Snp 3.2 — Padhana Sutta: The Great Struggle

English translation by John D. Ireland.

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

Completeness: UNKNOWN. Entire protected source unit, including notes and verses, preserved; canonical completeness has not been independently established.

Text

"When, near the river Nerañjara, I exerted myself in meditation for attaining to security from bondage,[1] there came Namuci[2] speaking words of compassion:

"'You are emaciated and ill-looking, you are near to death! A thousand parts of you belong to death and only a fraction of you is alive. Live, good Sir! It is better to live. Living you may perform meritorious deeds. From practicing celibacy and tending the sacrificial fire much merit is made, but what is obtained from striving? It is difficult to enter the path of exertion, it is difficult to do, difficult to maintain.'"

Mara spoke these words whilst standing in the presence of the Awakened One. To Mara speaking thus, the Lord replied:

"You who are the friend of the negligent, O Evil One, for what reason have you come here? Those who still have use for merit Mara may consider worthwhile addressing. I have faith

and energy and wisdom. Being thus bent on striving why do you ask me to live? This wind will wither the currents of the rivers, why should not my exertion dry up even the blood? When the blood dries up, the bile and phlegm wither. On the wasting away of the flesh the mind becomes more and more serene and my mindfulness, wisdom and concentration are established more firmly. In me, who abides enduring such an extreme experience, the mind does not long for sensual pleasures. See the purity of a being!

"Sensual desire is your first army, the second is called discontent, the third is hunger and thirst, the fourth craving, the fifth sluggishness and laziness, the sixth fear, the seventh indecision, and the eighth disparagement of others and stubbornness: gain, fame, honor, prestige wrongly acquired and whoever praises himself and despises others — these, Namuci, are your armies, the Dark One's[3] striking forces. A lazy, cowardly person cannot overcome them, but by conquering them one gains bliss.

"I wear muñja-grass![4] Shame on life here in this world! It is better for me to die in battle than to live defeated. Some recluses and brahmanas are not seen (exerting themselves) here, so immersed are they (in worldliness). They are not aware of that path by which those of perfect conduct walk.

"Seeing the surrounding army ready and Mara mounted (on his elephant), I am going out to fight so that he may not shift me from my position. This army of yours which the world together with the devas is unable to subdue, that I will destroy with wisdom, like an unbaked clay-bowl with a stone. Having mastered the mind and firmly established mindfulness I shall wander from country to country guiding many disciples. And they will be diligent and energetic in practicing my teaching, the teaching of one without sensual desire, and they will go where, having gone, one does not grieve."

Mara: "For seven years I followed the Lord step by step but did not find an opportunity to defeat that mindful Awakened One. A crow flew around a stone having the color of fat: 'Can we find even here something tender? May it be something to eat?'

"Not finding anything edible the crow left that place. As with the crow and the stone, we leave Gotama, having approached and become disheartened."

Overcome by sorrow his lute fell from his arm and thereupon the unhappy spirit disappeared from that place.

Notes

1.

Yogakkhema, a name for Nibbana.

2.

Namuci, meaning "He who does not let go" (his hold over beings easily) is a name for Mara, the Evil One.

3.

The "Dark One" or Kanha (Sanskrit: Krishna), is another name for Mara. He is the Indian Cupid (Kamadeva) and personifies sensual passions. He carries a lute (vina), mentioned at the close, with which he captivates beings by his playing. His other equipment includes a bow, arrows, a noose and a hook.

4.

Indian warriors used to wear a tuft of a certain grass, called muñja, on their head or headgear, for indicating that they were prepared to die in battle and determined not to retreat.