SN 47.19 — At Sedaka

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/sn47.19/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Linked Discourses 47.19

2. At Nāḷandā

At Sedaka

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sumbhas, near the town of the Sumbhas named Sedaka. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:

“Once upon a time, mendicants, a pole acrobat of the corpse-workers set up the bamboo pole of his tribe and said to his apprentice Medakathālikā, ‘Come now, dear Medakathālikā, climb up the bamboo pole and stand above my shoulders.’

‘Yes, tutor,’ she replied. She climbed up the bamboo pole and stood above her tutor’s shoulders.

Then the pole acrobat of the corpse-workers said to Medakathālikā, ‘You look after me, dear Medakathālikā, and I shall look after you. That’s how, guarding and looking after each other, we’ll display our skill, collect our fee, and get down safely from the bamboo pole.’

When he said this, Medakathālikā said to her teacher, ‘That’s not how it will be, tutor! You look after yourself, and I shall look after myself. That’s how, guarding and looking after ourselves, we’ll display our skill, collect our fee, and get down safely from the bamboo pole.’

That’s the way,” said the Buddha. “It’s just as Medakathālikā said to her tutor. Thinking ‘I’ll look after myself,’ you should cultivate mindfulness meditation. Thinking ‘I’ll look after others,’ you should cultivate mindfulness meditation. Looking after yourself, you look after others; and looking after others, you look after yourself.

And how do you look after others by looking after yourself? By development, cultivation, and practice of meditation. And how do you look after yourself by looking after others? By acceptance, harmlessness, love, and sympathy.

Thinking ‘I’ll look after myself,’ you should cultivate mindfulness meditation. Thinking ‘I’ll look after others,’ you should cultivate mindfulness meditation. Looking after yourself, you look after others; and looking after others, you look after yourself.”