SN 7.18 — Collecting Firewood

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Text

Linked Discourses 7.18

2. Lay Followers

Collecting Firewood

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

Then several students, pupils of one of the Bhāradvāja brahmins, approached a forest grove while collecting firewood. They saw the Buddha sitting down cross-legged at the root of a certain sal tree, his body set straight, and mindfulness brought to the present. Seeing this, they went up to Bhāradvāja and said to him, “Please sir, you should know this. In such-and-such forest grove the ascetic Gotama is sitting down cross-legged, his body set straight, and mindfulness brought to the present.”

Then Bhāradvāja together with those young students went to that forest grove where he saw the Buddha sitting down cross-legged, his body set straight, and mindfulness brought to the present.

He went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:

“Deep in the jungle so full of terrors,

you’ve plunged into the empty, desolate wilderness.

Still, steady, and graceful:

how beautifully you meditate, mendicant!

Where there is no song or music,

a lonely sage resorts to the wilderness.

This strikes me as an amazing thing,

that you dwell so joyfully alone in the jungle.

I suppose you wish to be reborn in the company

of the supreme world-sovereign of the Third Heaven.

Is that why you resort to the desolate wilderness,

to practice fervor for attaining divinity?”

“Any wishes and hopes that are always attached

to the many and various realms—

the prayers sprung from the root of unknowing—

I’ve eliminated them all down to the root.

So I’m wishless, unattached, uninvolved;

amongst all things, my vision is clear.

I’ve attained the state of grace, the supreme awakening;

I meditate alone, brahmin, and self-assured.”

When he had spoken, Bhāradvāja said to the Buddha, “Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”