Snp 4.15 — Attadanda Sutta: The Training

English translation by John D. Ireland.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: UNKNOWN. Entire protected source unit, including notes and verses, preserved; canonical completeness has not been independently established.

Text

"Violence breeds misery; [1] look at people quarreling. I will relate the emotion agitating me.

"Having seen people struggling and contending with each other like fish in a small amount of water, fear entered me. The world is everywhere insecure, every direction is in turmoil; desiring an abode for myself I did not find one uninhabited. [2] When I saw contention as the sole outcome, aversion increased in me; but then I saw an arrow [3] here, difficult to see, set in the heart. Pierced by it, one runs in every direction, but having pulled it out one does not run nor does one sink. [4]

"Here follows the (rule of) training:

"Whatever are worldly fetters, may you not be bound by them! Completely break down sensual desires and practice so as to realize Nibbana for yourself!

"A sage should be truthful, not arrogant, not deceitful, not given to slandering others, and should be without anger. He should remove the evil of attachment and wrongly directed longing; he should conquer drowsiness, lassitude and sloth, and not dwell in indolence. A man whose mind is set on Nibbana should not be arrogant. He should not lapse into untruth nor generate love for sense objects. He should thoroughly understand (the nature of) conceit and abstain from violence. He should not delight in what is past, nor be fond of what is new, nor sorrow for what is disappearing, nor crave for the attractive.

"Greed, I say, is a great flood; it is a whirlpool sucking one down, a constant yearning, seeking a hold, continually in movement; [5] difficult to cross is the morass of sensual desire. A sage does not deviate from truth, a brahmana [6] stands on firm ground; renouncing all, he is truly called 'calmed.'

"Having actually experienced and understood the Dhamma he has realized the highest knowledge and is independent. [7] He comports himself correctly in the world and does not envy anyone here. He who has left behind sensual pleasures, an attachment difficult to leave behind, does not grieve nor have any longing; has cut across the stream and is unfettered.

"Dry out that which is past, [8] let there be nothing for you in the future. [9] If you do not grasp at anything in the present you will go about at peace. One who, in regard to this entire mindbody complex, has no cherishing of it as 'mine,' and who does not grieve for what is non-existent truly suffers no loss in the world. For him there is no thought of anything as 'this is mine' or 'this is another's'; not finding any state of ownership, and realizing, 'nothing is mine,' he does not grieve.

"To be not callous, not greedy, at rest and unruffled by circumstances — that is the profitable result I proclaim when asked about one who does not waver. For one who does not crave, who has understanding, there is no production (of new kamma). [10] Refraining from initiating (new kamma) he sees security everywhere. A sage does not speak in terms of being equal, lower or higher. Calmed and without selfishness he neither grasps nor rejects."

Notes

1.

Attadanda bhayam jatam: "Violence" (attadanda, lit.: "seizing a stick" or "weapons") includes in it all wrong conduct in deeds, words and thoughts. Bhaya is either a subjective state of mind, "fear," or the objective condition of "fearfulness," danger, misery; and so it is explained in the Comy. as the evil consequences of wrong conduct, in this life and in future existence.

2.

Uninhabited by decay and death, etc. (Comy).

3.

The arrow of lust, hate, delusion and (wrong) views.

4.

That is, sink into the four "floods" of sensual desire, continual becoming, wrong views and ignorance. These are the two contrasting dangers of Samsara, i.e., restless running, ever seeking after sensual delights, and sinking, or passively clinging to the defilements, whereby one is overwhelmed by the "flood." In the first discourse of the Samyutta-nikaya the Buddha says: "If I stood still, I sank; if I struggled, I was carried away. Thus by neither standing still nor struggling, I crossed the flood."

5.

According to the commentary these four phrases, beginning with a "whirlpool sucking down," are all synonyms for craving (tanha) or greed (gedha) called the "great flood."

6.

In Buddhism the title "Brahmana" is sometimes used for one who has reached final deliverance. The Buddha himself is sometimes called "the Brahmana."

7.

Independent of craving and views.

8.

"Dry out" (visodehi) your former, and not your matured kamma, i.e., make it unproductive, by not giving room to passions that may grow out of the past actions.

9.

Do not rouse in kamma-productive passions concerning the future.

10.

Volitional acts, good or bad, manifesting in deeds of body, speech and mind leading to a future result.