Snp 3.12 — Dvayatanupassana Sutta: A Teaching Hard to Know

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

Translator's note

These verses from the Sutta Nipata aptly state the paradox of illusion. Our six senses spin threads of perception, which we weave into a tapestry called "myself and the world." We then take this handiwork to be more solid and meaningful than it is, and get caught in its intricate patterns and colors.

For those who are able to see through this illusory construction (an ability that comes in part from meditation), ordinary pleasures are seen as a snare that catches and reinforces the ego — that view we have of self as separate, from which so much suffering arises. The moderation or even renunciation of these pleasures, on the other hand, can be viewed as a powerful tool for gaining freedom from our self-created suffering.

The term "nobles" or "noble ones" is used in the Buddhist tradition, not for people of a certain birth or social class, but for any person who thinks, speaks or acts nobly: with generosity, kindness and wisdom, rather than with greed, hatred or delusion.

... Forms and sounds and flavors and smells And touches and all mental states, Are wished for, cherished and pleasing, As long as it's said that "They're real." For the world and for its devas These are equal to happiness; Whereas when they come to an end... This for them is equal to pain. 'Happiness,' viewed by the nobles, Comes from restraining the ego. This is just the opposite of How it is seen by all the world. That which is pleasant for others, For the noble ones is painful. And what for others is painful, The noble ones know as pleasant. Behold! A teaching hard to know. The deluded are confused here. ...