SN 5.2 — With Somā

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 5.2

1. Nuns

With Somā

At Sāvatthī.

Then the nun Somā robed up in the morning and, taking her bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. She wandered for alms in Sāvatthī. After the meal, on her return from almsround, she went to the Dark Forest for the day's meditation, plunged deep into it, and sat at the root of a tree to meditate.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Somā feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away from immersion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:

"That state's very challenging;

it's for the sages to attain.

With her two-inch wisdom,

it's not possible for a woman."

Then the nun Somā thought, "Who's speaking this verse, a human or a non-human?"

Then she thought, "This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away from immersion!"

Then Somā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse:

"What difference does womanhood make

when the mind is serene,

and knowledge is present

as you rightly discern the Dhamma.

Surely someone who might think:

'I am woman', or 'I am man',

or 'I am' anything at all,

is fit for Māra to address."

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, "The nun Somā knows me!" miserable and sad, vanished right there.