AN 4.30 — Wanderers

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.30

3. At Uruvelā

Wanderers

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain.

Now at that time several very well-known wanderers were residing in their monastery on the bank of the Serpentine River. They included Annabhāra, Varadhara, Sakuludāyī, and other very well-known wanderers. Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and went to the wanderer's monastery on the bank of the Serpentine River. He sat down on the seat spread out and said to the wanderers:

"Wanderers, these four footprints of the Dhamma are primordial, long-standing, customary, and traditional. They are uncorrupted, as they have been since the beginning. They're not being corrupted now nor will they be. Sensible ascetics and brahmins don't look down on them. What four? Contentment … Good will … Right mindfulness … Right immersion … These four footprints of the Dhamma are primordial, long-standing, customary, and traditional. They are uncorrupted, as they have been since the beginning. They're not being corrupted now nor will they be. Sensible ascetics and brahmins don't look down on them.

Wanderers, if someone should say: 'I'll deny this Dhamma footprint of contentment, and describe a true ascetic or brahmin who covets sensual pleasures with acute lust.' Then I'd say to them: 'Let them come, speak, and discuss. We'll see how powerful they are.' It is quite impossible to deny this Dhamma footprint of contentment, and point out a true ascetic or brahmin who covets sensual pleasures with acute lust.

If someone should say: 'I'll deny this Dhamma footprint of good will, and describe a true ascetic or brahmin who has ill will and malicious intent.' Then I'd say to them: 'Let them come, speak, and discuss. We'll see how powerful they are.' It is quite impossible to deny this Dhamma footprint of good will, and point out a true ascetic or brahmin who has ill will and malicious intent.

If someone should say: 'I'll deny this Dhamma footprint of right mindfulness, and describe a true ascetic or brahmin who is unmindful, with no situational awareness.' Then I'd say to them: 'Let them come, speak, and discuss. We'll see how powerful they are.' It is quite impossible to deny this Dhamma footprint of right mindfulness, and point out a true ascetic or brahmin who is unmindful, with no situational awareness.

If someone should say: ‘I’ll deny this Dhamma footprint of right immersion, and describe a true ascetic or brahmin who is scattered, with straying mind.’ Then I’d say to them: ‘Let them come, speak, and discuss. We’ll see how powerful they are.’ It is quite impossible to deny this Dhamma footprint of right immersion, and point out a true ascetic or brahmin who is scattered, with straying mind.

If anyone imagines they can criticize and reject these four footprints of the Dhamma, they deserve rebuttal and criticism on four legitimate grounds in this very life. What four?

If you reject the Dhamma footprint of contentment, then you must honor and praise those ascetics and brahmins who covet sensual pleasures with acute lust.

If you reject the Dhamma footprint of good will, you must honor and praise those ascetics and brahmins who have ill will and malicious intent.

If you reject the Dhamma footprint of right mindfulness, then you must honor and praise those ascetics and brahmins who are unmindful, with no situational awareness.

If you reject the Dhamma footprint of right immersion, you must honor and praise those ascetics and brahmins who are scattered, with straying minds.

If anyone imagines they can criticize and reject these four footprints of the Dhamma, they deserve rebuttal and criticism on four legitimate grounds in this very life.

Even those who were loud and bold advocates of the doctrines of no-cause, inaction, and nihilism didn’t imagine that these four footprints of the Dhamma should be criticized or rejected. Why is that? For fear of being blamed, provoked, and faulted.

One who has good will, ever mindful,

serene within,

training to remove desire,

is called ‘a diligent one’.”