SN 5.1 — Alavika Sutta: Sister Alavika

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

At Savatthi. Then, early in the morning, Alavika the nun put on her robes and, taking her bowl & outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. When she had gone for alms in Savatthi and had returned from her alms round, after her meal she went to the Grove of the Blind to spend the day. Having gone deep into the Grove of the Blind, she sat down at the foot of a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Mara the Evil One, wanting to arouse fear, horripilation, & terror in her, wanting to make her fall away from seclusion, approached her & addressed her in verse:

There's no escape in the world, so what are you trying to do with solitude? Enjoy sensual delights. Don't be someone who later regrets.

Then the thought occurred to Alavika the nun: "Now who has recited this verse — a human being or a non-human one?" Then it occurred to her: "This is Mara the Evil One, who has recited this verse wanting to arouse fear, horripilation, & terror in me, wanting to make me fall away from seclusion."

Then, having understood that "This is Mara the Evil One," she replied to him in verses:

There is an escape in the world, well touched by me with discernment — something that you, you Evil One, kinsman of the heedless, don't know. Sensual pleasures are like swords & spears; the aggregates, their executioner's block. What you call sensual delight is no delight for me.

Then Mara the Evil One — sad & dejected at realizing, "Alavika the nun knows me" — vanished right there.