AN 3.156 — AN 3.156

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Text

Numbered Discourses 3.156–162

The Chapter on Practices

Untitled Discourses on Three Practices

“Mendicants, there are three practices. What three? The addicted practice, the scorching practice, and the middle practice.

And what’s the addicted practice? It’s when someone has this doctrine and view: ‘There’s nothing wrong with sensual pleasures’; so they throw themselves into sensual pleasures. This is called the addicted practice.

And what’s the scorching practice? It’s when someone goes naked, ignoring conventions. They lick their hands, and don’t come or wait when called. They don’t consent to food brought to them, or food prepared on their behalf, or an invitation for a meal. They don’t receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or who lives with a man; or where there’s a hound waiting or flies buzzing. They accept no fish or meat or beer or wine, and drink no fermented gruel. They go to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. They feed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers a day. They eat once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. They live pursuing the practice of eating food at set intervals.

They eat herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice bran, scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. They survive on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit.

They wear robes of sunn hemp, mixed hemp, corpse-wrapping cloth, rags, lodh tree bark, antelope hide (whole or in strips), kusa grass, bark, wood-chips, human hair, horse-tail hair, or owls’ wings. They tear out their hair and beard, committed to this practice. They constantly stand, turning down seats. They squat, committed to the endeavor of squatting. They lie on a mat of thorns, making a mat of thorns their bed. They’re devoted to ritual bathing three times a day, including at dusk. And so they live pursuing these various ways of mortifying and tormenting the body. This is called the scorching practice.

And what’s the middle practice? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

They meditate observing an aspect of feelings … They meditate observing an aspect of the mind … They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is called the middle practice.

These are the three practices.