AN 4.123 — Difference (1st)

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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.123

13. Fears

Difference (1st)

“Mendicants, these four individuals are found in the world. What four?

Take an individual who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. They enjoy it and like it and find it rewarding. If they abide in that, are committed to it, and meditate on it often without losing it, when they die they’re reborn in the company of the gods of the Divinity’s host. The lifespan of the gods of the Divinity’s host is one eon. An ordinary person stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they go to hell or the animal realm or the ghost realm. But a disciple of the Buddha stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they’re extinguished in that very life. This is the difference between a learned noble disciple and an unlearned ordinary person, that is, when there is a place of rebirth.

Furthermore, take an individual who, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. They enjoy it and like it and find it rewarding. If they abide in that, are committed to it, and meditate on it often without losing it, when they die they’re reborn in the company of the gods of sublime luminosity. The lifespan of the gods of sublime luminosity is two eons. An ordinary person stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they go to hell or the animal realm or the ghost realm. But a disciple of the Buddha stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they’re extinguished in that very life. This is the difference between a learned noble disciple and an unlearned ordinary person, that is, when there is a place of rebirth.

Furthermore, take an individual who, with the fading away of rapture, enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’ They enjoy it and like it and find it rewarding. If they abide in that, are committed to it, and meditate on it often without losing it, when they die they’re reborn in the company of the gods of universal beauty. The lifespan of the gods of universal beauty is four eons. An ordinary person stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they go to hell or the animal realm or the ghost realm. But a disciple of

the Buddha stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they're extinguished in that very life. This is the difference between a learned noble disciple and an unlearned ordinary person, that is, when there is a place of rebirth.

Furthermore, take an individual who, with the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. They enjoy it and like it and find it rewarding. If they abide in that, are committed to it, and meditate on it often without losing it, when they die they're reborn in the company of the gods of abundant fruit. The lifespan of the gods of abundant fruit is five hundred eons. An ordinary person stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they go to hell or the animal realm or the ghost realm. But a disciple of the Buddha stays there until the lifespan of those gods is spent, then they're extinguished in that very life. This is the difference between a learned noble disciple and an unlearned ordinary person, that is, when there is a place of rebirth.

These are the four individuals found in the world."