SN 4.9 — Lifespan (1st)

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 4.9

1. Lifespan

Lifespan (1st)

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Mendicants, the lifespan of humans is short. We are headed for lives to come. So we must do what is skillful, we must practice the spiritual life. No one born is immortal. A long life is a hundred years or a little more."

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:

"The life of humans is long!

A true person wouldn't scorn it.

Live like a suckling babe,

for Death has not come for you."

"The life of humans is short,

and a true person scorns it.

They should live as though their head was on fire,

for Death comes for everyone."

Then Māra … vanished right there.