SN 4.17 — The Six Fields of Contact

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Text

Linked Discourses 4.17

2. Rule

The Six Fields of Contact

At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

Now at that time the Buddha was educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk on the topic of the six fields of contact. And those mendicants were paying attention, applying the mind, concentrating wholeheartedly, and actively listening.

Then Māra thought, “This ascetic Gotama is educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk on the topic of the six fields of contact. And those mendicants are paying attention, applying the mind, concentrating wholeheartedly, and actively listening. Why don’t I go and pull the wool over their eyes?”

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and made a terrifyingly loud noise close by him. It seemed as if the earth were shattering, so that one of the mendicants said to another, “Mendicant, mendicant, it seems like the earth is shattering!”

When this was said, the Buddha said to that mendicant, “Mendicant, that’s not the earth shattering. That’s Māra the Wicked come to pull the wool over your eyes!”

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

“Sights, sounds, tastes, smells,

touches, and ideas, the lot of them—

this is the terrible bait

that the world’s infatuated by.

But a mindful disciple of the Buddha

has transcended all that.

Having slipped free of Māra’s dominion,

they dazzle like the sun.”

Then Māra ... vanished right there.