AN 11.1 — What’s the Goal?

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 11.1

1. Dependence

What’s the Goal?

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, what is the goal and benefit of skillful ethics?”

“Ānanda, having no regrets is the goal and benefit of skillful ethics.”

“But what is the goal and benefit of having no regrets?”

“Joy is the goal and benefit of having no regrets.”

“But what is the goal and benefit of joy?”

“Rapture …”

“But what is the goal and benefit of rapture?”

“Tranquility …”

“But what is the goal and benefit of tranquility?”

“Bliss …”

“But what is the goal and benefit of bliss?”

“Immersion …”

“But what is the goal and benefit of immersion?”

“Truly knowing and seeing …”

“But what is the goal and benefit of truly knowing and seeing?”

“Disillusionment …”

“But what is the goal and benefit of disillusionment?”

“Dispassion …”

“But what is the goal and benefit of dispassion?”

“Knowledge and vision of freedom is the goal and benefit of dispassion.

So, Ānanda, the goal and benefit of skillful ethics is not having regrets. Joy is the goal and benefit of not having regrets. Rapture is the goal and benefit of joy. Tranquility is the goal and benefit of rapture. Bliss is the goal and benefit of tranquility. Immersion is the goal and benefit of bliss. Truly knowing and seeing is the goal and benefit of immersion. Disillusionment is the goal and benefit of truly knowing and seeing. Dispassion is the goal and benefit of disillusionment. And knowledge and vision of freedom is the goal and benefit of dispassion. So, Ānanda, skillful ethics progressively lead up to the highest.”