SN 18.1 — The Eye, Etc.

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 18.1

Chapter One

The Eye, Etc.

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then Venerable Rāhula went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I've heard it, I'll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute."

"What do you think, Rāhula? Is the eye permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, sir."

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

"Suffering, sir."

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"No, sir."

"Is the ear permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, sir." …

"Is the nose permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, sir." …

"Is the tongue permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, sir." …

"Is the body permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, sir." …

"Is the mind permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, sir."

“But if it’s impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?”

“Suffering, sir.”

“But if it’s impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”

“No, sir.”

“Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they’re freed. When they’re freed, they know they’re freed.

They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.’”

(The ten discourses of this series should be told in full the same way.)