Snp 4.12 — Cūḷabyūha Sutta

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.
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Text

Snp. 4.12

Cūḷabyūha Sutta

“Shorter Discourse on Getting

Ready for Battle”

878. “There are those who hold on to their individual opinions and views, the so-called experts who continue disputing contentiously, as they exclaim:

‘Whoever sees and understands the Dhamma as we do, then they must truly know the Dhamma! But whoever does not agree with us, then they don’t know what they are talking about!’

879. “In this manner, they go on disputing, arguing, battling, while calling the other ‘a mere fool and without any experience!’ And in such hubbub, how can one find out, as to who is indeed speaking the truth, for each calls himself an ‘expert?’

880. “If the mere fact that someone does not agree with another’s view makes them ‘a fool,’ or ‘intellectually inferior,’ or ‘lacking any wisdom,’ then all of them are indeed fools, collectively, for they each are stuck in their own views, unable to see beyond them.

881. “But, with the wise who have purified themselves through Right View, dwelling with wisdom in the heart that

is pure, considerate, and wholesome in behavior, none could be found among them to be inferior in any way, for they are freed from the pangs of ignorance; now gone beyond all manner of disputing, having seen through and recognized the true nature of things.

882. “I do not consider it accurate when people call each other ‘fools,’ because each of them has convinced themselves that the view they hold must be true and unmistakable, hence their insistence, that the other is ‘no more than a fool.’

883. “While some declare their teaching to be correct and true, they turn and call the teachings of others to be no more than ‘empty’ and ‘not true.’ They go on disputing and fighting with each other, but why can’t recluses all come to an agreement about what is the Truth?

884. “For, there is only one Truth and not another, understanding which, no sane or intelligent person would continue arguing. Yet, recluses keep weaving for themselves new truths, and as a result, not a single one of them agrees on the same thing.

885. “Why do those claiming themselves to be ‘experts’ go on proclaiming different truths? Do they really believe there are multiple truths, or are those simply fabricated by their own reasoning?”

886. “No, there are no multiple truths to speak of! There are only mistaken conclusions; the results of wrong reasoning, that stem from the conviction that there is permanence. Relying on their views, they speak of this being ‘true’ and

the other, a ‘lie;’ other than this, there are no truths to speak of.

887. “Whether debating over what is seen, heard, experienced, or the training rules or precepts, they keep judging and scoffing at others, while labeling them ‘fools’ and ‘mere amateurs.’

888. “Meanwhile, whatever reasons they are using for labelling the other a ‘fool’ or an ‘amateur,’ for the same exact reasons, they are calling themselves ‘experts.’ Therefore, despite the fact that he uses the same reasoning, he continues to despise the other, even though he hypocritically distinguishes himself, as an ‘expert.’

889. “Intoxicated by conceit and never lacking in matchless words about himself, he crowns himself as ‘perfect’ and ‘exceptional,’ at least in his mind; a conviction he continues holding on to and grabs, which he also uses to look down upon everyone else.

890. “Meanwhile, those opposing his position and views, who in turn regard him as ‘inferior,’ will automatically be regarded by him as lacking in wisdom, compared to him, of course. But, if others look upon him with respect and consider him as ‘truly exceptional,’ surely then, it would be difficult for anyone to call the other, ‘a fool’ or ‘inferior.’

891. “Those who are unable to see the truth in this cannot be called pure, for they will continue missing the opportunity to go beyond their sectarian thinking, thus blinded from seeing the Dhamma, as a result of latching on greedily to their views and opinions.

892. “Skeptics entangled in their own views passionately exclaim how ‘purity can only be found within their own teachings,’ whereas ‘no purity could ever be found or taught in the teachings of others.’ Thus, they lock themselves in the world of stagnant views and blind beliefs, journeying aimlessly on never-ending paths where no growth in wisdom, or any spiritual development could ever take place.

893. “If one’s own views on the spiritual path are thus greedily and passionately adhered to, then why should anyone be calling another, ‘a fool’? For he himself, through his rigidity and close-mindedness, would not be behaving any better than those whom he criticizes, hence, proving himself to be none other than yet, ‘another fool.’

894. “Standing to distinguish himself from others, proud and conceited with judgement for others, comparing himself to them, he soon finds himself caught in dispute after dispute. But the one who has given up judging, has already put an end to all battling and quarreling.