Snp 1.1 — Sn 1:1 The Snake

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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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

I : The Snake Chapter (Uraga Vagga)

1:1 The Snake

Alternative versions of this poem—a Sanskrit version included in the Udānavarga, and a Gāndhārī version included in the Gāndhārī Dharmapada—have many of the same verses included here, but arranged in a different order. This suggests that the verses originally may have been separate poems, spoken on separate occasions, and that they were gathered together because they share the same refrain.

The monk who subdues his arisen anger

as, with herbs, snake-venom once it has spread,

sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who has cut off passion
without leaving a trace,
as he would, plunging into a lake, a lotus,
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who has cut off craving
without leaving a trace,
drying up the swift-flowing flood,1
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who has uprooted conceit
without leaving a trace,
as a great flood, a very weak bridge made of reeds,
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk seeing
in states of becoming
no essence,
as he would,
when examining fig trees,
no flowers,
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk with no inner anger,
who has thus gone beyond
becoming & not-,

sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk whose discursive thoughts are dispersed,
well-dealt with inside
without leaving a trace,
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who hasn't slipped past or held back,2
transcending all
this objectification,3
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who hasn't slipped past or held back,
knowing with regard to the world
that "All this is unreal,"
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who hasn't slipped past or held back,
without greed, as "All this is unreal,"
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who hasn't slipped past or held back,
without aversion, as "All this is unreal,"
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who hasn't slipped past or turned back,
without delusion, as "All this is unreal,"
sloughs off the near shore & far—

as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk in whom
there are no obsessions4
—the roots of unskillfulness totally destroyed—
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk in whom
there's nothing born of disturbance5
that would lead him back to this shore,
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk in whom
there's nothing born of the underbrush6
that would act as a cause
for binding him to becoming,
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who's abandoned five hindrances,
who, untroubled, de-arrowed,7
has crossed over doubt,
sloughs off the near shore & far—
as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

vv. 1–17

Notes

1. On craving as a flooding river, see Dhp 251, 337, 339–340, and 347.

2. See Iti 49.

3. On objectification, see Sn 4:11, note 4, and the introduction to MN 18.

4. The seven obsessions, listed in AN 7:11, are: sensual passion, resistance, views, uncertainty, conceit, passion for becoming, and ignorance. The relationship of three of these obsessions—the first two and the last—to the three types of feeling is discussed in MN 44.

5. Daratha. For a detailed description of the subtleties of disturbance, see MN 121.

6. Underbrush stands for desire. See Dhp 344.

7. The arrow can stand for becoming, craving, or grief. See SN 36:6, Sn 3:8, Sn 4:15, Dhp 351, Thag 6:13, Thig 3:5, and Thig 6:1.