SN 12.55 — A Great Tree

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 12.55

6. Suffering

A Great Tree

At Sāvatthī.

“There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. … That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

Suppose there was a great tree. And its roots going downwards and across all draw the sap upwards. Fed and fuelled by that, the great tree would stand for a long time.

In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the gratification provided by these things, your craving grows. Craving is a requirement for grasping. … That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

There are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. … That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

Suppose there was a great tree. Then a person comes along with a spade and basket. They’d cut the tree down at the roots, dig it up, and pull the roots out, down to the fibers and stems. They’d cut the tree apart, cut up the parts, and chop it into splinters. They’d dry the splinters in the wind and sun, burn them with fire, and reduce them to ashes. Then they’d winnow the ashes in a strong wind, or float them away down a swift stream. In this way the great tree is cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.

In the same way, there are things that fuel grasping. When you concentrate on the drawbacks of these things, your craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. … That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.”