SN 13.1 — SN 13:1 The Tip of the Fingernail | Nakhasikhā Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

The Tip of the Fingernail

Nakhasikhā Sutta (SN 13:1)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then the Blessed One, picking up a little bit of dust with the tip of his fingernail, said to the monks, “What do you think, monks? Which is greater: the little bit of dust I have picked up with the tip of my fingernail, or the great earth?”

“The great earth is far greater, lord. The little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail is next to nothing. It’s not a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth—this little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of

his fingernail—when compared with the great earth."

"In the same way, monks, for a disciple of the noble ones who is consummate in view, an individual who has broken through (to stream-entry), the suffering & stress totally ended & extinguished is far greater. That which remains in the state of having at most seven remaining lifetimes is next to nothing: It's not a hundredth, a thousandth, a one hundred-thousandth, when compared with the previous mass of suffering. That's how great the benefit is of breaking through to the Dhamma, monks. That's how great the benefit is of obtaining the Dhamma eye."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 55:1; SN 56:11