Thig 12.1 — Verses of the Elder Puṇṇā

English translation by Bhikkhuni Soma.
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Text

Verses of the Elder Bhikkhunīs

Chapter of the Sixteens

Verses of the Elder Puṇṇā

“I am one who bathes in cold water,

always plunging into the water,

afraid of punishment by the masters,

terrified of angry words.”

“Why are you doing that, brahmin,

always plunging into the water frightened,

shivering,

and feeling very cold?”

“Dear Puṇṇa, surely you know already,

why do you ask?

I am making good karma

to block past bad karma.

Whether one is young or old,

whomever does a bad deed

is liberated from their bad deed

through ritual bathing.”

“Who told you this,

one ignorant person to another:

‘through ritual bathing

one is liberated from bad deeds’?

Does this mean that
all frogs, turtles,
sea-serpents, crocodiles,
and all the other marine beings will go to heaven?
Those who slaughter sheep and pigs,
fishermen, deer-hunters,
thieves, executioners,
and others doing bad deeds:
through ritual bathing,
they would be liberated from their bad deeds.
If these rivers could carry away
the bad deeds you made in the past,
they would also carry away your merit,
because it would be outside of yourself.
Whatever you are frightened about, brahmin,
because of which you are always going into the water,
brahmin, just don't do that;
you do not need to let the cold hurt your skin."
"I was practicing the wrong path,
and you have led me to the Noble Path.
Dear Madam, I give you
this ritual bathing-cloth."
"Let this cloth be yours,
I do not wish to have it.
If you are afraid of suffering,
if you dislike suffering,
do not do any bad deeds,
either publicly or privately.
If you do a bad deed,

or will do so in the future,

you will not be liberated from your suffering,

it reaches you even if you try to run away from it.

If you are afraid of suffering,

if you dislike suffering,

go for refuge to the Buddha,

Dhamma, and Sangha.

Take up the moral practices,

for your own sake."

"I go for refuge to the Buddha,

Dhamma, and Sangha.

I take up the moral practices,

for my own sake.

Before I was a kinsman of Brahmā,

today I am a real brahmin.

Possessing the three knowledges and higher insight,

I am one who has bathed, and has attained the highest knowledge."

The Elder Puṇṇā

The Chapter of the Sixteens is finished.