SN 1.35 — Fault-Finding Deities

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 1.35

4. The Host of a Hundred Felicities

Fault-Finding Deities

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.

Then, late at night, several glorious deities of the host of the fault-finders, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, and stood in the air. Standing in the air, one deity spoke this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“Someone who pretends

to be other than they really are,

is like a cheating gambler

who enjoys what was gained by theft.

You should only say what you would do;

you shouldn’t say what you wouldn’t do.

The wise will recognize

one who talks without doing.”

“Not just by speaking,

nor solely by listening,

are you able to progress

on this hard path,

by which the attentive practicing absorption

are released from Māra’s bonds.

The attentive certainly don’t act like that,

for they understand the way of the world.

The attentive are quenched by understanding,

they've crossed over clinging to the world."

Then those deities landed on the ground, bowed with their heads to the Buddha's feet and said, "We made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of us to presume to attack the Buddha! Please, sir, accept our mistake for what it is, so we will restrain ourselves in future."

At that, the Buddha smiled.

Then those deities, becoming even more fault-finding, flew up in the air. One deity spoke this verse in the Buddha's presence:

"If you don't give your pardon

when a mistake is confessed,

with hidden anger and heavy hate,

you're stuck in your enmity."

"Suppose no mistake were found,

and no one here had gone astray:

if enmities were not settled,

how could that be skillful?"

"Who makes no mistakes?

Who doesn't go astray?

Who doesn't fall into confusion?

Who is attentive, ever mindful?"

"The Realized One, the Buddha,

sympathetic for all beings:

that's who makes no mistakes,

and that's who doesn't go astray.

He doesn't fall into confusion,

for he's attentive, ever mindful.

If you don't give your pardon

when a mistake is confessed,

with hidden anger and heavy hate,

you're stuck in your enmity.

I don't approve of such enmity,

and so I pardon your mistake.”