SN 17.3 — SN 17:3 The Turtle | Kumma Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN17_3.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017

License notice: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Attribution: From Handful of Leaves, Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu; https://www.dhammatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/SuttaPitaka_251113.epub. Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

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

The Turtle

Kumma Sutta (SN 17:3)

Staying near Sāvatthī. “Monks, gains, offerings, & fame are a cruel thing, a harsh, bitter obstacle to the attainment of the unexcelled rest from bondage.

“Once, monks, a large family of turtles had lived for a long time in a certain freshwater lake. Then one turtle said to another, ‘My dear turtle, don’t go to that area.’ But the turtle went to that area, and because of that a hunter lanced him with a harpoon. So he went back to the first turtle. The first turtle saw him coming from afar, and on seeing him said to him, ‘I hope, dear turtle, that you didn’t go to area.’

“‘I went to that area, dear turtle.’

“‘Then I hope you haven’t been wounded or hurt.’

“‘I haven’t been wounded or hurt, but there’s this cord that keeps dragging behind me.’

“‘Yes, dear turtle, you’re wounded, you’re hurt. It was because of that cord that your father & grandfather fell into misfortune & disaster. Now go, dear turtle. You are no longer one of us.’

“The hunter, monks, stands for Māra, the Evil One. The harpoon stands for gains, offerings, & fame. The cord stands for delight & passion. Any monk who relishes & revels in gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen is called a monk lanced by the harpoon, who has fallen into misfortune & disaster. The Evil One can do with him as he will. That’s how cruel gains, offerings, & fame are: a harsh, bitter obstacle to the attainment of the unexcelled rest from bondage.

“So you should train yourselves: ‘We will put aside any gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen; and we will not let any gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen keep our minds consumed.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 8:7