Snp 4.13 — Maha-viyuha Sutta: The Great 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

"Those who, dwelling on views, dispute, saying, 'Only this is true': do they all incur blame, or also earn praise there?" "[The praise:] It's such a little thing, not at all appeasing.[1] I speak of two fruits of dispute; and seeing this, you shouldn't dispute — seeing the state where there's no dispute as secure. One who knows doesn't get involved in whatever are commonplace conventional views. One who is uninvolved: when he's forming no preference for what's seen, for what's heard, why would he get involved? Those for whom precepts are ultimate say that purity's a matter of self-restraint. Undertaking a practice, they devote themselves to it: 'Let's train just in this, and then there would be purity.' Those who say they are skilled are [thus] led on to becoming. But if one of them falls from his precepts or practice, he trembles, having failed in his actions. He hopes for, longs for, purity, like a lost caravan leader far from home. But one who's abandoned precepts & practices[2] — all — things that are blamable, blameless,[3] not hoping for 'pure or impure,'[4] would live in compassion & peace, without taking up peace,[5] detached. Dependent on taboos, austerities, or what's seen, heard, or sensed, they speak of purity through wandering further on through becoming & not-, their craving not gone for becoming & not-.[6] For one who aspires has longings & trembling with regard to preconceptions. But one who here has no passing away & arising: Why would he tremble? For what would he long?" "The teaching some say is 'supreme,' is the very one others call

'lowly.' Which statement is true when all of these claim to be skilled?" "They say their own teaching is perfect while the doctrine of others is lowly. Thus quarreling, they dispute, each saying his agreed-on opinion is true. If something, because of an opponent's say-so, were lowly, then none among teachings would be superlative, for many say that another's teaching's inferior when firmly asserting their own. If their worship of their teaching were true, in line with the way they praise their own path, then all doctrines would be true — for purity's theirs, according to each. The brahman has nothing led by another, when considering what's grasped among doctrines. Thus he has gone beyond disputes, for he doesn't regard as best the knowledge of a teaching, any other mental state.[7] 'I know. I see. That's just how it is!' — Some believe purity's in terms of view. But even if a person has seen, what good does it do him? Having slipped past, they speak of purity in connection with something or somebody else. A person, in seeing, sees name & form. Having seen, he'll know only these things. No matter if he's seen little, a lot, the skilled don't say purity's in connection with that. A person entrenched in his teachings, honoring a preconceived view, isn't easy to discipline. Whatever he depends on he describes it as lovely, says that it's purity, that there he saw truth. The brahman, evaluating, isn't involved with conjurings, doesn't follow views, isn't tied even to knowledge.[8] And on knowing whatever's conventional, commonplace, he remains equanimous: 'That's what others hold onto.' Having released the knots that tie him down, the sage here in the world doesn't follow a faction when disputes have arisen. At peace among those not at peace, he's equanimous, doesn't hold on: 'That's what others hold onto.' Giving up old fermentations, not forming new, neither pursuing desire, nor entrenched in his teachings, he's totally released from viewpoints, enlightened. He doesn't adhere to the world, is without self-rebuke; is enemy-free[9] with regard to all things seen, heard, or sensed. His burden laid down, the sage totally released is improper / is free from conjuring hasn't stopped / isn't impassioned isn't worth wanting / doesn't desire,"[10] the Blessed One said.

Notes

1.

Or: Not enough to appease (the defilements, says Nd.I).

2.

Nd.I: Abandoning precepts & practices in the sense of no longer believing that purity is measured in terms of them, the view discussed in the preceding verse.

3.

Nd.I: "Blamable, blameless" = black and white kamma (see AN 4.232, 234, 237-238, quoted in The Wings to Awakening, section I/B).

4.

Nd.I: Having abandoned impure mental qualities, and having fully attained the goal, the arahant has no need to hope for anything at all.

5.

"In compassion & peace, without taking up peace" — a pun on the word, santimanuggahaya.

6.

The word bhavabhavesu — through/for becoming & not- becoming — here is a lamp, i.e., a single word functioning in two phrases.

7.

"The knowledge of a teaching, any other mental state" — a pun on the word, dhammamaññam.

8.

According to Nd.I, this compound — ñana-bandhu — should be translated as "tied by means of knowledge," in that the arahant doesn't use the knowledge that comes with the mastery of concentration, the five mundane forms of psychic power (abhiñña), or any wrong knowledge to create the bonds of craving or views. However, the compound may also refer to the fact that the arahant isn't tied even to the knowledge that forms part of the path to arahantship (see MN 117).

9.

See note 7 under Sn 4.4.

10.

"Is improper / is free from conjuring, hasn't stopped / isn't impassioned, isn't worth wanting / doesn't desire" — a series of puns — na kappiyo, nuparato, na patthiyo — each with a strongly positive and a strongly negative meaning, probably meant for their shock value. For a similar set of puns, see Dhp 97.

See also: AN 10.93; AN 10.96.