Snp 4.13 — Sn 4:13 The Great Array

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/StNp/StNp4_13.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017

License notice: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Attribution: From Handful of Leaves, Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu; https://www.dhammatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/SuttaPitaka_251113.epub. Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

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

4:13 The Great Array

“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 small 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 enter into
any conventions
born of the run-of-the mill
at all.
One who's uninvolved:
When he's forming no predilection
for what's seen, for what's heard,
why would he get
involved?2

Those for whom habits
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 habits or practice,
he trembles,
having failed in his actions.
He hopes for, longs for, purity,

like a caravan leader lost
far from home.

But one who's abandoned
habits & practices3
—all—
things that are blamable, blameless,4
not hoping for 'pure' or 'impure,'5
would live in kindness & peace,
without taking up peace,6
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-.7
For one who aspires has longings
& trembling with regard to theorizings.
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 doctrine,
any other doctrine.8

‘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,
preferring a theorized 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,
doesn't enter into a theory,
doesn't follow views,
isn't tied even to knowledge.9
And on knowing
whatever's conventional, commonplace,
he remains equanimous:
'That's what others hold onto.'

Having untied the knots
here in the world,

the sage here in the world10
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 effluents,
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-free11
with regard to all things
seen, heard, or sensed.

His burden laid down,
the sage totally released

is improper :: is theory-free
hasn’t stopped :: isn’t impassioned
isn’t worth wanting :: doesn’t
desire,”12

the Blessed One said.

vv. 895–914

Notes

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

2. A Sanskrit version of this verse is quoted by Asaṅga in the Bodhisattvabhūmi (48.24).

3. Nd I: Abandoning habits & practices in the sense of no longer believing that purity is measured in terms of them, the view discussed in the preceding verse. See MN 79.

4. Nd I: "Blamable, blameless" = black and white kamma (see AN 4:232, 234, 237–238, quoted in The Wings to Awakening, section I/B.

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

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

7. The word bhavabhavesu—"through/for becoming & not-becoming"—functions here as a lamp.

8. "The knowledge of a doctrine, any other doctrine"—a pun on the word, dhammamaññam. Nd I favors the second interpretation, saying that the brahman does not see as best any doctrine aside from the Wings to Awakening: the establishings of mindfulness, the exertions, the bases of power, the faculties, the strengths, the factors for awakening, and the noble eightfold path. This reading seems unlikely, though, as these doctrines are not mentioned anywhere in this poem. The first reading is more in line with the Buddha's statement in Sn 4:9 that the highest state is not defined in terms of knowledge, and is well-illustrated in action in AN 10:93.

9. According to Nd I, this compound—ñāṇa-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 (abhiññā), 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).

10. "In the world" functions as a lamp here.

11. See Sn 4:4, note 9.

12. "Is improper :: is free from theories, 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.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 24; AN 4:24