SN 22.99 — A Leash

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 22.99

10. Flowers

A Leash

At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, this transmigration has no known beginning. No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving.

There comes a time when the ocean dries up and evaporates and is no more. But in any case, there is no making an end of suffering for sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving, I say.

There comes a time when Sineru the king of mountains is burned up and destroyed, and is no more. But in any case, there is no making an end of suffering for sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving, I say.

There comes a time when the great earth is burned up and destroyed, and is no more. But in any case, there is no making an end of suffering for sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, shrouded by ignorance and fettered by craving, I say.

Suppose a hound on a leash was tethered to a strong post or pillar. It would just keep running and circling around that post or pillar.

In the same way, take an unlearned ordinary person who has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in their teaching. They’ve not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in their teaching. They regard form … feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. They just keep running and circling around form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. Doing so, they’re not freed from form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. 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.

A learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They’ve seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They don’t regard form … feeling … perception … choices … or consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. They don’t keep running and circling around form, feeling, perception,

choices, and consciousness. By not doing so, they're freed from form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. They're freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're freed from suffering, I say."