AN 2.1 — 1. Faults

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Source: https://suttacentral.net/an2.1/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Numbered Discourses 2.1–10

The Chapter on Punishments

1. Faults

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"There are, mendicants, these two faults. What two? The fault apparent in this life, and the fault to do with lives to come.

What is the fault apparent in this life? It's when someone sees that kings have arrested a bandit, a criminal, and subjected them to various punishments— whipping, caning, and clubbing; cutting off hands or feet, or both; cutting off ears or nose, or both; the 'porridge pot', the 'shell-shave', the 'Rāhu's mouth', the 'garland of fire', the 'burning hand', the 'bulrush twist', the 'bark dress', the 'antelope', the 'meat hook', the 'coins', the 'caustic pickle', the 'twisting bar', the 'straw mat'; being splashed with hot oil, being fed to the hounds, being impaled alive, and being beheaded.

It occurs to them: 'If I were to commit the kinds of bad deeds for which the kings arrested that bandit, that criminal, the rulers would arrest me and subject me to the same punishments.' Afraid of the fault apparent in this life, they do not steal the belongings of others. This is called the fault apparent in this life.

What is the fault to do with lives to come? It's when someone reflects: 'Bad conduct of body, speech, or mind has a bad, painful result in the next life. If I conduct myself badly, then, when my body breaks up, after death, won't I be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell?' Afraid of the fault to do with lives to come, they give up bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and develop good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, keeping themselves pure. This is called the fault to do with lives to come.

These are the two faults.

So you should train like this: 'We will fear the fault apparent in this life, and we will fear the fault to do with lives to come. We will fear faults, seeing the danger in faults.' That's how you should train. If you fear faults, seeing the danger in faults, you can expect to be freed from all faults."