SN 20.7 — The Drum Called Plugger

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Text

Linked Discourses 20.7

1. Similes

The Drum Called Plugger

At Sāvatthī.

“Once upon a time, mendicants, the Dasārahas had a mridangam drum called the Plugger. When the Plugger cracked, the Dasārahas patched it with another plug. Eventually, there came a time when the old wooden shell for the drumskin disappeared and all that was left of the mridangam Plugger was a mass of plugs.

In the same way, in a future time there will be mendicants who won’t want to listen when discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—are being recited. They won’t actively listen or try to understand, nor will they think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing.

But when discourses composed by poets—poetry, with fancy words and phrases, composed by outsiders or spoken by disciples—are being recited they will want to listen. They’ll actively listen and try to understand, and they’ll think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing. And that is how the discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—will disappear.

So you should train like this: ‘When discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—are being recited we will want to listen. We will actively listen and try to understand, and we will think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing.’ That’s how you should train.”