SN 1.10 — Araññña Sutta: The Wilderness

English translation by John D. Ireland.

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Text

Thus have I heard. At one time the Lord was staying near Savatthi, at the Jeta Grove in Anathapindika's monastery. Now when night was passing a certain devataa, lighting up the whole Jeta Grove with her surpassing beauty, approached the Lord. Having drawn near and prostrated herself she stood to one side.[1]

Standing there the devata said:

Those living in the forest, Peaceful and calm, of pure life, Eating but one meal a day: How is it they appear so radiant?

The Lord replied:

They sorrow not for what is past, They have no longing for the future, The present is sufficient for them: Hence it is they appear so radiant. By having longing for the future, By sorrowing over what is past, By this fools are withered up As a cut down tender reed.

Note

1.

A devataa (or deva) is an inhabitant of one of the several heavens. The word means "a shining one" and is related to the English words: deity, divinity, etc. The body of a devataa is purer and more subtle than a human being's and radiates light. The period before dawn is the usual time for these beings to visit the Buddha, one of whose titles, it should be remembered, is satthaa devamanussaana.m, the teacher of gods and men.