuous and serene.

A brahmin and I both lived

on a bank of the Ganges.

I stayed upstream,

the brahmin downstream.

Wandering along the riverbank,

he saw my hermitage upstream.

Then he abused and cursed me,

that my head would split in seven.

If I were upset with him

and if I were not taking care of my ethics,

then just with a glance

I could have reduced him to ashes.

But when he cursed me then,

so angry and bitter-hearted,

it fell right back on his own head:

I freed him from that yoke.

I guarded my ethics,

not my life.

For then I was ethical,

because it was solely for awakening.”