AN 3.50 — Mahācora Sutta (The Highway Robber)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Source revision: ee5230c458ad6c1566f518d5909916ad92d12aebf1240750c5357dd9b5699f30

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Candana source labels: 50. Site text ID: AN 3.50.

Text

50. Mahācora Sutta (The Highway Robber) Bhikkhus, by possessing three things, the highway robber breaks into houses, cuts limbs, plunders wealth, robs people, and goes into hiding while setting his ambush.

What are these three?

Here, Bhikkhus, the highway robber takes cover in uneven terrains; he hides under a covering; and he hides in the shadow of powerful people.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the highway robber take cover in uneven terrains?

Here, he hides in uneven and rough terrains of deep river valleys and mountain slopes. In this way, he takes cover in uneven terrains.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the highway robber hide under a covering?

Here, he hides among heavily grown and tall grass, in a place crowded with trees, in a cave, or in the great forest. In this way, he hides under a covering.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the highway robber hide in the shadow of powerful people?

Here, he takes cover under the king or the king’s ministers, whereby he goes on reflecting while scheming:

‘If anyone were to accuse me of anything, the king or his ministers will defend me by dismissing their accusations.’

Thus, if anyone were to accuse him of anything, the king or his ministers will defend him by dismissing the accusations. In this way, he hides in the shadow of powerful people.

Bhikkhus, by possessing these three things, the highway robber takes cover in uneven terrains; he hides under a covering; and he hides in the shadow of powerful people.

In a similar manner, Bhikkhus, by possessing three qualities, the evil bhikkhu injures and even destroys himself; he is blameworthy, as he falls to an offense and is reproached and questioned by the wise, thus accruing much evil and damaging demerit for himself, and for a long time.

What are these three?

Here, Bhikkhus, such a bhikkhu also takes cover in uneven terrains; he hides under a covering; and he hides in the shadow of powerful people.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the bhikkhu take cover in uneven terrains?

Here, the evil bhikkhu is endowed with uneven bodily behavior; uneven communication, speech or verbal action; as well as uneven thinking or mental behavior. In this way, the evil bhikkhu takes cover in uneven terrains.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the bhikkhu hide under a covering?

Here, not being dedicated at all to The Dhamma taught by The Tathāgata, the evil bhikkhu holds to wrong and extremist views that go contrary to The Dhamma, while he goes hiding like a coward, concealing himself under and within his wrong views. In this way, the bhikkhu hides under a covering.

And how, Bhikkhus, does the evil bhikkhu hide in the shadow of powerful people?

Here, he takes cover under the king or his ministers, whereby he goes on reflecting while scheming:

‘If anyone were to accuse me of anything, the king or his ministers will defend me by dismissing their accusations.’

Thus, if anyone were to accuse him of anything, the king or his ministers will defend him by dismissing the accusations. In this way, he hides in the shadow of powerful people.

Therefore, Bhikkhus, by possessing these three qualities, the evil bhikkhu injures and even destroys himself; he is blameworthy, as he falls to an offense and is reproached and questioned by the wise, thus accruing much evil and damaging demerit for himself, and for a long time.