AN 4.190 — Sabbath

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.190

19. Brahmins

Sabbath

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery.

Now, at that time it was the sabbath, and the Buddha was sitting surrounded by the Saṅgha of monks. Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were so very silent. He addressed them:

"This assembly has no chaff, monks, it is free of chaff, pure, and consolidated in the core. Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly! An assembly such as this is rarely seen in the world. An assembly such as this is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of greeting with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world. For an assembly such as this, giving little becomes much, while giving much becomes even more. An assembly such as this is worth traveling many leagues to see, even if you have to carry your own provisions in a knapsack.

There are mendicants staying in this Saṅgha who have attained to the gods. There are mendicants staying in this Saṅgha who have attained to divinity. There are mendicants staying in this Saṅgha who have attained to the imperturbable. There are mendicants staying in this Saṅgha who have attained to nobility.

And how has a mendicant attained to the gods? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption … As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption … That's how a mendicant has attained to the gods.

And how has a mendicant attained to divinity? Firstly, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. Furthermore, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of compassion … rejoicing … equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

That’s how a mendicant has attained to divinity.

And how has a mendicant attained to the imperturbable? It’s when a mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite’, enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite’, he enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, he enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, he enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. That’s how a mendicant has attained to the imperturbable.

And how has a mendicant attained to nobility? It’s when they 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 mendicant has attained to nobility.”