SN 14.33 — If There Were No

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 14.33

4. Chapter Four

If There Were No

At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, if there were no gratification in the earth element, sentient beings wouldn’t be aroused by it. But since there is gratification in the earth element, sentient beings are aroused by it. If the earth element had no drawback, sentient beings wouldn’t grow disillusioned with it. But since the earth element has a drawback, sentient beings do grow disillusioned with it. If there were no escape from the earth element, sentient beings wouldn’t escape from it. But since there is an escape from the earth element, sentient beings do escape from it.

If there were no gratification in the water element … If there were no gratification in the fire element … If there were no gratification in the air element …

As long as sentient beings don’t truly understand these four elements’ gratification, drawback, and escape for what they are, they haven’t escaped from this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—and they don’t live detached, liberated, with mind free of boundaries.

But when sentient beings truly understand these four elements’ gratification, drawback, and escape for what they are, they’ve escaped from this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—and they live detached, liberated, with mind free of boundaries.”