Snp 1.2 — Dhaniya Sutta — Dhaniya, the Cowherd

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.
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Text

Snp. 1.2

Dhaniya Sutta

“Dhaniya, the Cowherd”

18. “I boiled my rice, and the cows are already milked,” said Dhaniya the cowherd, to The Blessed One. “I live together with my family on the bank of the river Mahī. Our hut is well thatched, and there’s plenty of dung to fuel the fire. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

19. The Blessed One replied,

“Freed from anger, with the arrow of meanness pulled out of my heart, it is only one night that I spend on the bank of the river Mahī. My hut is laid bare, I sit in open space, with my fire cooled and fully extinguished.”

20. “Here there are no mosquitoes and no gadflies,” continued Dhaniya the cowherd. “My cattle roam freely in lush green pastures by the meadow, untroubled by the pouring rain. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

21. “Having made for me a well-built raft,” replied The Blessed One, “I have crossed over and gone to the other side

with it, overcoming the entire flood. And now, there is no longer a need for any rafts. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

22. Then, Dhaniya the cowherd said,

“My wife is obedient, well-tamed, and never self-centered. We have been happily married for a very long time. She has no evil qualities, and no one talks ill of her. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

23. “My mind is obedient, well-tamed, and completely liberated,” replied The Blessed One, as He continued, “It has been trained and perfected for a very long time. No evil thoughts are found within me. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

24. Dhaniya the cowherd then said,

“I make my living as a free man, working for myself, and my sons work for me, all in great health. They have no evil qualities, and no one talks ill of them. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

25. “I serve no one,” replied The Blessed One, as He added, “I walk this whole world with what I earn. No wages are necessary for me. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

26. Dhaniya the cowherd then said,

“I own plump calves, cows, and breeding cows too. I have also a strong bull, the father of the herd. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

27. “I neither have calves, nor cows, or even breeding cows,” replied The Blessed One, as He added, “There is no bull here, to be the father of any herd. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

28. Then Dhaniya the cowherd said,

“The stakes keeping them in place are driven deep into the ground, making them unshakeable, and the ropes, newly made from muñja grass are strong, as they are unbreakable even by the strong, young male bulls. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

29. “Like a strong bull, I have broken all the bonds,” responded The Blessed One, as He continued, “Like the alpha male tusker elephant that tears through weathered and decaying vines, I will never return to any womb, ever again. So, let the rain Deva pour down his wrath, as he wishes.”

30. And right at that moment, suddenly, a thunderous rain started pouring down, filling up both the valleys and the highlands alike. And in hearing the roar of lightning and the pouring of rain, Dhaniya the cowherd exclaimed:

31. “Indeed, it is so fortunate and auspicious for us to encounter The Blessed One! O! Great Leader of Sages, we take refuge in You, as Our Teacher!

32. “O! Sugata! Just like You, who has crossed over and gone to the other shore, beyond birth and death; now, both my wife and I will obediently lead the Holy Life in Your Dispensation. Thus, we also will put an end to suffering.”

33. Meanwhile, Māra, the great deceiver, witnessing all this, interjected by saying to Dhaniya, the cowherd:

“But sons bring so much joy and delight to their parents! Also, owning cattle brings great joy to their owners, who delight in having possessions, whereas all those who have none, grieve and never have a reason to rejoice!”

34. And The Blessed One said:

“Sons and children are for much sorrow and grief! So are the cattle you own the cause for much grief, for having possessions brings their owners nothing more than worry, fear, and much suffering too! But, when you live with no more attachments, you become finally freed from the sorrow that all these things bring!”