Snp 4.12 — Cula-viyuha Sutta: The Lesser Array

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

"Dwelling on their own views, quarreling, different skilled people say: 'Whoever knows this, understands Dhamma. Whoever rejects this, is imperfect.' Thus quarreling, they dispute: 'My opponent's a fool & unskilled.' Which of these statements is true when all of them say they are skilled?" "If, in not accepting an opponent's doctrine, one's a fool, a beast of inferior discernment, then all are fools of inferior discernment — all of these who dwell on their views. But if, in siding with a view, one's cleansed, with discernment made pure, intelligent, skilled, then none of them are of inferior discernment, for all of them have their own views. I don't say, 'That's how it is,' the way fools say to one another. They each make out their views to be true and so regard their opponents as fools." "What some say is true — 'That's how it is' — others say is 'falsehood, a lie.' Thus quarreling, they dispute. Why can't contemplatives say one thing & the same?" "The truth is one,[1] there is no second about which a person who knows it would argue with one who knows. Contemplatives promote their various personal truths, that's why they don't say one thing & the same." "But why do they say various truths, those who say they are skilled? Have they learned many various truths or do they follow conjecture?" "Apart from their perception there are no many various constant truths in the world.[2] Preconceiving conjecture with regard to views, they speak of a pair: true & false. Dependent on what's seen, heard, & sensed, dependent on precepts & practices, one shows disdain [for others].

Taking a stance on his decisions, praising himself, he says, 'My opponent's a fool & unskilled.' That by which he regards his opponents as fools is that by which he says he is skilled. Calling himself skilled he despises another who speaks the same way. Agreeing on a view gone out of bounds, drunk with conceit, thinking himself perfect, he has consecrated, with his own mind, himself as well as his view. If, by an opponent's word, one's inferior, the opponent's of inferior discernment as well. But if, by one's own word one's an attainer-of-wisdom, enlightened, no one among contemplative's a fool. 'Those who teach a doctrine other than this are lacking in purity, imperfect.' That's what the many sectarians say, for they're smitten with passion for their own views. 'Only here is there purity,' that's what they say. 'In no other doctrine is purity,' they say. That's how the many sectarians are entrenched, speaking firmly there concerning their own path. Speaking firmly concerning your own path, what opponent here would you take as a fool? You'd simply bring quarrels on yourself if you said your opponent's a fool with an impure doctrine. Taking a stance on your decisions, & yourself as your measure, you dispute further down into the world. But one who's abandoned all decisions creates in the world quarrels no more."

Notes

1.

"The truth is one": This statement should be kept in mind throughout the following verses, as it forms the background to the discussion of how people who preconceive their conjectures speak of the pair, true and false. The Buddha is not denying that there is such a thing as true and false. Rather, he is saying that all entrenched views, regardless of how true or false their content might be, when considered as events in a causal chain behave in line with the truth of conditioned phenomena as explained in the preceding discourse. If held to, they lead to conceit, conflict, and states of becoming. When they are viewed in this way — as events rather than as true or false depictions of other events (or as events rather than signs) — the tendency to hold to or become entrenched in them is diminished.

2.

On the role of perception in leading to conflicting views, see the preceding discourse.

See also: AN 10.93; AN 10.96.