AN 4.241 — Ascetics

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.241

24. Deeds

Ascetics

“‘Only here is there a first ascetic, here a second ascetic, here a third ascetic, and here a fourth ascetic. Other sects are empty of ascetics.’ This, mendicants, is how you should rightly roar your lion’s roar.

And who is the first ascetic? It’s a mendicant who—with the ending of three fetters—is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. This is the first ascetic.

And who is the second ascetic? It’s a mendicant who—with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion—is a once-returner. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. This is the second ascetic.

And who is the third ascetic? It’s a mendicant who—with the ending of the five lower fetters—is reborn spontaneously. They’re extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world. This is the third ascetic.

And who is the fourth ascetic? It’s a mendicant who realizes 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. This is the fourth ascetic.

‘Only here is there a first ascetic, here a second ascetic, here a third ascetic, and here a fourth ascetic. Other sects are empty of ascetics.’ This, mendicants, is how you should rightly roar your lion’s roar.”