Snp 4.15 — Sn 4:15 The Rod Embraced

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

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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.

PDF presentation: discretionary soft-hyphen layout hints are omitted; original TXT and HTML retain them.

Text

4:15 The Rod Embraced

“When embraced,

the rod of violence1

breeds danger & fear:

Look at people in strife.

I will tell how

I experienced

terror:

Seeing people floundering

like fish in small puddles,

competing with one another—

as I saw this,

fear came into me.

The world was entirely

without substance.

All the directions

were knocked out of line.

Wanting a haven for myself,

I saw nothing that wasn’t laid claim to.

Seeing nothing in the end

but competition,

I felt discontent.

And then I saw

an arrow here,

so very hard to see,

embedded in the heart.

Overcome by this arrow

you run in all directions.

But simply on pulling it out

you don’t run,

you don’t sink.2

[Here the trainings are recited.] 3

Whatever things are tied down in the world,

you shouldn’t be set on them.

Having totally penetrated

sensual pleasures,

sensual passions,4
you should train for your own
unbinding.

Be truthful, not insolent,
not deceptive, remote
from divisiveness.
Without anger, the sage
should cross over the evil
of greed & avarice.
He should conquer drowsiness,
weariness,
sloth;
shouldn’t consort with heedlessness,
shouldn’t stand firm in his pride—
the man with his heart set
on unbinding.

He shouldn’t engage in lying,
shouldn’t create affection for form,
should fully fathom conceit,
and live refraining from impulsiveness;
shouldn’t delight in what’s old,
prefer what’s new,5
grieve over decline,
get entangled in
what’s dazzling & bright.6

I call greed
a great flood;
hunger, a swift current.
Preoccupations are ripples;

sensuality, a bog
hard to cross over.
Not deviating from truth,
a sage stands on high ground
: a brahman.7

Having relinquished
in every way,
he is said to be
at peace;
having clearly known, he
is an attainer-of-knowledge;
knowing the Dhamma, he's
independent.
Moving rightly through the world,
he doesn't envy
anyone here.

Whoever here has gone beyond
sensual passions—
an attachment hard
to transcend in the world—
doesn't sorrow,
doesn't fret.
He, his stream8 cut, is free
from bonds.

Burn up what's before,
and have nothing for after.
If you don't grasp
at what's in between,9
you will go about, calm.

For whom, in name-&-form,

in every way,

there’s no sense of mine,

and who doesn’t grieve

over what is not:

He, in the world,

isn’t defeated,

suffers no loss.10

To whom there doesn’t occur

‘This is mine,’

for whom nothing is others’:

He, feeling no sense of mine-ness,

doesn’t grieve at the thought

‘I have nothing.’

Not harsh,

not greedy,

not perturbed,11

everywhere

concordant12:

This is the reward

—I say when asked—

for those who are free

from theorizing.

For one unperturbed

—who knows—

there’s no accumulating.

Abstaining, unaroused,

he everywhere sees

security.13

The sage

doesn't speak of himself

as among those who are higher,

equal,

or lower.

At peace, free of stinginess,

he doesn't embrace, doesn't

reject,"

the Blessed One said.

vv. 935–954

Notes

1. Nd I: The rod of violence takes three forms: physical violence (the three forms of bodily misconduct), verbal violence (the four forms of verbal misconduct), and mental violence (the three forms of mental misconduct). See AN 10:176 and Dhp 129–142.

2. Nd I: "One doesn't run" to any of the destinations of rebirth; "one doesn't sink" into any of the four floods of sensuality, views, becoming, and ignorance. See SN 1:1, SN 45:171, and AN 4:10.

3. This phrase, a kind of stage direction, seems to indicate that this poem had a ritual use, as part of a ceremony for giving the precepts.

4. "Sensual pleasure, sensual passions": two meanings of the word kāma.

5. Nd I: "Old" and "new" mean past and present aggregates.

6. Nd I: "what's dazzling & bright" = craving and other defilements.

7. See AN 7:15.

8. Nd I: The stream here stands for craving and the various defilements that arise in its wake. See Dhp 251, 337, 339–340, and 347. It could also stand for the stream of becoming, mentioned in Sn 3:12.

9. Nd I: "Before," "after," and "in between" = past, future, and present.

10. "Isn't defeated, suffers no loss"—two meanings of the Pali phrase, na jiyyati.

11. Nd I defines “perturbation” as meaning “craving,” and “unperturbed” as meaning unmoved by gain, loss, status, loss of status, praise, criticism, pleasure, or pain (see AN 8:6–7). However, when the Buddha discusses the meaning of “unperturbed” in Sn 5:3, he relates it to the practice of concentration. See Sn 5:3, note 5.

12. Sama. See Sn 1:12, note 11.

13. See Ud 2:10.