AN 3.28 — Speech like Dung

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Text

Numbered Discourses 3.28

3. Individuals

Speech like Dung

“These three individuals are found in the world. What three? One with speech like dung, one with speech like flowers, and one with speech like honey.

And who has speech like dung? It’s an individual who is summoned to a council, an assembly, a family meeting, a guild, or to the royal court, and asked to bear witness: ‘Please, my man, say what you know.’ Not knowing, they say ‘I know.’ Knowing, they say ‘I don’t know.’ Not seeing, they say ‘I see.’ And seeing, they say ‘I don’t see.’ So they deliberately lie for the sake of themselves or another, or for some trivial worldly reason. This is called an individual with speech like dung.

And who has speech like flowers? It’s an individual who is summoned to a council, an assembly, a family meeting, a guild, or to the royal court, and asked to bear witness: ‘Please, my man, say what you know.’ Not knowing, they say ‘I don’t know.’ Knowing, they say ‘I know.’ Not seeing, they say ‘I don’t see.’ And seeing, they say ‘I see.’ So they don’t deliberately lie for the sake of themselves or another, or for some trivial worldly reason. This is called an individual with speech like flowers.

And who has speech like honey? It’s an individual who gives up harsh speech. They speak in a way that’s mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people. This is called an individual with speech like honey.

These are the three individuals found in the world.”