SN 1.38 — A Splinter

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Text

Linked Discourses 1.38

4. The Host of a Hundred Felicities

A Splinter

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Maddakucchi deer park.

Now at that time the Buddha's foot had been cut by a wooden splinter. The Buddha was stricken by harrowing pains; physical feelings that were painful, sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, and disagreeable. But he endured unbothered, with mindfulness and situational awareness. And then he spread out his outer robe folded in four and laid down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware.

Then, late at night, seven hundred glorious deities of the host of a hundred felicities, lighting up the entire Maddakucchi, went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side.

Standing to one side, one deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such an elephant, sir! And as an elephant, he endures painful physical feelings that have come up—sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, and disagreeable—unbothered, with mindfulness and situational awareness."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a lion, sir! And as a lion, he endures painful physical feelings … unbothered."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a thoroughbred, sir! And as a thoroughbred, he endures painful physical feelings … unbothered."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a boss bull, sir! And as a boss bull, he endures painful physical feelings … unbothered."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a behemoth, sir! And as a behemoth, he endures painful physical feelings … unbothered."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is truly tamed, sir! And as someone tamed, he endures painful physical feelings … unbothered."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "See, his immersion is so well developed, and his mind is so well freed—not leaning forward or pulling back, and not held in place by forceful suppression. If anyone imagines that they can overcome such an elephant of a man, a lion of a man, a thoroughbred of a man, a boss bull of a man, a behemoth of a man, a tamed man—what is that but a failure to see?"

"Learned in the five branches of Vedic lore,

brahmins practice fervent mortification for a full century.

But their minds are not properly freed,

for those of base character don't cross to the far shore.

Seized by craving, attached to precept and observance,

they practice rough and fervent mortification for a hundred years.

But their minds are not properly freed,

for those of base character don't go to the far shore.

Someone who's fond of conceit can't be tamed,

and someone without immersion can't be a sage.

Living negligent alone in the wilderness,

they can't cross beyond Death's dominion."

"Having given up conceit, serene within oneself,

with a good heart, everywhere free;

living diligent alone in the wilderness,

they cross beyond Death's dominion."