Ud 4.8 — With Sundarī

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/ud4.8/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Heartfelt Sayings 4.8

With Sundarī

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now at that time the Buddha was honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. And he received robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. And the mendicant Saṅgha was also honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. And they received robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. But the wanderers who followed other religions were not honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. And they didn't receive robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.

Then those wanderers who followed other religions, unable to bear the esteem of the mendicant Saṅgha, approached the female wanderer Sundarī and said, "Sister, are you able to do something for the welfare of your kin?" "What can I do, masters? How can I help? I'd even give my life for the welfare of my kin."

"Well then, sister, frequently visit Jeta's Grove." "Yes, masters," she replied, and did as they asked.

When those wanderers knew that Sundarī had been clearly seen by many people frequently visiting Jeta's Grove, they killed her and dumped her in the ditch around Jeta's Grove. Then they went to see King Pasenadi of Kosala and said to him, "Great king, we cannot find the female wanderer Sundarī." "But where do you suspect she is?" "At Jeta's Grove, Great King." "Well then, search Jeta's Grove."

So the wanderers searched Jeta's Grove. They pulled her body up from the ditch where they had dumped it, and lifted it on a bier. Having entered Sāvatthī, they went from street to street and from square to square, complaining to people:

"See the deed of the ascetics who follow the Sakyan! Shameless are these ascetics who follow the Sakyan, immoral and wicked. They are liars and unchaste. Sure, they claim to be of principled and moral conduct, to be chaste, truthful, ethical, and of good character. But they have no asceticism, no spirituality. Asceticism and spirituality are lost to them! Where is their asceticism, where their spirituality? They have abandoned asceticism and spirituality! How on earth can a man, having done a man's business, kill a woman!"

Then at that time when the people of Sāvatthī saw the mendicants they abused and insulted them with rude, harsh words:

“Shameless are these ascetics who follow the Sakyan, immoral, wicked. They are liars and unchaste. Sure, they claim to be of principled and moral conduct, to be chaste, truthful, ethical, and of good character. But they have no asceticism, no spirituality. Asceticism and spirituality are lost to them! Where is their asceticism, where their spirituality? They have abandoned asceticism and spirituality! How on earth can a man, having done a man’s business, kill a woman!”

Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their bowls and robes, entered Sāvatthī for alms. Then, after the meal, when they returned from almsround, they went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what was happening.

“That rumor, mendicants, won’t last long. It will only be seven days, then it will vanish. So you may respond to those critics with this verse:

A liar goes to hell,

as does one who denies what they did.

Both are equal in the hereafter,

those men of base deeds.”

The mendicants memorized that verse in the Buddha’s presence, then used it to respond to those critics.

People thought, “These ascetics who follow the Sakyan didn’t do it, it was not done by them, they swear it.” That rumor didn’t last long. It was seven days, then it vanished.

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him,

“It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! How well said this was by the Buddha: ‘That rumor, mendicants, won’t last long. It will only be seven days, then it will vanish.’ That rumor has vanished, sir.”

Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

“People out of control stab with words,

like they stab a tusker in battle with darts.

When they hear a harsh word spoken,

a mendicant should endure with no anger in heart.”