SN 36.4 — The Abyss

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Text

Linked Discourses 36.4

1. With Verses

The Abyss

“Mendicants, when an unlearned ordinary person says that there’s an abyss under the ocean, they’re speaking of something that doesn’t exist.

‘Abyss’ is a term for painful physical feelings.

When an unlearned ordinary person experiences painful physical feelings they sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They’re called an unlearned ordinary person who hasn’t stood up in the abyss and has found no footing.

When a learned noble disciple experiences painful physical feelings they don’t sorrow or wail or lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. They’re called a learned noble disciple who has stood up in the abyss and found a footing.

If you can’t abide

those painful physical feelings

that arise and sap your vitality;

if you tremble at their touch,

weeping and wailing,

a weakling lacking strength—

you won’t stand up in the abyss

and find a footing.

If you can endure

those painful physical feelings

that arise and sap your vitality;

if you don’t tremble at their touch—

you stand up in the abyss

and find a footing.”