Ud 6.8 — The Courtesan

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Text

Heartfelt Sayings 6.8

The Courtesan

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. Now at that time two gangs were both hopelessly in love with a certain courtesan. Fighting, quarreling, and disputing, they attacked each other with fists, stones, rods, and swords, resulting in death and deadly pain.

Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their bowls and robes, entered Rājagaha for alms. Then, after the meal, when they returned from almsround, they went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what was happening.

Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

"What has been attained and what is to be attained are both strewn over with dust for that one training while still sick. Those for whom the training is the essence, or precepts and observances, chastity, and service as the essence: this is one extreme. Those who say, 'There's nothing wrong with sensual pleasures': this is the second extreme. Thus these two extremes swell the charnel grounds, while the charnel grounds swell wrong view. Not realizing these two extremes, some get stuck and some overreach. For those who realize these things, who were not found there, who did not conceive by that, there is no cycle of rebirths to be found."