AN 3.51 — Paṭhama Dvebrāhmaṇa Sutta (The Two Brahmins – Part 1)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

AN III

Suttas 51-60

Brāhmaṇa Vagga “The Section on Brahmins”

51. Paṭhama Dvebrāhmaṇa Sutta (The Two Brahmins – Part 1) At one time, two elderly brahmins, burdened by years, who had lived up to a hundred and twenty years, went and approached The Blessed One. Once the friendly greetings were exchanged, they sat down to one side and addressed The Blessed One by saying:

“Master Gotama, we are two elderly brahmins, burdened by years, who have lived up to a hundred and twenty years. However, we have not done anything wholesome, good, nor worthy of merits, and in addition, we have not established for ourselves any worthwhile shelter against the terrors of uncertainty.

“Please, let Master Gautama advise us for our good, welfare, and happiness for a long time.”

“Indeed brahmins, you are burdened by years, having lived up to a hundred and twenty years, but you have not done anything wholesome, good, nor worthy merits, and in addition, you have not established for yourselves any worthwhile shelter against the terrors of uncertainty.

“Truly, brahmins, this world is led on by decay, old age, illness, and death. But, despite the fact of being susceptible to and led on by decay, old age, illness, and death, one can still have and maintain protection through the shelter of restraint, built and developed through his bodily actions, his speech or communication, and his thoughts.

“These, therefore, are one’s own island, one’s own shelter and support, giving you the protection and safety you are looking for.”

‘Life sweeps by, making one’s lifespan short despite its seeming length, For, here is no shelter for the one growing old. Thus, on witnessing this inevitable danger in death, Quickly engage in doing actions, the merits of which Bring you and others much happiness.

Because, for the one going beyond as life comes to an end, It is the self-discipline in behavior,

Through restraint of his own bodily actions, his speech or communication, And especially the thoughts he entertains in his mind, Along with the merits done while still living, That truly become one’s own shelter, Leading him to the happiness beyond.’