Thig 14.1 — Subha Jivakambavanika: Subha and the Libertine

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

As Subha the nun was going through Jivaka's delightful mango grove, a libertine (a goldsmith's son) blocked her path, so she said to him:

"What wrong have I done you that you stand in my way? It's not proper, my friend, that a man should touch a woman gone forth. I respect the Master's message, the training pointed out by the one well-gone. I am pure, without blemish: Why do you stand in my way? You — your mind agitated, I — unagitated; You — impassioned, I — unimpassioned, unblemished, with a mind everywhere released: Why do you stand in my way?" "You are young & not bad-looking, what need do you have for going forth? Throw off your ochre robe — Come, let's delight in the flowering forest. A sweetness they exude from all around, the towering trees with their pollen. The beginning of spring is a pleasant season — Come, let's delight in the flowering forest. The trees with their blossoming tips moan, as it were, in the breeze: What delight will you have if you plunge into the forest alone? Frequented by herds of wild beasts, disturbed by elephants rutting & aroused: you want to go unaccompanied into the great, lonely, frightening forest? Like a doll made of gold, you will go about, like a goddess in the gardens of heaven. With delicate, smooth Kasi fabrics, you will shine, O beauty without compare. I would be under your power if we were to dwell in

the wood. For there is no creature dearer to me than you, O nymph with the languid regard. If you do as I ask, happy, come live in my house. Dwelling in the calm of a palace, have women wait on you, wear delicate Kasi fabrics, adorn yourself with garlands & creams. I will make you many & varied ornaments of gold, jewels, & pearls. Climb onto a costly bed, scented with sandalwood carvings, with a well-washed coverlet, beautiful, spread with a woolen quilt, brand new. Like a blue lotus rising from the water, where there dwell non-human spirits, you will go to old age with your limbs unseen, if you stay as you are in the holy life." "What do you assume of any essence, here in this cemetery grower, filled with corpses, this body destined to break up? What do you see when you look at me, you who are out of your mind?" "Your eyes are like those of a fawn, like those of a nymph in the mountains. Seeing your eyes, my sensual delight grows all the more. Like tips they are, of blue lotuses, in your golden face — spotless: Seeing your eyes, my sensual delight grows all the more. Even if you should go far away, I will think only of your pure, long-lashed gaze, for there is nothing dearer to me than your eyes, O nymph with the languid regard." "You want to stray from the road, you want the moon as a plaything, you want to jump over Mount Sineru, you who have designs on one born of the Buddha. For there is nothing anywhere at all in the world with its devas, that would be an object of passion for me. I don't even know what that passion would be, for it's been killed, root & all, by the path. Like embers from a pit — scattered, like a bowl of poison — evaporated, I don't even see what that passion would be, for it's been killed, root & all, by the path. Try to seduce one who hasn't reflected on this, or who the Master hasn't instructed. But try it with this one who knows and you do yourself violence. For whether insulted or worshiped, in pleasure or pain, my mindfulness stands firm. Knowing the unattractiveness of fabricated things, my heart adheres nowhere at all. I am a follower of the one well-gone, riding the vehicle of the eightfold way: My arrow removed, effluent-free, I delight, having gone to an empty dwelling. For I have seen well-painted puppets, hitched up with sticks & strings, made to dance in various ways. When the sticks & strings are removed, thrown away, scattered, shredded, smashed into pieces, not to be found, in what will the mind there make its home? This body of mine, which is just like that, when devoid of dhammas doesn't function. When, devoid of dhammas, it doesn't function, in what will the mind there make its home? Like a mural you've seen, painted on a wall, smeared with yellow orpiment, there your vision has been distorted, meaningless your perception of a human being. Like an evaporated mirage, like a tree of gold in a dream, like a magic show in the midst of a crowd — you run blind after what is unreal. Resembling a ball of sealing wax, set in a hollow, with a bubble in the middle & bathed with tears, eye secretions are born there too: The parts of the eye are rolled all together in various ways." Plucking out her lovely eye, with mind unattached she felt no regret. "Here, take this eye. It's yours." Straightaway she gave it to him. Straightaway his passion faded right there, and he begged her forgiveness. "Be safe, follower of the holy life. This sort of thing won't happen again. Harming a person like you is like embracing a blazing fire, It's as if I have seized a poisonous snake. So may you be safe. Forgive me." And freed from there, the nun went to the excellent Buddha's presence. When she saw the mark of his excellent merit, her eye became as it was before.