SN 52.8 — The Salaḷa Tree Hut

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Text

Linked Discourses 52.8

1. In Private

The Salaḷa Tree Hut

At one time Venerable Anuruddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the salaḷa tree hut. There Venerable Anuruddha addressed the mendicants: “Reverends, suppose that, although the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east, a large crowd were to come along with a spade and basket, saying: ‘We’ll make this Ganges River slant, slope, and incline to the west!’ What do you think, reverends? Would they succeed?”

“No, reverend. Why is that? The Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines to the east. It’s not easy to make it slant, slope, and incline to the west. That large crowd will eventually get weary and frustrated.”

“In the same way, while a mendicant develops and cultivates the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, if rulers or their chief ministers, friends or colleagues, relatives or family should invite them to accept wealth, saying: ‘Please, my man, why let these ocher robes torment you? Why follow the practice of shaving your head and carrying an alms bowl? Come, return to a lesser life, enjoy wealth, and make merit!’

It is quite impossible for a mendicant who is developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation to resign the training and return to a lesser life. Why is that? Because for a long time that mendicant’s mind has slanted, sloped, and inclined to seclusion. So it’s impossible for them to return to a lesser life.

And how does a mendicant develop and cultivate the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body … feelings … mind … principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. That’s how a mendicant develops and cultivates the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.”