AN 9.6 — Association

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Numbered Discourses 9.6

1. Awakening

Association

There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants:

“Reverends, you should distinguish two two kinds of individual: those you should associate with, and those you shouldn’t associate with. You should distinguish two kinds of robes: those you should wear, and those you shouldn’t wear. You should distinguish two kinds of almsfood: that which you should eat, and that which you shouldn’t eat. You should distinguish two kinds of lodging: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent. You should distinguish two kinds of village or town: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent. You should distinguish two kinds of country: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent.

‘You should distinguish two two kinds of individual: those you should associate with, and those you shouldn’t associate with.’ That’s what I said, but why did I say it? Well, should you know of an individual: ‘When I associate with this individual, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline. And the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are hard to come by. And the goal of the ascetic life for which I went forth from the lay life to homelessness is not being fully developed.’ In this case you should leave that individual at that very time of the day or night, without asking. You shouldn’t follow them.

Whereas, should you know of an individual: ‘When I associate with this individual, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline. But the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are easy to come by. However, the goal of the ascetic life for which I went forth from the lay life to homelessness is not being fully developed.’ In this case you should leave that individual after reflecting, without asking. You shouldn’t follow them.

Well, should you know of an individual: ‘When I associate with this individual, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow. And the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are hard to come by. But the goal of the ascetic life for which I went forth from the lay life to homelessness is being fully developed.’ In this case you should follow that individual after appraisal. You shouldn’t leave them.

Whereas, should you know of an individual: ‘When I associate with this individual, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow. And the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are easy to come by. And the goal of the ascetic life for which I went forth from the lay life to homelessness is being fully developed.’ In this case you should follow that individual. You shouldn’t leave them, even if they send you away. ‘You should distinguish two kinds of individual: those you should associate with, and those you shouldn’t associate with.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.

‘You should distinguish two kinds of robes: those you should wear, and those you shouldn’t wear.’ That’s what I said, but why did I say it? Well, should you know of a robe: ‘When I wear this robe, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not wear that kind of robe. Whereas, should you know of a robe: ‘When I wear this robe, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.’ You should wear that kind of robe. ‘You should distinguish two kinds of robes: those you should wear, and those you shouldn’t wear.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.

‘You should distinguish two kinds of almsfood: that which you should eat, and that which you shouldn’t eat.’ That’s what I said, but why did I say it? Well, should you know of almsfood: ‘When I eat this almsfood, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not eat that kind of almsfood. Whereas, should you know of almsfood: ‘When I eat this almsfood, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.’ You should eat that kind of almsfood. ‘You should distinguish two kinds of almsfood: that which you should eat, and that which you shouldn’t eat.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.

‘You should distinguish two kinds of lodging: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent.’ That’s what I said, but why did I say it? Well, should you know of a lodging: ‘When I frequent this lodging, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not frequent that kind of lodging. Whereas, should you know of a lodging: ‘When I frequent this lodging, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.’ You should frequent that kind of lodging. ‘You should distinguish two kinds of lodging: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.

‘You should distinguish two kinds of village or town: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent.’ That’s what I said, but why did I say it? Well, should you know of a village or town: ‘When I frequent this village or town, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not frequent that kind of village or town. Whereas, should you know of a village or town: ‘When I frequent this village or town, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.’ You should frequent that kind of village or town. ‘You should distinguish two kinds of village or town: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.

‘You should distinguish two kinds of country: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent.’ That’s what I said, but why did I say it? Well, should you know of a country: ‘When I frequent this country, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not frequent that kind of country. Whereas, should you know of a country: ‘When I frequent this country, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities

grow.’ You should frequent that kind of country. ‘You should distinguish two kinds of country: those you should frequent, and those you shouldn’t frequent.’ That’s what I said, and this is why I said it.”