SN 47.14 — At Ukkacelā

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 47.14

2. At Nāḷandā

At Ukkacelā

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Vajjis near Ukkacelā on the bank of the Ganges River, together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. It was not long after Sāriputta and Moggallāna had become fully quenched. Now, at that time the Buddha was sitting in the open, surrounded by the Saṅgha of mendicants.

Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of mendicants, who were silent. He addressed them:

“Mendicants, this assembly seems empty to me now that Sāriputta and Moggallāna have become fully quenched. My assembly never used to be empty; I had no concern for any region where Sāriputta and Moggallāna stayed. The Buddhas of the past or the future have pairs of chief disciples who at best were like Sāriputta and Moggallāna were to me.

It’s an incredible and amazing quality of such disciples that they fulfill the Teacher’s instructions and follow his advice. And they’re liked and approved, respected and admired by the four assemblies.

And it’s an incredible and amazing quality of the Realized One that when such a pair of disciples becomes fully quenched he does not sorrow or lament. How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to wear out should not wear out? That is not possible.

Suppose there was a large tree standing with heartwood, and the largest branches broke off. In the same way, in the great Saṅgha that stands with heartwood, Sāriputta and Moggallāna have become fully quenched.

How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to wear out should not wear out? That is not possible.

So mendicants, live as your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge.

And how does a mendicant do this? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings … mind … principles—keen, aware,

and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

That's how a mendicant lives with themselves as island and refuge, without other refuge; with the teachings as island and refuge, without other refuge.

Whether now or after I have passed, any who shall live as their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge; with the teaching as their island and their refuge, with no other refuge—those mendicants of mine eager to train shall be among the best of the best."