

Phum Village

Sutras / *Discourse on Transforming Violence and Fear*

Attadaṇḍa Sutta, #16 of the Arthapada, Taishō 198, Snp 4.15

1) Let us listen and observe to understand how, from a happy and wholesome state, people have brought society into a state of terror and violence. How have past generations acted for the situation to become like this? I want to talk to you about this suffering and tell you how I have been able to let go of fear.

2) People in the world experience one suffering after another like a fish living in a pond that is drying up day by day. In a situation of suffering, violent thoughts easily arise, and out of ignorance, people seek to relieve their suffering by terrorizing and punishing others.

3) The whole world is burning with violence. Every place is in turmoil. Nowhere is completely safe. Everyone thinks they are better than others and few people know how to let go of their attachments. Unable to see this truth, people continue to hold on to their wrong perceptions.

4) People bind themselves up in these wrong perceptions just bringing more ignorance and pain into their lives. I have looked deeply into the minds of those who are not happy, and I have seen hidden under their suffering a sharp-pointed knife. Because they cannot see the sharp-pointed knife hidden in their mind, they are not able to bear the pain.

5) The pain brought about by the sharp-pointed knife lasts a long time without changing. People hold on to that knife wherever they go, so that their pain spills out into the world. Only when they have a chance to recognize the knife and take it out of their hearts, will their suffering cease, and they will have a chance to stop running.

6) Do not allow any worldly fetter to bind you. The roots of wrong-doing and agitation have to be abandoned. Let go of them and do not take refuge in them. If you can put aside wrong desire, you can overcome every misfortune. The practitioner must break free from the cycle of suffering in order to realise their career of liberation.

7) To be a true practitioner you must be wholehearted and sincere, not doing anything based on wrong perception. Go straight on your path, not employing divisive speech. Know how to put out the flames of hatred and break the blocks of wrong desire. If you are able to untie the bonds of the afflictions, you will begin to see the shore of liberation.

8) Let go of pride, do not oversleep, nor sink into a state of torpor. Live and work with moderation, and do not be carried away by the emotions of the majority. Do not be caught by dazzling appearances and know how to turn your back on them. Meditate frequently on the empty nature of all things in order to realise the silence of Nirvana.

9) Do not insult anyone. Do not be attracted and caught by deceptive outer appearances. Do not launch into all kinds of amusements, forgetting that the aim of your practice is to relieve suffering in yourself and others.

10) Do not reminisce about what happened in the past and do not have wrong thinking about what will happen. Recognize what is happening in the present moment and do not be carried away by it. In this way, you can walk alone anywhere in the world of the five continents and the four oceans and no one will be jealous of you.

11) I maintain that craving pleasure is the most destructive force. It is the flood that engulfs the whole world. If you can see that, you can master all doubts. You need to apply your mind to the meditation on conditioned co-arising. You should see that if you cannot overcome the defilement of sensual desire it will be difficult to put an end to suffering.

12) Throughout the ages, the number of people who have had the energy to let go of desire for pleasure is very small. However once you, the practitioner, have let go of desire, you do not feel you have lost anything and you do not need to find another place to go to. The flood subsides all by itself, and nothing can bind you anymore.

13) Relying on the power of the vehicle of insight, the Muni crosses to the other shore. Thanks to this insight they have no more anxiety and see they are protected. Birth, death, disasters, and jealousy cannot assail them anymore. By the power of right diligence they realise true peace.

14) When there are no more false notions, your suffering ends. Practitioners meditate on the emptiness of all phenomena and are no longer caught in them. Having seen directly the great way that leads to peace, they are no longer caught in any of the views that exist in the world.

15) When practitioners are not caught in the view: "This body is myself," see the ungraspable nature of things and that there is no real existence of a separate self, they have nothing more to be anxious about.

16) When ignorance is uprooted, and all its new shoots have been removed and have no chance to grow again, the practitioner does not cling to anything in their present environment, because there is no longer the need to discriminate between friend and enemy.

17) No longer caught in the concepts of matter and mind as separate from each other, no longer caught in any concept, not seeing anything to grasp, understanding that space and matter are empty, nothing in the three times can make the practitioner complain in anger.

18) Having completely transcended concepts about everything, including the idea of an object, then you are able to master all the wholesome practices. Having practiced and eloquently taught the teachings of non-desire and non-duality, you are not hesitant in responding to any questions put to you.

19) Having attained understanding, you no longer need to be a follower of anyone. No longer yearning for nor hating anything, you attain inner peace and realize the silence of Nirvana.

20) Standing on high, the Muni doesn't feel proud. In a lowly position they have no complex. they dwell in equanimity and are not caught in any view. There is no longer any dispute with anyone; hatred and jealousy have ceased. Standing in a place of true insight, they do not feel the slightest pride.



Translated by Thich Nhat Hanh from Number 16 of the Arthapada, Taishō 198
(corresponding to Attadaṇḍa Sutta, Sutta Nipāta 4.15, Verse #935-954)

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