SN 12.19 — The Astute and the Foolish

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 12.19

2. Fuel

The Astute and the Foolish

At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, for a fool shrouded by ignorance and coupled to craving, this body has been produced. So there is this duality: this body and external name and form. Contact depends on this duality. When contacted through one or other of the six sense fields, the fool experiences pleasure and pain.

For an astute person shrouded by ignorance and coupled to craving, this body has been produced. So there is this duality: this body and external name and form. Contact depends on this duality. When contacted through one or other of the six sense fields, the astute person experiences pleasure and pain.

What, then, is the difference between the foolish and the astute?”

“Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”

“Well then, mendicants, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“For a fool shrouded by ignorance and coupled to craving, this body has been produced. But the fool has not given up that ignorance or finished that craving. Why is that? The fool has not completed the spiritual journey for the complete ending of suffering. Therefore, when their body breaks up, the fool passes on to another body. When they have passed on to another body, they’re not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They’re not freed from suffering, I say.

For an astute person shrouded by ignorance and coupled to craving, this body has been produced. But the astute person has given up that ignorance and finished that craving. Why is that? The astute person has completed the spiritual journey for the complete ending of suffering. Therefore, when their body breaks up, the astute person does not pass on to another body. Not passing on to another body, they’re freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They’re freed from

suffering, I say. This is the difference here between the foolish and the astute, that is, leading the spiritual life.”