SN 4.1 — Mortification

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/sn4.1/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Linked Discourses 4.1

1. Lifespan

Mortification

So I have heard. At one time, when he was first awakened, the Buddha was staying in Uruvelā at the root of the goatherd's banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, "I am truly freed from that grueling work! Thank goodness I'm freed from that pointless grueling work. Thank goodness I'm freed and have attained awakening."

And then Māra the Wicked, knowing the Buddha's train of thought, went up to him and addressed him in verse:

"You've left the practice of mortification

by which sons of men purify themselves.

You're impure, but think yourself pure;

you've strayed from the path of purity."

Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse:

"I realized that it's pointless;

all that endless mortification

is as futile

as oars and rudder on dry land.

Ethics, immersion, and wisdom:

by developing this path to awakening

I attained ultimate purity.

You're beaten, terminator!"

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, "The Buddha knows me! The Holy One knows me!" miserable and sad, vanished right there.