Snp 4.10 — Purabheda Sutta: Before the Break-up of the Body

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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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

"Seeing how, behaving how, is one said to be at peace? Gotama, tell me about — when asked about — the ultimate person." The Buddha: "Free from craving before the break-up [of the body], independent of before & the end,[1] not classified in between,[2] no yearning is his. Un- angered, un- startled, un- boastful, un- anxious, giving counsel unruffled, he is a sage, his speech under control. Free from attachment with regard to the future, not sorrowing over the past, he sees seclusion in the midst of sensory contacts.[3] He can't be led in terms of views.[4] Withdrawn, un- deceitful, not stingy, not miserly, not insolent, in- offensive, he doesn't engage in divisive speech. Not intoxicated with enticements, nor given to pride, he's gentle, quick-witted, beyond conviction & dispassion.[5] Not in hopes of material gain does he take on the training; when without material gain he isn't upset. Unobstructed by craving, he doesn't through craving[6] hunger for flavors. Equanimous — always — mindful, he doesn't conceive himself as equal, superior, inferior, in the world. No swellings of pride are his. Whose dependencies don't exist when, on knowing the Dhamma, he's in- dependent; in whom no craving is found for becoming or not-: he is said to be at peace, un-intent on sensual pleasures, with nothing at all to tie him down: one who's crossed over attachment. He has no children cattle, fields, land. In him you can't pin down what's embraced or rejected.[7] He has no yearning for that which people

run-of-the-mill or brahmans & contemplatives might blame — which is why he is unperturbed with regard to their words. His greed gone, not miserly, the sage doesn't speak of himself as among those who are higher, equal, or lower. He, conjuring-free, doesn't submit to conjuring, to the cycling of time.[8] For whom nothing in the world is his own, who doesn't grieve over what is not, who doesn't enter into doctrines phenomena:[9] he is said to be at peace."

Notes

1.

Nd.I: "Independent of before & the end" = no craving or view with regard to past or future.

2.

For discussions of how the awakened one cannot be classified even in the present, see MN 72 and SN 22.85-86.

3.

Nd.I: "He sees seclusion in the midst of sensory contacts" = he sees contact as empty of self. This passage may also refer to the fact that the awakened person experiences sensory contact as if disjoined from it. On this point, see MN 140 and MN 146, quoted in The Mind Like Fire Unbound, pp. 116 and 113.

4.

See AN 10.93.

5.

Beyond conviction & dispassion — The Pali here can also mean, "A person of no conviction, he does not put away passion." This is an example of the kind of pun occasionally used in Pali poetry for its shock value. Other examples are at Dhp 97 and the end of Sn 4.13. For an explanation of what is meant by being beyond dispassion, see note 2 to Sn 4.6.

6.

The Pali word tanhaya — by/through craving — here is a "lamp," i.e., a single word that functions in two separate phrases.

7.

This reading follows the Thai and PTS editions: atta,m vaa-pi niratta,m vaa. The Burmese and Sri Lankan editions read, attaa vaa-pi nirattaa vaa: "self or what's opposed to self."

The first reading seems preferable for two reasons: First, it follows the theme established in Sn 4.3 and Sn 4.4 (and also followed in Sn 4.15 and Sn 5.11) that the awakened person has gone beyond embracing or rejecting views. Second, the word nirattaa is found nowhere else in the Canon aside from the two other verses in the Sutta Nipata (Sn 4.3 and Sn 4.14) where it is offered as a possible alternative for niratta (released, rejected). As niratta is clearly the preferable alternative in Sn 4.3, I have adopted it here and in Sn 4.14 as well.

8.

"Conjuring, the cycling of time" — two meanings of the Pali word, kappam.

9.

"Doctrines, phenomena" — two meanings of the Pali word, dhamma.