AN 4.125 — Metta Sutta: Loving-kindness (1)

English translation by Ñanamoli Thera.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved; source ellipsis or repetition-omission statement retained. Canonical repetitions were not reconstructed.

Text

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"Here, bhikkhus, a certain person abides with his heart imbued with loving-kindness extending over one quarter, likewise the second quarter, likewise the third quarter, likewise the fourth quarter, and so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides with his heart abundant, exalted, measureless in loving-kindness, without hostility or ill-will, extending over the all-encompassing world.

"He finds gratification in that, finds it desirable and looks to it for his well-being; steady and resolute thereon, he abides much in it, and if he dies without losing it, he reappears among the gods of a High Divinity's retinue.

"Now the gods of a High Divinity's retinue have a life-span of one aeon. An ordinary person [who has not attained the Noble Eightfold Path] stays there for his life-span; but after he has used up the whole life-span enjoyed by those gods, he leaves it all, and [according to

what his past deeds may have been] he may go down even to hell, or to an animal womb, or to the ghost realm. But one who has given ear to the Perfect One stays there [in that heaven] for his life-span, and after he has used up the whole life-span enjoyed by those gods, he eventually attains complete extinction of lust, hate and delusion in that same kind of heavenly existence.

"It is this that distinguishes, that differentiates, the wise hearer who is ennobled [by attainment of the Noble Path] from the unwise ordinary man, when, that is to say, there is a destination for reappearance [after death, but an arahant has made an end of birth].

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See also: AN 4.126