AN 3.101 — A Panner

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Text

Numbered Discourses 3.101

10. A Lump of Salt

A Panner

“Native gold has coarse corruptions: sand, soil, and gravel. A panner or their apprentice pours it into a pan, where they wash, rinse, and clean it. When that’s been eliminated, there are medium corruptions in the native gold: fine grit and coarse sand. The panner washes it again. When that’s been eliminated, there are fine corruptions in the native gold: fine sand and black grime. The panner washes it again. When that’s been eliminated, only golden flecks remain. A goldsmith or their apprentice places the native gold in a crucible where they blow, melt, and smelt it. Still the native gold is not settled and the dross is not totally gone. It’s not pliable, workable, or radiant, but is brittle and not completely ready for working. But the goldsmith keeps on blowing, melting, and smelting it. The native gold becomes pliable, workable, and radiant, not brittle, and ready to be worked. Then the goldsmith can successfully create any kind of ornament they want, whether a bracelet, earrings, a necklace, or a golden garland.

In the same way, a mendicant who is committed to the higher mind has coarse corruptions: bad bodily, verbal, and mental conduct. A sincere, proficient mendicant gives these up, dispels, eliminates, and obliterates them.

When they’ve been given up and eliminated, there are middling corruptions: sensual, malicious, or cruel thoughts. A sincere, proficient mendicant gives these up, dispels, eliminates, and obliterates them.

When they’ve been given up and eliminated, there are fine corruptions: thoughts of family, country, and status. A sincere, proficient mendicant gives these up, dispels, eliminates, and obliterates them.

When they’ve been given up and eliminated, only thoughts about the teaching are left. That immersion is not peaceful or sublime or tranquil or unified, but is held in place by forceful suppression.

But there comes a time when that mind is stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That immersion is peaceful and sublime and tranquil and unified, not held in place by forceful suppression. They extend the mind to realize by insight each and every thing that can be realized by insight; and they are capable of realizing those things, since each and every one is within range.

If they wish: ‘May I wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying myself and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.’ They are capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range.

If they wish: ‘With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, may I hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.’ They are capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range.

If they wish: ‘May I understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with my mind. May I understand mind with greed as “mind with greed”, and mind without greed as “mind without greed”; mind with hate as “mind with hate”, and mind without hate as “mind without hate”; mind with delusion as “mind with delusion”, and mind without delusion as “mind without delusion”; constricted mind as “constricted mind”, and scattered mind as “scattered mind”; expansive mind as “expansive mind”, and unexpansive mind as “unexpansive mind”; mind that is not supreme as “mind that is not supreme”, and mind that is supreme as “mind that is supreme”; mind immersed in samādhi as “mind immersed in samādhi”, and mind not immersed in samādhi as “mind not immersed in samādhi”; freed mind as “freed mind”, and unfreed mind as “unfreed mind”.’ They are capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range.

If they wish: ‘May I recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. May I remember: “There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.” May I recollect my many past lives, with features and details.’ They are capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range.

If they wish: ‘With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, may I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place—and understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: “These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.” And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, may I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful

and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. And may I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.' They are capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range.

If they wish: 'May I realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.' They are capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range."