Snp 3.8 — Sn 3:8 The Arrow

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/StNp/StNp3_8.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017

License notice: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Attribution: From Handful of Leaves, Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu; https://www.dhammatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/SuttaPitaka_251113.epub. Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

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

3:8 The Arrow

Without sign,

unknown

—the life here of mortals—

difficult,

short,

tied up with pain.

For there’s no way

by which those who are born
will not die.
Beings are subject
to death
even when they attain
old age.

Like ripe fruits
whose downfall, whose danger
is falling,
so for mortals, once born,
the constant danger
is death.

As clay vessels made by a potter
all end up broken,
so too life
heads to death.1
Young & old
wise & foolish:
All
come under the sway of death;
all
have death as their end.

For those overcome by death,
gone to the other world,
father cannot shelter son,
nor relatives a relative.
See: Even while relatives are looking on,
wailing heavily,
mortals are

one
by
one
led away
like cows to the slaughter.
In this way is the world afflicted
with aging & death,
and so the enlightened don’t grieve,
knowing the way of the world.

“You don’t know the path
of his coming or going:
seeing neither end,
you lament in vain.”2

If, by lamenting,
—confused,
harming yourself—
any use could be gained
the prudent would do it as well.
But not by weeping & grief
do you gain peace of awareness.
Pain
arises all the more. Your body
is harmed.
You grow thin,
pale,
harming yourself
by yourself.
Not in that way
are the dead protected.

Lamentation's in vain.
Not abandoning grief, a person
suffers all the more pain.
Bewailing one whose time is done,
you fall under the sway of grief.

Look at others
going along,
people arriving
in line with their actions:
falling under the sway of death,
beings simply
shivering here.

For however they imagine it,
it always turns out
other than that.
That's the type of (their) separation.
See the way of the world.

Even if a person lives a century
—or more—
he's parted
from his community of relatives,
he abandons his life
right here.

So, having heard the arahant,
subduing lamentation,
seeing the dead one whose time is done,
[think,] "I can't fetch him back."3
Just as one would put out

a burning refuge
with water,
so does the enlightened one—
discerning,
skillful,
& wise—
blow away any arisen grief,
like the wind, a bit of cotton fluff.

Seeking your own happiness,
you should pull out your own arrow:
your own
lamentation,
longing,
& sorrow.4
With arrow pulled out,
independent,
attaining peace of awareness,
all grief transcended,
griefless you are
unbound.

vv. 574–593

Notes

1. See the verse at the end of DN 16, part III.

2. See Thig 6:1.

3. These lines can also be translated as follows:

So, having heard the arahant,
subdue lamentation,
seeing the dead one whose time is done,

[and thinking,] “I can’t fetch him back.”

4. These lines can also be translated as follows:

Just as one would put out
a burning refuge
with water,
so does the enlightened one—
discerning,
skillful,
& wise—
blow away any arisen grief,
his own lamentation, longing, & sorrow,
like the wind, a bit of cotton fluff.
Seeking your own happiness,
you should pull out your own arrow.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 82; MN 87; SN 21:2; SN 36:6; SN 47:13; AN 5:49; Ud 8:8; Thig 3:5; Thig 6:1