Thig 13.5 — Subhā, the Smith’s Daughter

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Text

Verses of the Senior Nuns 13.5

The Book of the Twenties

Subhā, the Smith’s Daughter

“I was so young, my clothes so fresh,

at that time I heard the teaching.

Being diligent,

I comprehended the truth;

and then I became profoundly dispassionate

toward all sensual pleasures.

Seeing fear in substantial reality,

I longed for renunciation.

Giving up my family circle,

bonded servants and workers,

and my flourishing village fields,

so delightful and pleasant,

I went forth;

all that is no small wealth.

Now that I’ve renounced in faith like this,

in the true teaching so well proclaimed,

since I desire to have nothing,

it would not be appropriate

to take back gold and currency,

having already got rid of them.

Currency or gold
doesn’t lead to peace and awakening.
It doesn’t befit an ascetic;
it’s not the wealth of the noble ones;
it’s greed and vanity,
confusion and growing decadence,
dubious and troublesome—
there is nothing lasting there.
Depraved and heedless,
unenlightened folk, their hearts corrupt,
fight each other,
creating conflict.
Killing, caging, misery,
loss, grief, and lamentation;
those sunk in sensual pleasures
see many disastrous things.
My family, why do you urge me on
to pleasures, as if you were my enemies?
You know I’ve gone forth,
seeing fear in sensual pleasures.
It’s not due to gold, coined or uncoined,
that defilements come to an end.
Sensual pleasures are enemies and killers,
hostile forces that bind you to thorns.
My family, why do you urge me on
to pleasures, as if you were my enemies?
You know I’ve gone forth,
shaven, wrapped in my outer robe.
Leftovers as gleanings,

and cast-off rags as robes—
that's what's fitting for me,
the essentials of the homeless life.
Great seers expel sensual pleasures,
both human and heavenly.
Safe in their sanctuary, they are freed,
having found unshakable happiness.
May I not encounter sensual pleasures,
for no shelter is found in them.
Sensual pleasures are enemies and killers,
as painful as a mass of fire.
This is a roadblock, a threat,
full of distress and thorns;
it is a blind spot, uneven,
a great gateway to confusion.
Hazardous and terrifying,
sensual pleasures are like a cobra's head,
where fools delight,
the blind ordinary folk.
Stuck in the swamp of sensuality,
there are so many ignorant in the world.
They know nothing of the end
of rebirth and death.
Because of sensual pleasures,
people jump right on to the path that goes to a bad place.
So many walk the path
that brings disease onto themselves.
That's how sensual pleasures create enemies;
they are so tormenting, so corrupting,

trapping beings with worldly pleasures of the flesh,
they are nothing less than the bonds of death.
Maddening, enticing,
sensual pleasures derange the mind.
For the corruption of beings,
swiftly ensnared by Māra.
Sensual pleasures are infinitely dangerous,
they’re full of suffering, a terrible poison;
offering little gratification, they’re makers of strife,
withering bright qualities away.
Since I’ve created so much ruination
because of sensual pleasures,
I will not relapse to them again,
but will always delight in extinguishment.
Having once made strife for the sake of sensual pleasures,
now I am longing for that cool state.
I shall meditate diligently
for the ending of all fetters.
Sorrowless, stainless, secure—
I follow that path,
the straight noble eightfold way
by which the seers have crossed over.”
“Look at this: Subhā the smith’s daughter,
standing firm in the teaching.
She has entered the imperturbable state,
meditating at the root of a tree.
It’s just eight days since she went forth,
the faithful one, grace of the true teaching.
Guided by Uppalavaṇṇā,

she is master of the three knowledges, conqueror of death.

This one is freed from slavery and debt,

a nun with faculties developed.

Unyoked from all yokes,

she has completed the task and is free of defilements.”

Thus did Sakka, lord of all creatures,

along with a host of gods,

having come by their psychic powers,

honor Subhā, the smith’s daughter.