Dhp 60-75 — Chapter on Fools

English translation by Bhante Suddhāso.
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Text

Collection of Minor Texts

Verses of Dhamma

Chapter on Fools

Long is the night for one who is awake,

long is a yojana for one who is weary,

long is saṁsāra for fools

who do not understand the true Dhamma.

If you do not find a traveler

who is superior or equal to yourself,

then resolutely travel alone;

one cannot go with a fool.

A fool is tormented

by thoughts of children and wealth;

but since one does not even possess oneself,

how could one possess children and wealth?

A fool who conceives of foolishness

is wise in that regard;

but a fool who has the conceit of wisdom

can truly be called a fool.

Even if a fool spends a lifetime

in the presence of the wise,

they do not understand the Dhamma,

just as a spoon does not understand the flavor of soup.
Even if a discerning person spends only a moment
in the presence of the wise,
they quickly understand the Dhamma,
just as a tongue understands the flavor of soup.
Unwise fools act as if
they are not even their own friends—
they perform evil actions
which yield bitter fruit.
It is not good to perform an action
which one will later regret,
when, weeping with a tearful face,
one experiences its result.
But it is good to perform an action
which one will not later regret,
when, satisfied and uplifted,
one experiences its result.
A fool thinks that evil is sweet
as long as its results have yet to fully manifest;
but when the results of that evil fully manifest,
then they descend into suffering.
Month after month
a fool might eat using the tip of a blade of grass;
but such a one is not worth even a sixteenth as much
as those who comprehend the Dhamma.
Once an evil action has been performed,
it is not released suddenly like milk;
burning, it follows a fool,
like fire concealed by ash.

It brings no benefit
when fame comes to a fool;
it destroys their good traits
and tears apart their head.
A fool wishes for a false existence—
preeminence among monks,
dominion in residences,
and honor among other families.
“May both renunciants and laypeople
think it was done by me alone;
may I alone have the highest authority,
in determining what should or should not be done.”
In this way,
the attitude, desire, and conceit of a fool grows.
Knowledge is the cause of gain,
knowledge leads to Nibbāna;
since this is exactly what
a monastic disciple of the Buddha understands,
they do not delight in acclaim;
they devote themselves to seclusion.