AN 10.119 — The Ceremony of Descent (1st)

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Text

Numbered Discourses 10.119

12. The Ceremony of Descent

The Ceremony of Descent (1st)

Now, at that time it was the sabbath. The brahmin Jānussoṇi had bathed his head and dressed in a new pair of linen robes. Holding a handful of fresh grass, he stood to one side not far from the Buddha.

The Buddha saw him, and said, “Brahmin, why have you bathed your head and dressed in a new pair of linen robes? Why are you standing to one side holding a handful of fresh grass? What’s going on today with the brahmin clan?”

“Worthy Gotama, today is the ceremony of descent for the brahmin clan.”

“But how do the brahmins observe the ceremony of descent?”

“Well, worthy Gotama, on the sabbath the brahmins bathe their heads and dress in a new pair of linen robes. They make a heap of fresh cow dung and spread it with green grass. Then they make their beds between the boundary and the fire chamber. That night they rise three times and worship the fire with cupped palms: ‘We descend, lord! We descend, lord!’ And they serve the fire with abundant ghee, oil, and butter. And when the night has passed they serve the brahmins with delicious fresh and cooked foods. That’s how the brahmins observe the ceremony of descent.”

“The ceremony of descent observed by the brahmins is quite different from that observed in the training of the Noble One.”

“But worthy Gotama, how is the ceremony of descent observed in the training of the Noble One? Worthy Gotama, please teach me this.”

“Well then, brahmin, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, worthy sir,” Jānussoṇi replied. The Buddha said this:

“It’s when a noble disciple reflects: ‘Wrong view has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong view, they descend from wrong view.

‘Wrong purpose has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong purpose, they descend from wrong purpose.

‘Wrong speech has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong speech, they descend from wrong speech.

‘Wrong action has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong action, they descend from wrong action.

‘Wrong livelihood has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong livelihood, they descend from wrong livelihood.

‘Wrong effort has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong effort, they descend from wrong effort.

‘Wrong mindfulness has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong mindfulness, they descend from wrong mindfulness.

‘Wrong immersion has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong immersion, they descend from wrong immersion.

‘Wrong knowledge has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong knowledge, they descend from wrong knowledge.

‘Wrong freedom has a bad result in both this life and the next.’ Reflecting like this, they give up wrong freedom, they descend from wrong freedom. This is the ceremony of descent in the training of the Noble One.”

“The ceremony of descent observed by the brahmins is quite different from that observed in the training of the Noble One. And, worthy Gotama, the ceremony of descent observed by the brahmins is not worth a sixteenth part of a master of the ceremony of descent observed in the training of the Noble One. Excellent, worthy Gotama! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”