AN 4.110 — Vipers

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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.110

11. Clouds

Vipers

“Mendicants, there are these four kinds of viper. What four?

One whose venom is fast-acting but not lethal,

one whose venom is lethal but not fast-acting,

one whose venom is both fast-acting and lethal, and

one whose venom is neither fast-acting nor lethal.

These are the four kinds of viper. In the same way, these four individuals similar to vipers are found in the world. What four?

One whose venom is fast-acting but not lethal,

one whose venom is lethal but not fast-acting,

one whose venom is both fast-acting and lethal, and

one whose venom is neither fast-acting nor lethal.

And how is an individual’s venom fast-acting but not lethal? It’s when an individual is often angry, but their anger doesn’t linger long. That’s how an individual’s venom is fast-acting but not lethal. That individual is like a viper whose venom is fast-acting but not lethal.

And how is an individual’s venom lethal but not fast-acting? It’s when an individual is not often angry, but their anger lingers for a long time.

And how is an individual’s venom both fast-acting and lethal? It’s when an individual is often angry, and their anger lingers for a long time.

And how is an individual’s venom neither fast-acting nor lethal? It’s when an individual is not often angry, and their anger doesn’t linger long.

These four individuals similar to vipers are found in the world.”