SN 51.21 — The Path

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/sn51.21/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Linked Discourses 51.21

3. The Iron Ball

The Path

At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought: ‘What’s the path and practice for developing the bases of psychic power?’ Then it occurred to me: ‘It’s when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They think: “My enthusiasm won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.” And they meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that’s full of radiance.

They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy … mental development … inquiry, and active effort. They think: “My inquiry won’t be too lax or too tense. And it’ll be neither constricted internally nor scattered externally.” And they meditate perceiving before and behind: as before, so behind; as behind, so before; as below, so above; as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that’s full of radiance.’

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way, a mendicant wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again … controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.

When the four bases of psychic power have been developed and cultivated in this way, they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.”

(The six direct knowledges should be told in full.)