Snp 2.9 — Sn 2:9 With What Virtue?

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

2:9 With What Virtue?

This sutta mentions the metaphorical notion of “heartwood” (sāra) three times. Although sāra as a metaphor is often translated as “essence,” this misses some of the metaphor’s implications. When x is said to have y as its heartwood, that means that the proper development of x yields y, and that y is the most valuable part of x—just as a tree, as it matures, develops heartwood, and the heartwood is the most valuable part of the tree.

“With what virtue,

what behavior,

nurturing what actions,

would a person become rightly based
and attain the ultimate goal?"

"One should be respectful
of one's superiors1
& not envious;
should have a sense of the time
for seeing teachers;2
should value the opportunity
when a talk on Dhamma's in progress;
should listen intently
to well-spoken words;
should go at the proper time,
humbly, casting off arrogance,
to one's teacher's presence;
should both recollect & follow
the Dhamma, its meaning,
restraint, & the holy life.

Delighting in Dhamma,
savoring Dhamma,
established in Dhamma,
with a sense of how
to investigate Dhamma,
one should not speak in ways
destructive of Dhamma,3
should guide oneself
with true, well-spoken words.

Shedding
laughter,chattering,
lamentation, hatred,

deception, deviousness,

greed, pride,

confrontation, roughness,

astringency, infatuation,

one should go about free

of intoxication,

with steadfast mind.

Understanding's the heartwood

of well-spoken words;

concentration, the heartwood

of learning & understanding.

When a person is hasty & heedless

his discernment & learning

don't grow.

While those who delight

in the Dhamma taught by the noble ones,

are unsurpassed

in word, action, & mind.

They, established in

calm,

composure, &

concentration,

have reached

what discernment & learning

have as their heartwood."4

vv. 324–330

Notes

1. According to SnA, one's superiors include those who have more wisdom than oneself, more skill in concentration and other aspects of the path than oneself, and those senior to

oneself.

2. SnA says that the right time to see a teacher is when one is overcome with passion, aversion, and delusion, and cannot find a way out on one's own. This echoes a passage in AN 6:26, in which Ven. Mahā Kaccāna says that the right time to visit a "monk worthy of esteem" is when one needs help in overcoming any of the five hindrances or when one doesn't yet have an appropriate theme to focus on to put an end to the mind's effluents.

3. SnA equates "words destructive of the Dhamma" with "animal talk." See the discussion under Pācittiya 85 in The Buddhist Monastic Code.

4. The heartwood of learning & discernment is release. See MN 29 and 30.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 29–30; AN 5:151; AN 5:202; AN 6:86; AN 8:53; AN 10:58; Thag 5:10