AN 3.78 — Precepts and Observances

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/an3.78/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Numbered Discourses 3.78

8. Ānanda

Precepts and Observances

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him: “Ānanda, are all precepts and observances, lifestyles, and spiritual paths fruitful when taken as the essence?”

“This matter is not categorical, sir.”

“Well then, Ānanda, break it down.”

“Take the case of someone who cultivates precepts and observances, a lifestyle, and a spiritual path, taking this as the essence. If unskillful qualities grow while skillful qualities decline, that’s not fruitful. However, if unskillful qualities decline while skillful qualities grow, that is fruitful.”

That is what Venerable Ānanda said, and the Teacher concurred.

Then Ānanda, knowing that the Teacher concurred, got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. Then, not long after Ānanda had left, the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, Ānanda is a trainee, but it’s not easy to find his equal in wisdom.”