SN 36.4 — SN 36:4 The Bottomless Chasm | Pātāla Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

The Bottomless Chasm

Pātāla Sutta (SN 36:4)

“Monks, when an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person makes the statement, ‘There is a bottomless chasm in the ocean,’ he is talking about something that doesn’t exist, that can’t be found. The word ‘bottomless chasm’ is actually a designation for painful bodily feeling.

“When an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is touched by a painful bodily feeling, he sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. This is called an uninstructed run-of-the-mill person who has not risen up out of the bottomless chasm, who has not gained a foothold.

“When a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones is touched by a painful bodily feeling, he does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, does not beat his breast or become distraught. This is called a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones who has risen up out of the bottomless chasm, whose foothold is gained.”

Whoever can’t endure them

once they’ve arisen—

painful bodily feelings

that could kill living beings—

who trembles at their touch,

who cries & wails,

a weakling with no resilience:

He hasn’t risen up

out of the bottomless chasm

or even gained

a foothold.

Whoever endures them

once they’ve arisen—

painful bodily feelings

that could kill living beings—

who doesn’t tremble at their touch:

He’s risen up

out of the bottomless chasm;

his foothold is gained.