AN 10.54 — Samatha Sutta: With Regard to Tranquility

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an10/an10.054.than.html

Source revision: sha256:7c411108530c04aafcca0ac43267ed12227cbb2653320e8ae0bb686e566bb783

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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, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

"Even if a monk is not skilled in the ways of the minds of others,[1] he should train himself: 'I will be skilled in reading my own mind.'

"And how is a monk skilled in reading his own mind? Imagine a young woman — or man — fond of adornment, examining the image of her own face in a bright, clean mirror or bowl of clear water: If she saw any dirt or blemish there, she would try to remove it. If she saw no dirt or blemish there, she would be pleased, her resolves fulfilled: 'How fortunate I am! How clean I am!' In the same way, a monk's self-examination is very productive in terms of skillful qualities:[2] 'Am I one who achieves internal tranquility of awareness, or am I one who does not achieve internal tranquility of awareness? Am I one who achieves insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, or am I one who does not achieve insight into phenomena through heightened discernment?"

"If, on examination, he knows, 'I am one who achieves internal tranquility of awareness but not insight into phenomena through heightened discernment,' then his duty is to make an effort for the maintenance of internal tranquility of awareness and for insight into phenomena through heightened discernment. At a later time he will then be one who achieves both internal tranquility of awareness and insight into phenomena through

heightened discernment.

"But if, on examination, the monk knows, 'I am one who achieves insight into phenomena through heightened discernment but not internal tranquility of awareness,' then his duty is to make an effort for the maintenance of insight into phenomena through heightened discernment and for internal tranquility of awareness. At a later time he will then be one who achieves both insight into phenomena through heightened discernment and internal tranquility of awareness.

"But if, on examination, the monk knows, 'I am one who achieves neither internal tranquility of awareness nor insight into phenomena through heightened discernment,' then he should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for gaining those very same skillful qualities. Just as when a person whose turban or head was on fire would put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness to put out the fire on his turban or head; in the same way, the monk should put forth extra desire, effort, diligence, endeavor, relentlessness, mindfulness, & alertness for gaining those very same skillful qualities.

"But if, on examination, the monk knows, 'I am one who achieves both internal tranquility of awareness and insight into phenomena through heightened discernment,' then his duty is to make an effort in maintaining those very same skillful qualities to a higher degree for the ending of the effluents.

"Monks, I speak of robes in two ways: to be partaken of and not to be partaken of. I also speak of alms food... lodgings... villages & towns... countrysides... individuals in two ways: to be partaken of and not to be partaken of.

"'Monks, I speak of robes in two ways: to be partaken of and not to be partaken of': Thus was it said. In reference to what was it said? Any robe of which one has come to know, 'When I partake of this robe, unskillful qualities increase and skillful qualities decrease,' that sort of robe is not to be partaken of. Any robe of which one has come to know, 'When I partake of this robe, unskillful qualities decrease and skillful qualities increase,' that sort of robe is to be partaken of. 'Monks, I speak of robes in two ways: to be partaken of and not to be partaken of': Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said.

"'Monks, I also speak of alms food in two ways...' ...

"'Monks, I also speak of lodgings in two ways...' ...

"'Monks, I also speak of villages & towns in two ways...' ...

"'Monks, I also speak of countrysides in two ways...' ...

"'Monks, I also speak of individuals in two ways: to be partaken of and not to be partaken of':[3] Thus was it said. In reference to what was it said? Any individual of whom one has come to know, 'When I partake of this individual, unskillful qualities increase and skillful

qualities decrease,' that sort of individual is not to be partaken of. Any individual of whom one has come to know, 'When I partake of this individual, unskillful qualities decrease and skillful qualities increase,' that sort of individual is to be partaken of. 'Monks, I also speak of individuals in two ways: to be partaken of and not to be partaken of': Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said."

Notes

1.

I.e., not skilled in reading the minds of others.

2.

I.e., if he conducts it in this way.

3.

The word sevitabba, when used with material items, is usually translated as "to be partaken of." When used with people, it is usually translated as "to be associated with." However, here I have used the former rendering throughout to maintain the pattern of the original language, and also to point out the fact that when one associates with another person, one internalizes that person's qualities and views.

See also: MN 149; SN 35.204; AN 2.30; AN 4.94; AN 4.170; AN 10.71.