AN 2.36 — AN 2.36

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

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So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.

Now at that time Venerable Sāriputta was staying near Sāvatthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Monastery. There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants: “Reverends, mendicants!”

“Reverend,” they replied. Sāriputta said this:

“I will teach you about an individual fettered internally and one fettered externally. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, reverend,” they replied. Sāriputta said this:

“Who is an individual fettered internally? It’s a mendicant who is ethical, restrained in the monastic code, conducting themselves well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, they keep the rules they’ve undertaken. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in one of the orders of gods. When they pass away from there, they’re a returner, who comes back to this place. This is called an individual who is fettered internally, a returner, who comes back to this place.

Who is an individual fettered externally? It’s a mendicant who is ethical, restrained in the monastic code, conducting themselves well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, they keep the rules they’ve undertaken. They enter and remain in a certain peaceful state of freed mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in one of the orders of gods. When they pass away from there, they’re a non-returner, not coming back to this place. This is called an individual who is fettered externally, a non-returner, who does not come back to this place.

Furthermore, a mendicant is ethical … they keep the rules they’ve undertaken. They simply practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding sensual pleasures. They simply practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding future lives. They practice for the ending of craving. They practice for the ending of greed. When their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in one of the orders of gods. When they pass away from there, they are non-returners, not coming back to this place. This is called an individual who is fettered externally, a non-returner, who does not come back to this place.”

Then several peaceful-minded deities went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to the Buddha, “Sir, Venerable Sāriputta is in the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Monastery, where he is teaching the mendicants about an individual with internal fetters and one with external fetters. The assembly is overjoyed! Sir, please go to Venerable Sāriputta out of sympathy.” The Buddha consented with silence.

Then the Buddha, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from Jeta’s Grove and reappeared in the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Monastery, in front of Sāriputta. He sat down on the seat spread out. Sāriputta bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

“Just now, Sāriputta, several peaceful-minded deities came up to me, bowed, and stood to one side. Those deities said to me: ‘Sir, Venerable Sāriputta is in the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Monastery, where he is teaching the mendicants about an individual with internal fetters and one with external fetters. The assembly is overjoyed! Sir, please go to Venerable Sāriputta out of sympathy.’

Those deities, though they number ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty, can stand on the point of a needle without bumping up against each other.

Sāriputta, you might think: ‘Surely those deities, since so many of them can stand on the point of a needle without bumping up against each other, must have developed their minds in that place.’ But you should not see it like this. It was right here that those deities developed their minds.

So you should train like this: ‘We shall have peaceful faculties and peaceful minds.’ That’s how you should train. When your faculties and mind are peaceful, your acts of body, speech, and mind will be peaceful, thinking: ‘We shall present the gift of peace to our spiritual companions.’ That’s how you should train.

Those wanderers of other religions, Sāriputta, who have not heard this exposition of the teaching are lost.”