AN 2.47 — AN 2.47

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

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“There are, mendicants, these two assemblies. What two? An assembly educated in fancy talk, not in questioning, and an assembly educated in questioning, not in fancy talk. And what is an assembly educated in fancy talk, not in questioning? It is an assembly where, when discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—are being recited the mendicants do not want to listen. They don’t actively listen or try to understand, nor do they think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing. But when discourses composed by poets—poetry, with fancy words and phrases, composed by outsiders or spoken by disciples—are being recited the mendicants do want to listen. They actively listen and try to understand, and they think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing. But when they’ve memorized those teachings they don’t question or examine each other, saying: ‘Why does it say this? What does that mean?’ So they don’t reveal what is hidden or clarify what is unclear, or dispel doubt regarding the many doubtful matters. This is called an assembly educated in fancy talk, not in questioning.

And what is an assembly educated in questioning, not in fancy talk? It is an assembly where, when discourses composed by poets—poetry, with fancy words and phrases, composed by outsiders or spoken by disciples—are being recited the mendicants do not want to listen. They don’t actively listen or try to understand, nor do they think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing. But when discourses spoken by the Realized One—deep, profound, transcendent, dealing with emptiness—are being recited the mendicants do want to listen. They actively listen and try to understand, and they think those teachings are worth learning and memorizing. And when they’ve memorized those teachings they question and examine each other, saying: ‘Why does it say this? What does that mean?’ So they reveal what is hidden, clarify what is unclear, and dispel doubt regarding the many doubtful matters. This is called an assembly educated in questioning, not in fancy talk. These are the two assemblies. The better of these two assemblies is the assembly educated in questioning, not in fancy talk.”