Snp 4.6 — Sn 4:6 Old Age

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/StNp/StNp4_6.html

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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

4:6 Old Age

How short this life!

You die this side of a century,

but even if you live past,

you die of old age.

People grieve

for what they see as mine,

for nothing possessed is constant,

nothing is constantly possessed.1
Seeing this separation
simply as it is,
one shouldn’t follow the household life.

At death a person abandons
what he supposes as mine.
Realizing this, the wise
shouldn’t incline
to be devoted to mine-ness.

Just as a man doesn’t see
on awakening
what he met in a dream,
even so he doesn’t see,
when they are dead
—their time done—
those he held dear.

When they are seen & heard,
people are called by this name or that,
but only the name remains
to be pointed to
when they are dead.

Grief, lamentation, & selfishness
are not let go
by those greedy for mine,
so sages
letting go of possessions,
go about
seeing the Secure.

A monk, living withdrawn,
enjoying a dwelling secluded:
They say it’s congenial for him,
he who wouldn’t, in any realm,
display self.

Everywhere
the sage
independent
makes nothing dear or undear.

In him
lamentation & selfishness,
like water on a white lotus,
do not adhere.

As a water bead on a lotus leaf,
as water on a red lily,
doesn’t adhere,

so the sage
doesn’t adhere
to the seen, the heard, or the sensed;

for, cleansed,
he doesn’t suppose
in connection
with the seen, the heard, or the sensed.

In no other way
does he wish for purity,
for he neither takes on passion
nor puts it away.2

vv. 804–813

Notes

1. “Nothing possessed is constant, nothing is constantly possessed”—two readings of the phrase, na hi santi niccā pariggahā.

2. Nd I: An arahant has put passion totally away once and for all, and so has no need to do it ever again.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 21:2; AN 4:184; Dhp 21; Sn 5:16