SN 22.122 — An Ethical Mendicant

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 22.122

12. A Dhamma speaker

An Ethical Mendicant

At one time Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita were staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana. Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita came out of retreat, went to Venerable Sāriputta, and said:

“Reverend Sāriputta, what things should an ethical mendicant rationally apply the mind to?”

“Reverend Koṭṭhita, an ethical mendicant should rationally apply the mind to the five grasping aggregates as impermanent, as suffering, as diseased, as a boil, as a dart, as gloom, as an affliction, as alien, as breaking apart, as empty, as not-self. What five? That is, the grasping aggregates of form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. An ethical mendicant should rationally apply the mind to these five grasping aggregates as impermanent, as suffering, as diseased, as a boil, as a dart, as gloom, as an affliction, as alien, as breaking apart, as empty, as not-self. It’s possible that an ethical mendicant who rationally applies the mind to the five grasping aggregates will realize the fruit of stream-entry.”

“But Reverend Sāriputta, what things should a mendicant stream-enterer rationally apply the mind to?”

“A mendicant stream-enterer should also rationally apply the mind to these five grasping aggregates as impermanent … as not-self. It’s possible that a mendicant stream-enterer who rationally applies the mind to the five grasping aggregates will realize the fruit of once-return.”

“But Reverend Sāriputta, what things should a mendicant once-returner rationally apply the mind to?”

“A mendicant once-returner should also rationally apply the mind to these five grasping aggregates as impermanent … as not-self. It’s possible that a mendicant once-returner who rationally applies the mind to the five grasping aggregates will realize the fruit of non-return.”

“But Reverend Sāriputta, what things should a mendicant non-returner rationally apply the mind to?”

“A mendicant non-returner should also rationally apply the mind to these five grasping aggregates as impermanent … as not-self. It’s possible that a mendicant non-returner who rationally applies the mind to the five grasping aggregates will realize perfection.”

“But Reverend Sāriputta, what things should a perfected one rationally apply the mind to?”

“Reverend Koṭṭhita, a perfected one should also rationally apply the mind to the five grasping aggregates as impermanent, as suffering, as diseased, as a boil, as a dart, as gloom, as an affliction, as alien, as breaking apart, as empty, as not-self. A perfected one has nothing more to do, and nothing that needs improvement. Still, these things, when developed and cultivated, lead to blissful meditation in this life, and also to mindfulness and situational awareness.”