SN 56.51 — A Fingernail

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Text

Linked Discourses 56.51

6. Comprehension

A Fingernail

Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of dirt on his fingernail, addressed the mendicants: “What do you think, mendicants? Which is more: the little bit of dirt on my fingernail, or this great earth?”

“Sir, the great earth is certainly more. The little bit of dirt on your fingernail is tiny. Compared to the great earth, it doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction.”

“In the same way, for an individual with comprehension, a noble disciple accomplished in view, the suffering that’s over and done with is more, what’s left is tiny. Compared to the mass of suffering in the past that’s over and done with, it doesn’t count, there’s no comparison, it’s not worth a fraction, since there are at most seven more lives. Such an individual truly understands about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.

That’s why you should practice meditation …”