AN 4.51 — Overflowing Merit

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/an4.51/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Numbered Discourses 4.51

6. Overflowing Merit

Overflowing Merit

At Sāvatthī.

“Mendicants, there are these four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness. They nurture happiness and are conducive to heaven, ripening in happiness and leading to heaven. They lead to what is likable, desirable, agreeable, to welfare and happiness. What four?

When a mendicant enters and remains in a limitless immersion of the heart while using a robe, the overflowing of merit for the donor is limitless …

When a mendicant enters and remains in a limitless immersion of the heart while eating almsfood, the overflowing of merit for the donor is limitless …

When a mendicant enters and remains in a limitless immersion of the heart while using lodgings, the overflowing of merit for the donor is limitless …

When a mendicant enters and remains in a limitless immersion of the heart while using medicines and supplies for the sick, the overflowing of merit for the donor is limitless …

These are the four kinds of overflowing merit, overflowing goodness. They nurture happiness and are conducive to heaven, ripening in happiness and leading to heaven. They lead to what is likable, desirable, agreeable, to welfare and happiness.

When a noble disciple has these four kinds of overflowing merit and goodness, it’s not easy to grasp how much merit they have by saying that this is the extent of their overflowing merit … that leads to happiness. It’s simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.

It’s like trying to grasp how much water is in the ocean. It’s not easy to say how many gallons, how many hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of gallons there are. It’s simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of water.

In the same way, when a noble disciple has these four kinds of overflowing merit it’s simply reckoned as an incalculable, immeasurable, great mass of merit.

Hosts of people use the rivers,

and though the rivers are many,
all reach the great deep, the boundless ocean,
the cruel sea that's home to precious gems.
In the same way, when a person gives food, drink, and clothes;
and they're a giver of beds, seats, and mats—
the streams of merit reach that astute person,
as the rivers bring their waters to the sea."