SN 12.64 — Atthi Raga Sutta: Where There is Passion

English translation by Nyanaponika Thera.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

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Text

At Savatthi.

"There are, O monks, four nutriments for the sustenance of beings born, and for the support of beings seeking birth. What are the four?

"Edible food, coarse and fine; sense-impression is the second; volitional thought, the third; and consciousness, the fourth.

"If, O monks, there is lust for the nutriment edible food, if there is pleasure in it and craving for it, then consciousness[1] takes a hold[2] therein[3] and grows.[4] Where consciousness takes a hold and grows, there will be occurrence of mind-and-body.[5] Where there is occurrence of mind-and-body, there is[6] growth of kamma-formations.[7] Where there is growth of kamma-formations, there is a future arising of renewed existence.[8] Where there is a future arising of renewed existence, there is future birth, decay and death. This, I say, O monks, is laden with sorrow, burdened with anguish and

despair.

"If, O monks, there is lust for the nutriment sense-impression... volitional thought... consciousness, if there is pleasure in it and craving for it, then consciousness takes a hold therein and grows. Where consciousness takes a hold and grows, there will be occurrence of mind-and-body. Where there is occurrence of mind-and-body, there is growth of kamma-formations. Where there is growth of kamma-formations, there is a future arising of renewed existence. Where there is a future arising of renewed existence, there is future birth, decay and death. This, I say, O monks, is laden with sorrow, burdened with anguish and despair.

"Suppose there is a dyer or a painter. Having some dye or lac, (yellow) turmeric, (blue) indigo or crimson, he would depict, on a well-smoothed wooden tablet, on a wall or a piece of cloth, the figure of a woman or a man, with all the major and minor features (of the body). Similarly, O monks, if there is lust for the nutriments edible food, sense-impression, volitional thought and consciousness... then consciousness takes a hold therein and grows. Where consciousness takes a hold and grows, there is occurrence of mind-and-body. Where there is occurrence of mind-and-body, there is growth of kamma-formations. Where there is growth of kamma-formations, there is a future arising of renewed existence. Where there is a future arising of renewed existence, there is future birth, decay and death. This, I say, O monks, is laden with sorrow, burdened with anguish and despair.[9]

"But if, O monks, there is no lust for the nutriments edible food, sense-impression, volitional thought and consciousness, if there is no pleasure in them and no craving for them, then consciousness does not take a hold therein and does not grow. Where consciousness does not take a hold nor grow, there will be no occurrence of mind-and-body. Where there is no occurrence of mind-and-body, there is no growth of kamma-formations. Where there is no growth of kamma-formations, there is no future arising of renewed existence. Where there is no future arising of renewed existence, there is no future birth, decay and death. This, I say, O monks, is free of sorrow, of anguish and despair.

"Suppose, O monks, there is a gabled house or a gabled hall, with windows at the northern, southern, and eastern sides. Now, when at sunrise, a ray of the sun enters through a window, where would it find hold?" — "On the western wall, O Lord." — "But if there were no western wall, O monks, where would it find a hold?" — "On the earth, O Lord." — "And if there were no earth, where would it find a hold?" — "On the water,[10] O Lord." — "And if there were no water, where would it find a hold?" — "It would not find any hold whatsoever, O Lord."

"Similarly, O monks, if there is no lust for the nutriments edible food, sense-impression, volitional thought and consciousness, if there is no pleasure in them and no craving for them, then consciousness does not take hold therein and does not grow. Where consciousness does not take a hold nor grow, there will be no occurrence of mind-and-body, there is no growth of kamma-formations. Where there is no growth of

kamma-formations there is no future arising of renewed existence. Where there is no future arising of renewed existence, there is no future birth, decay and death. This, I say, O monks, is free of sorrow of anguish and despair."

Notes

1.

Sub-Comy: kamma-forming consciousness.

2.

Sub-Comy: it attains to (or: can express) its own nature (laddha-sabhaava).

3.

In the nutriment, or in the cycle of rebirths.

4.

Sub-Comy: it obtains growth (or maturity) for producing its fruit. — Comy: Kamma takes a hold and comes to growth in its capacity to drag (beings) to rebirth and it thus accelerates (the process of becoming; javaapetvaa).

5.

naamaruupassa avakkanti.

6.

In the present resultant sector of the cycle (vipaaka va.t.ta).

7.

Kamma-formations causing the future cycle.

8.

The nutriment consciousness signifies here the rebirth-consciousness.

9.

Comy: "This is the application of the simile: the dyer or painter is the kamma with its adjuncts. The wooden tablets, the wall or the piece of cloth, correspond to the three planes of existence in the cycle of rebirths. As the painter produces a figure on a clean surface, so kamma with its adjuncts produces forms (ruupa) in various existences. If the painter is unskilled, the figures he paints will be ugly, misshapen and not pleasing; similarly, if a

person performs a kamma with mind devoid of knowledge (ñaa.na-vippayuttena cittena), then that kamma will produce a (bodily) form that does not lend beauty to the eye, etc., but will be ugly, misshapen and not pleasing even to father and mother. But if the painter is skillful, the figures he produces will be beautiful, of attractive shape and pleasing; similarly if a person performs kamma in a state of mind imbued with knowledge (ñaa.nasampayutta), then the bodily form produced by that kamma, will give beauty to the eye, etc., will be attractive and well-shapen, like a finished work of art.

"Here, taking nutriment together with consciousness, there is one link (of cause and fruit) between nutriment and mind-and-body. Including mind-and-body in the section of the resultants there is one link (of fruit and cause) between mind-and-body and kamma-formations. Finally, there is one link (of cause and fruit) between kamma-formations and the future existence."

10.

According to Indian cosmology, the earth rests on water.

See also: SN 12.11; SN 12.12; SN 12.31; SN 12.63; AN 10.27; The Four Nutriments of Life by Nyanaponika Thera.