SN 12.41 — Fears and Enmities

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 12.41

5. Householders

Fears and Enmities

At Sāvatthī.

Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Seated to one side, the Buddha said to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika:

“Householder, when a noble disciple has quelled five fears and enmities, possesses the four factors of stream-entry, and has clearly seen and penetrated the noble system with wisdom, they may, if they wish, declare of themselves: ‘I’ve finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I’ve finished with all places of loss, bad places, the underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I’m not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am assured, destined for awakening.’

What are the five fears and enmities they have quelled? Anyone who kills living creatures brims with fear and enmity both in this life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from killing living creatures.

Anyone who steals brims with fear and enmity both in this life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from stealing.

Anyone who commits sexual misconduct brims with fear and enmity both in this life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from sexual misconduct.

Anyone who lies brims with fear and enmity both in this life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from lying.

Anyone who consumes beer, wine, and liquor intoxicants brims with fear and enmity both in this life and in lives to come, and experiences mental pain and sadness. That fear and enmity is quelled for anyone who refrains from beer, wine, and liquor intoxicants. These are the five fears and enmities they have quelled.

What are the four factors of stream-entry that they possess? It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'

They have experiential confidence in the teaching: 'The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—apparent in the present life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.'

They have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is practicing the way that's good, direct, systematic, and proper. It consists of the four pairs, the eight individual persons. This is the Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples that is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of greeting with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world.'

And a noble disciple's ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones, unbroken, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion. These are the four factors of stream-entry that they possess.

And what is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom? A noble disciple carefully and rationally applies the mind to dependent origination itself: 'So, when this exists, that comes to be; when this doesn't exist, that is not. Due to the arising of this, that arises; due to the cessation of this, that ceases. Ignorance is a requirement for choices.

Choices are a requirement for consciousness. … That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. … That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.' This is the noble system that they have clearly seen and penetrated with wisdom.

When a noble disciple has quelled five fears and enmities, possesses the four factors of stream-entry, and has clearly seen and penetrated the noble system with wisdom, they may, if they wish, declare of themselves: 'I've finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I've finished with all places of loss, bad places, the underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I'm not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am assured, destined for awakening.'"