Snp 4.16 — Sn 4:16 To Sāriputta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro 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

4:16 To Sāriputta

Ven. Sāriputta:

“Never before

have I seen or heard

from anyone

of a teacher with such lovely speech

come, together with his following

from Tusita heaven,1

as the One with Eyes
who appears to the world with its devas,
having dispelled all darkness,
having arrived at delight
all alone.

To that One Awakened—
unentangled, Such, un-
deceptive,
come with his following—
I have come desiring a question
on behalf of the many
here who are fettered:
For a monk disaffected,
frequenting a place remote—
the root of a tree,
a cemetery,
in mountain caves
various places to stay—
how many are the fears there
at which he shouldn’t tremble
—there in his noiseless abode—
how many the dangers in the world
for the monk going the direction
he never has gone
over which he should prevail
there in his isolated abode?
What should be
the ways of his speech?
What should be

his range there of action?
What should be
a resolute monk's
habits & practices?2
Undertaking what training
— mindful, astute, alone —
would he blow away
his own impurities
as a silver smith,
those in molten silver?"

The Buddha:
"I will tell you
as one who knows,
what is comfort
for one disaffected
if he's resorting to a place remote,
desiring self-awakening
in line with the Dhamma.
An enlightened monk,
living circumscribed,
mindful,
shouldn't fear the five fears:
of horseflies, mosquitoes, snakes,
human contact, four-footed beings;
shouldn't be fazed
by those following another's teaching
even on seeing their manifold
threats;
should prevail over still other

further dangers
as he seeks what is skillful.

Touched
by the touch
of disease, hunger,
he should endure cold
& inordinate heat.
He with no home,
in many ways touched by these things,
striving, should make firm his persistence.

He shouldn't commit a theft,
shouldn't speak a lie,
should touch with thoughts of goodwill
beings firm & infirm.
Conscious of when
his mind is stirred up & turbid,
he should dispel it:
'It's on the side
of the Dark One.'

He shouldn't come under the sway
of anger or pride.
Having dug up their root
he would stand firm.
Then, when prevailing
—yes—
he'd prevail over notions of dear & undear.

Deferring to discernment
enraptured with what's admirable,

he should overcome these dangers,
should conquer
discontent
in his isolated spot,
should conquer
these four
thoughts of lament:

‘What will I eat,
or where will I eat?
How badly I slept.
Tonight where will I sleep?’

These lamenting thoughts
he should subdue—
one under training,
wandering without home.
Receiving food & cloth
at appropriate times,
he should have a sense of enough
for the sake of contentment.3
Guarded in regard to these things
going restrained into a village,
even when harassed
he shouldn’t say a harsh word.

With eyes downcast,
& not footloose,
committed to jhāna,
he should be continually wakeful.4
Arousing equanimity,
centered within,

he should cut off any penchant
to conjecture or worry.
When reprimanded with words,
he should—mindful—
rejoice;5
should smash any rigidity
toward his fellows in the holy life;
should utter skillful words
that are not untimely;
should give no mind
to the gossip people might say.

And then there are in the world
the five kinds of dust
for whose subduing, mindful,
he should train:
With regard to forms, sounds, tastes,
smells, & tactile sensations
he should conquer passion;
with regard to these things
he should subdue his desire.

A monk, mindful,
his mind well released,
contemplating the right Dhamma
at the right times,
on coming
to oneness6
should annihilate
darkness,”

the Blessed One said.

vv. 955–975

Notes

1. The Buddha spent his next-to-last lifetime in the Tusita heaven, one of the highest levels on the sensual plane.

2.The fact that the Buddha answers this question in a straightforward manner illustrates the point that abandoning habits and practices does not mean having undefined precepts or practices—or no precepts or practices at all. See Sn 4:13, note 3.

3. See AN 4:28, AN 4:37, and AN 7:64.

4. See AN 4:37.

5. See Dhp 76–77.

6. Ekodi-bhūto. A quality of concentration attained in the second jhāna.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 35:117; SN 35:200; AN 4:28; Thag 3:8; Thag 5:8; Thag 6:2; Thag 18