SN 35.230 — The Simile of the Angler

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Text

Linked Discourses 35.230

18. The Ocean

The Simile of the Angler

“Mendicants, suppose an angler was to cast a baited hook into a deep lake. Seeing the bait, a fish would swallow it. And so the fish that swallowed the hook would meet with tragedy and disaster, and the angler can do what he wants with it.

In the same way, there are these six hooks in the world that mean tragedy and slaughter for living creatures. What six?

There are sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant approves, welcomes, and keeps clinging to them, they’re called a mendicant who has swallowed Māra’s hook. They’ve met with tragedy and disaster, and the Wicked One can do with them what he wants.

There are sounds … smells … tastes … touches … ideas known by the mind, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant approves, welcomes, and keeps clinging to them, they’re called a mendicant who has swallowed Māra’s hook. They’ve met with tragedy and disaster, and the Wicked One can do with them what he wants.

There are sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant doesn’t approve, welcome, and keep clinging to them, they’re called a mendicant who hasn’t swallowed Māra’s hook. They’ve broken the hook, destroyed it. They haven’t met with tragedy and disaster, and the Wicked One cannot do with them what he wants.

There are sounds … smells … tastes … touches … ideas known by the mind, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant doesn’t approve, welcome, and keep clinging to them, they’re called a mendicant who hasn’t swallowed Māra’s hook. They’ve broken the hook, destroyed it. They haven’t met with tragedy and disaster, and the Wicked One cannot do with them what he wants.”