AN 9.26 — The Simile of the Stone Post

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 9.26

3. Abodes of Sentient Beings

The Simile of the Stone Post

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

There Venerable Candikāputta addressed the mendicants, "Reverends, Devadatta teaches the mendicants like this: 'When a mendicant's mind is solidified by heart, it's appropriate for them to say: "I understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"'"

When he said this, Venerable Sāriputta said to him, "Reverend Candikāputta, Devadatta does not teach the mendicants like that. He teaches like this: 'When a mendicant's mind is well consolidated by heart, it's appropriate for them to say: "I understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"'"

For a second time …

And for a third time Venerable Candikāputta addressed the mendicants …

And for a third time, Sāriputta said to him, "Reverend Candikāputta, Devadatta does not teach the mendicants like that. He teaches like this: 'When a mendicant's mind is well consolidated by heart, it's appropriate for them to say: "I understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"'

And how is a mendicant's mind well consolidated by heart? The mind is well consolidated by heart when they know: 'My mind is without greed.' … 'My mind is without hate.' … 'My mind is without delusion.' … 'My mind is not liable to become greedy.' … 'My mind is not liable to become hateful.' … 'My mind is not liable to become deluded.' … 'My mind is not liable to return to rebirth in the sensual realm.' … 'My mind is not liable to return to rebirth in the realm of luminous form.' … 'My mind is not liable to return to rebirth in the formless realm.'

When a mendicant's mind is rightly freed like this, even if compelling sights come into the range of vision they don't occupy their mind. Their mind is quite untainted. It is steady, imperturbable, observing disappearance.

Suppose there was a stone post, sixteen feet long. Eight feet were buried underground, and eight above ground. And violent storms were to blow up out of the east, the west, the north, and the south. They couldn't make it tremor and tremble and quake. Why is that? It's because that stone post is firmly embedded, with deep foundations. In the same way, when a mendicant's mind is rightly freed like this, even if compelling sights come into the range of vision they don't occupy their mind. Their mind is quite untainted. It is steady, imperturbable, observing disappearance.

If even compelling sounds … smells … tastes … touches … and ideas come into the range of the mind they don't occupy the mind. Their mind is quite untainted. It is steady, imperturbable, observing disappearance."