Snp 1.2 — Dhaniya Sutta: Dhaniya the Cattleman

English translation by Thanissaro 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

Dhaniya the cattleman:[1]

"The rice is cooked, my milking done. I live with my people along the banks of the Mahi; my hut is roofed, my fire lit: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

The Buddha:

"Free from anger, my stubbornness gone,[2] I live for one night along the banks of the Mahi; my hut's roof is open, my fire out:[3] so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

Dhaniya:

"No mosquitoes or gadflies are to be found. The cows range in the marshy meadow where the grasses flourish. They could stand the rain if it came: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

The Buddha:

"A raft, well-made, has been lashed together.[4] Having crossed over, gone to the far shore, I've subdued the flood. No need for a raft is to be found:[5] so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

Dhaniya:

"My wife is compliant, not careless, is charming, has lived with me long. I hear no evil about her at all: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

The Buddha:

"My mind is compliant, released, has long been nurtured, well tamed. No evil is to be found in me: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

Dhaniya:

"I support myself on my earnings. My sons live in harmony, free from disease. I hear no evil about them at all: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

The Buddha:

"I'm in no one's employ,[6] I wander the whole world on the reward [of my Awakening]. No need for earnings is to be found: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

Dhaniya:

"There are cows, young bulls, cows in calf, & breeding cows, & a great bull, the leader of the herd: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

The Buddha:

"There are no cows, no young bulls, no cows in calf or breeding cows, no great bull, the leader of the herd:[7] so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

Dhaniya:

"The stakes are dug-in, immovable. The new muñja-grass halters, well-woven, not even young bulls could break: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain."

The Buddha:

"Having broken my bonds like a great bull, like a great elephant tearing a rotting vine, I never again will lie in the womb: so if you want, rain-god, go ahead & rain." The great cloud rained down straightaway, filling the lowlands & high. Hearing the rain-god pour down, Dhaniya said: "How great our gain that we've gazed on the Blessed One! We go to him, the One with vision, for refuge. May you be our teacher, Great Sage. My wife & I are compliant. Let's follow the holy life under the One Well-gone. Gone to the far shore of aging & death,

let's put an end to suffering & stress."

Mara:[8]

"Those with children delight because of their children. Those with cattle delight because of their cows. A person's delight comes from acquisitions, since a person with no acquisitions doesn't delight."

The Buddha:

"Those with children grieve because of their children. Those with cattle grieve because of their cows. A person's grief comes from acquisitions, since a person with no acquisitions doesn't grieve."

Notes

1.

Dhaniya Gopa: Literally, one whose wealth is in cattle. According to the Commentary, his herd consisted of 30,000 head of cattle.

2.

The first line in the Buddha's verse plays on words in the first line of Dhaniya's. "Free from anger" (akkodhano) plays on "rice is cooked" (pakkodano); and "stubbornness" (khilo) plays on "milk" (khiro).

3.

"Open" means having a mind not covered or concealed by craving, defilement, or ignorance. This image is also used in Ud 5.5 and Sn 4.4. "My fire out" refers to the fires of passion, aversion, & delusion; birth, aging, & death; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. See SN 35.28; Iti 93; and The Mind Like Fire Unbound.

4.

The raft stands for the noble eightfold path. See passages 113 and 114 in The Wings to Awakening.

5.

As this verse doesn't seem to be a direct response to the preceding one, the Commentary suggests that we are missing part of the conversation here. An alternative possibility is that the Buddha is engaging in word play — the word "crossed over" (tinna) being a pun on Dhaniya's reference to grass (tina).

6.

According to the Commentary, the Buddha is not in anyone else's employ nor even in his own employ — i.e., he is not in the employ of craving.

7.

The Buddha may be speaking literally here — he has no cattle, so there is no way that a heavy rain could cause him harm — but he may also be speaking metaphorically. See SN 4.19.

8.

According to the Commentary, Mara suddenly comes on the scene to try — unsuccessfully — to prevent Dhaniya and his wife from going forth. His verses here, together with the Buddha's response, are also found at SN 4.8.

See also: AN 3.34; AN 7.6; AN 7.7; Ud 2.10.