

The First Discourse of the simile of the Clouds

*English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato
Āṅguttaranikāyo Catukkanipātapāḷi (numbered discourses 4)*

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Mendicants, there are these four kinds of clouds. What four?"

One thunders but doesn't rain,
one rains but doesn't thunder,
one neither thunders nor rains, and
one both rains and thunders.

These are the four kinds of clouds. In the same way, these four people similar to clouds are found in the world. What four?"

One thunders but doesn't rain,
one rains but doesn't thunder,
one neither thunders nor rains, and
one both rains and thunders.

And how does a person thunder but not rain? It's when a person is a talker, not a doer. That's how a person thunders but doesn't rain. That person is like a cloud that thunders but doesn't rain, I say.

And how does a person rain but not thunder? It's when a person is a doer, not a talker. ...

And how does a person neither thunder nor rain? It's when a person is neither a talker nor a doer. ...

And how does a person both thunder and rain? It's when a person is both a talker and a doer. ...

These four people similar to clouds are found in the world.

The Second Discourse of the simile of the Clouds

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato

Āṅguttaranikāyo Catukkanipātapāḷi (numbered discourses 4)

“Mendicants, there are these four kinds of clouds. What four?”

One thunders but doesn’t rain,
one rains but doesn’t thunder,
one neither thunders nor rains, and
one both rains and thunders.

These are the four kinds of clouds. In the same way, these four people similar to clouds are found in the world. What four?

One thunders but doesn’t rain,
one rains but doesn’t thunder,
one neither thunders nor rains, and
one both rains and thunders.

And how does a person thunder but not rain? It’s when a person memorizes the teaching—statements, songs, discussions, verses, inspired exclamations, legends, stories of past lives, amazing stories, and classifications. But they don’t truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. That’s how a person thunders but doesn’t rain. That person is like a cloud that thunders but doesn’t rain, I say.

And how does a person rain but not thunder? It’s when a person doesn’t memorize the teaching ... But they truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ...

And how does a person neither thunder nor rain? It’s when a person doesn’t memorize the teaching ... Nor do they truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ...

And how does a person both thunder and rain? It’s when a person memorizes the teaching ... And they truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ...

These four people similar to clouds are found in the world.”