Snp 3.8 — Salla Sutta: The Arrow

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

"Unindicated and unknown is the length of life of those subject to death. Life is difficult and brief and bound up with suffering. There is no means by which those who are born will not die. Having reached old age, there is death. This is the natural course for a living being. With ripe fruits there is the constant danger that they will fall. In the same way, for those born and subject to death, there is always the fear of dying. Just as the pots made by a potter all end by being broken, so death is (the breaking up) of life.

"The young and old, the foolish and the wise, all are stopped short by the power of death, all finally end in death. Of those overcome by death and passing to another world, a father cannot hold back his son, nor relatives a relation. See! While the relatives are looking on and weeping, one by one each mortal is led away like an ox to slaughter.

"In this manner the world is afflicted by death and decay. But the wise do not grieve, having realized the nature of the world. You do not know the path by which they came or

departed. Not seeing either end you lament in vain. If any benefit is gained by lamenting, the wise would do it. Only a fool would harm himself. Yet through weeping and sorrowing the mind does not become calm, but still more suffering is produced, the body is harmed and one becomes lean and pale, one merely hurts oneself. One cannot protect a departed one (peta) by that means. To grieve is in vain.

"By not abandoning sorrow a being simply undergoes more suffering. Bewailing the dead he comes under the sway of sorrow. See other men faring according to their deeds! Hence beings tremble here with fear when they come into the power of death. Whatever they imagine, it (turns out) quite different from that. This is the sort of disappointment that exists. Look at the nature of the world! If a man lives for a hundred years, or even more, finally, he is separated from his circle of relatives and gives up his life in the end. Therefore, having listened to the arahant,[1] one should give up lamenting. Seeing a dead body, one should know, "He will not be met by me again." As the fire in a burning house is extinguished with water, so a wise, discriminating, learned and sensible man should quickly drive away the sorrow that arises, as the wind (blows off) a piece of cotton. He who seeks happiness should withdraw the arrow: his own lamentations, longings and grief.

"With the arrow withdrawn, unattached, he would attain to peace of mind; and when all sorrow has been transcended he is sorrow-free and has realized Nibbana.

Note

1.

The Perfect One, i.e., the Buddha.