AN 4.234 — About Soṇakāyana

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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.234

24. Deeds

About Soṇakāyana

Then Sikhāmoggallāna the brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, Sikhāmoggallāna sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha:

“Worthy Gotama, a few days ago the student Soṇakāyana came to me and said: ‘The ascetic Gotama advocates not doing any deeds. So he teaches the annihilation of the world!’ The world exists through deeds, and it remains because deeds are undertaken.”

“Brahmin, I can’t recall even seeing the student Soṇakāyana, so how could we possibly have had such a discussion? I declare these four kinds of deeds, having realized them with my own insight. What four?

There are dark deeds with dark results;

bright deeds with bright results;

dark and bright deeds with dark and bright results; and

neither dark nor bright deeds with neither dark nor bright results, which lead to the ending of deeds.

And what are dark deeds with dark results? It’s when someone makes hurtful choices by way of body, speech, and mind. … Touched by hurtful contacts, they experience hurtful feelings that are absolutely painful—like the beings in hell. These are called dark deeds with dark results.

And what are bright deeds with bright results? It’s when someone makes pleasing choices by way of body, speech, and mind. … Touched by pleasing contacts, they experience pleasing feelings of absolute happiness—like the gods of universal beauty. These are called bright deeds with bright results.

And what are dark and bright deeds with dark and bright results? It’s when someone makes both hurtful and pleasing choices by way of body, speech, and mind. … Touched by both hurtful and pleasing contacts, they experience both hurtful and pleasing feelings that are a mixture of pleasure and pain—like humans, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. These are called dark and bright deeds with dark and bright results.

And what are neither dark nor bright deeds with neither dark nor bright results, which lead to the ending of deeds? It's the intention to give up dark deeds with dark results, bright deeds with bright results, and both dark and bright deeds with both dark and bright results. These are called neither dark nor bright deeds with neither dark nor bright results, which lead to the ending of deeds.

These are the four kinds of deeds that I declare, having realized them with my own insight."