Thig 12.1 — Punnika: Punnika and the Brahman

English translation by Thanissaro 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

[Punnika:]

I'm a water-carrier, cold, always going down to the water from fear of my mistresses' beatings, harrassed by their anger & words. But you, Brahman, what do you fear that you're always going down to the water with shivering limbs, feeling great cold?

[The Brahman:]

Punnika, surely you know. You're asking one doing skillful kamma & warding off evil. Whoever, young or old, does evil kamma is, through water ablution, from evil kamma set free.

[Punnika:]

Who taught you this — the ignorant to the ignorant — 'One, through water ablution, is from evil kamma set free?' In that case, they'd all go to heaven: all the frogs, turtles, serpents, crocodiles, & anything else that lives in the water. Sheep-butchers, pork-butchers, fishermen, trappers, thieves, executioners, & any other evil doers, would,

through water ablution, be from evil kamma set free. If these rivers could carry off the evil kamma you've done in the past, they'd carry off your merit as well, and then you'd be completely left out. Whatever it is that you fear, that you're always going down to the water, don't do it. Don't let the cold hurt your skin."

[The Brahman:]

I've been following the miserable path, good lady, and now you've brought me back to the noble. I give you this robe for water-ablution.

[Punnika:]

Let the robe be yours. I don't need it. If you're afraid of pain, if you dislike pain, then don't do any evil kamma, in open, in secret. But if you do or will do any evil kamma, you'll gain no freedom from pain, even if you fly up & hurry away. If you're afraid of pain, if you dislike pain, go to the Awakened One for refuge, go to the Dhamma & Sangha. Take on the precepts: That will lead to your liberation.

[The Brahman:]

I go to the Awakened One for refuge; I go to the Dhamma & Sangha. I take on the precepts: That will lead to my liberation. Before, I was a kinsman to Brahma; now, truly a brahman. I'm a three-knowledge man. consummate in knowledge, safe & washed clean.