Snp 1.4 — Kasi Bharadvaja Sutta: To the Plowing Bharadvaja

English translation by Andrew Olendzki.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: PARTIAL. Complete source excerpt preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure; source omits part of the canonical discourse.

Text

At one time the Buddha was living in Magadha, just below the hills, near a brahman village called Ekanala. At that time the brahman Kasibharadvaja had yoked together a number of plows, for it was planting time.

The Buddha arose in the morning, and having dressed and taken up his bowl he went up to where the brahman Kasibharadvaja was working. At that time the farmer was feeding his workers. So the Buddha went up to where that feeding was taking place and stood to one side.

Seeing the Buddha standing for alms, the brahman Kasibharadvaja said this to him: "I, recluse, plow and sow; and only after having plowed and sown do I eat. You too should plow and sow; and only after having plowed and sown should you eat."

"I do indeed plow and sow, brahman." replied the Buddha, "And only after having plowed and sown do I eat."

"But, Gotama, we do not see your yoke and plow, nor your plowshare, oxen or goad. And yet you say you plow and sow, and eat only after having plowed and sown!

And then the brahman Kasibharadvaja addressed the Buddha with this verse:

So you claim to be a farmer... But we do not see you plowing! Tell me, since you're asked, of plowing, So I'll know what you call "plowing".

[The Buddha replies:]

Faith is the seed, practice the rain, And wisdom is my yoke and plow. Modesty's the pole, mind the strap, Mindfulness my plowshare and goad. Body and speech are guarded well, And food and drink have been restrained. Truthfulness I use for weeding, And gentleness urges me on. Effort is my beast of burden, Pulling me onward to safety. On it goes without returning, Where, having gone, one does not grieve. This is how I plow my plowing — The crop it yields is deathlessness! And when one has plowed this plowing, One is released from all suffering.

Then the brahman Kasibharadvaja filled a large bronze bowl with food and offered it to the Buddha: "Please eat, Gotama sir, this food! You are indeed a farmer! Surely you plow the plowing that yields the crop of deathlessness!"

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See also: SN 7.17; Thig 13.2.