

0.0.1 Hair of the Tail

1. At one time the Auspicious One dwelled at Vesali, in the Great Wood, at the Hall with the Peaked Roof. It so happened that in the morning, the venerable Ananda, having dressed, having taken bowl and robe, entered Vesali for alms food. The venerable Ananda saw many Licchavi boys in the training hall practicing archery, shooting arrows from afar through a very tiny hole, [the distance of] a palm tree, shot after shot without missing. Having seen this, it occurred to him: “Indeed these Licchavi boys are well-trained. Indeed these Licchavi boys are well-trained, in as much as they shoot arrows from afar through a very tiny hole, [at the distance of] a palm tree, shot after shot without missing.”

2. Then the venerable Ananda, having wandered in Vesali for alms food, after his meal, having gone back after alms gathering, by which way [led to] the Auspicious One, by that way he approached. Having approached the Auspicious One, having bowed down, he sat down to one side. Having sat down to one side, the venerable Ananda said this to the Auspicious One: ”Here I, O Bhante, in the morning, having taken bowl and robe, entered Vesali for alms food. I, O Bhante, saw many Licchavi boys in the training hall practicing archery, shooting arrows from afar through a very tiny hole, [the distance of] a palm tree, shot after shot without missing. Having seen this, it occurred to me: “Indeed these Licchavi boys are well-trained. Indeed these Licchavi boys are well-trained, in

as much as they shoot arrows from afar through a very tiny hole [at the distance of] a palm tree, shot after shot without missing.”

3. “So what do you think? O Ananda, which is more difficult or harder to achieve, shooting arrows from afar through a very tiny hole [at the distance of] a palm tree, shot after shot without missing, or that one might pierce the tip of a hair split into a hundred strands [with an arrow] tip?” Just this, O Bhante, is simply more difficult and harder to achieve: that one might pierce the tip of a hair split into a hundred strands [with an arrow] tip.” Now, O Ananda, they pierce what is harder to pierce, those who pierce as it has come to be: “This is suffering”; who pierce as it has come to be: “This is the origination of suffering”; who pierce as it has come to be: “This is the cessation of suffering”; who pierce as it has come to be: “This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering.”

4. Therefore, O Ananda, an endeavour should be made [to realize]: “This is suffering.” An endeavour should be made [to realize]: “This is the origination of suffering.” An endeavour should be made [to realize]: “This is the cessation of suffering.” An endeavour should be made [to realize]: “This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering.”