Iti 109 — A River

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Text

So It Was Said 109

The Book of the Fours

The Chapter on the Brahmin's Offering of the Teaching

A River

This was said by the Buddha, the Perfected One: that is what I heard.

"Suppose a person was being carried along by a river current that seemed nice and pleasant. If a person with clear eyes saw them, they'd say: 'My man, even though the river current carrying you along seems nice and pleasant, downstream there is a lake with waves and whirlpools, saltwater crocodiles and monsters. When you reach there it will result in death or deadly pain.' Then, when they heard what was said, they'd paddle against the stream using their hands and feet.

I've made up this simile to make a point. And this is the point. 'River current' is a term for craving.

'Seeming nice and pleasant' is a term for the six interior sense fields.

'A downstream lake' is a term for the five lower fetters.

'Danger of waves' is a term for anger and distress.

'Whirlpool' is a term for the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

'Saltwater crocodiles and monsters' is a term for ladies.

'Against the stream' is a term for renunciation.

'Paddling with hands and feet' is a term for rousing energy.

'A person with clear eyes' is a term for the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha."

The Buddha spoke this matter. On this it is said:

"In pain they'd give up sensual pleasures,

aspiring to the future sanctuary from the yoke.

With deep understanding and heart well freed,

they’d experience universal liberation.

That knowledge master who has completed the spiritual journey,

and gone to the end of the world, is called ‘one who has gone beyond’.”

This too is a matter that was spoken by the Blessed One: that is what I heard.