Snp 4.13 — The Longer Discourse on Arrayed for Battle

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Text

Anthology of Discourses 4.13

The Longer Discourse on Arrayed for Battle

“Regarding those who maintain their own view,

disputing that, ‘This is the only truth’:

are all of them subject only to criticism,

or do some also win praise for that?”

“That is a small thing, insufficient for peace,

these two fruits of dispute, I say.

Seeing this, one ought not dispute,

looking for sanctuary in the land of no dispute.

One who knows does not get involved

with any of the many different conventions.

Why would the uninvolved get involved,

since they do not believe based on the seen or the heard?

Those for whom ethics are the highest speak of purity through self-control;

having undertaken a vow, they stick to it:

‘Let us train right here, then we will be pure.’

Professing to be experts, they are led on to future lives.

If they fall away from their precepts and vows,

they tremble, having failed in their task.

They pray and long for purity,

like one who has lost their caravan while journeying far from home.

But having given up all precepts and vows,

and these deeds blameworthy or blameless;
not longing for ‘purity’ or ‘impurity’,
live detached, fostering peace.
Relying on mortification in disgust of sin,
or else on what is seen, heard, or thought,
they moan that purification comes through heading upstream,
not rid of craving for life after life.
For one who longs there are muttered prayers,
and trembling too over ideas they have formed.
But one here for whom there is no passing away or reappearing:
why would they tremble? For what would they pray?”
“The very same teaching that some say is ‘ultimate’,
others say is inferior.
Which of these statements is true,
for all of them profess to be experts?”
“They say their own teaching is perfect,
while the teaching of others is inferior.
So arguing, they dispute,
each saying their own conventions are the truth.
If someone else’s disparagement makes you inferior,
no one in any teaching would be distinguished.
For each of them says the other’s teaching is lacking,
while forcefully advocating their own.
But if they honor their own teachings
just as they praise their own journeys,
then all doctrines would be equally valid,
and purity would be specific to them.
After judging among the teachings, a brahmin has adopted nothing
that requires interpretation by another.

That’s why they’ve gotten over disputes,
for they see no other doctrine as best.
Saying, ‘I know, I see, that’s how it is’,
some believe that purity stems from view.
But if they’ve really seen, what use is that view to them?
Overlooking what matters, they say purity comes from another.
When a person sees, they see name and form,
and having seen, they will know just these things.
Gladly let them see much or little,
for those who are skilled say this is no way to purity.
It’s not easy to educate someone who is dogmatic,
promoting a view they have formulated.
Speaking of the beauty in that on which they depend,
they talk of purity in accord with what they saw there.
The brahmin does not get involved with formulating and calculating;
they’re not followers of views, nor kinsmen of notions.
Having understood the many different conventions,
they look on when others grasp.
Having untied the knots here in the world,
the sage takes no side among disputes.
Peaceful among the peaceless, equanimous,
they don’t grasp when others grasp.
Having given up former defilements and not making new ones,
not swayed by preference, nor a proponent of dogma,
that attentive one is released from views,
not clinging to the world, nor reproaching themselves.
They are remote from all things
seen, heard, or thought.
With burden put down, the sage is released:

not formulating, not abstaining, not longing.”