SN 47.43 — The Path

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 47.43

5. Freedom From Death

The Path

At Sāvatthī.

There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, this one time, when I was first awakened, I was staying in Uruvelā at the goatherd’s banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River. As I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: ‘The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.

What four? A mendicant would meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Or they’d meditate observing an aspect of feelings … or mind … or principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.’

And then the divinity Sahampati, knowing my train of thought, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of me. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward me, and said: ‘That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One! Sir, the four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.

What four? A mendicant would meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Or they’d meditate observing an aspect of feelings … or mind … or principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.’

That is what the divinity Sahampati said. Then he went on to say:

‘The compassionate one, who sees the ending of rebirth,

understands the path to convergence.

By this path people crossed over before,

will cross over, and are crossing over.’”