SN 11.6 — Bird Nests

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Text

Linked Discourses 11.6

Chapter One

Bird Nests

At Sāvatthī.

“Once upon a time, mendicants, a battle was fought between the gods and the titans. In that battle the titans won and the gods lost. Defeated, the gods fled north with the titans in pursuit.

Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed his chariot handler Mātali in verse:

‘Mātali, don’t ram the bird nests

in the Red Silk-Cotton Woods with your draft-pole.

I’d rather give up our lives to the titans

than deprive these birds of their nests.’

‘Yes, lord,’ replied Mātali. And he turned the chariot back around, with its team of a thousand thoroughbreds.

Then the titans thought, ‘Now Sakka’s chariot has turned back. The titans will have to fight the gods a second time!’ Terrified, they retreated right away to the citadel of the titans.

And that’s how Sakka came to win victory by principle.”