Snp 4.6 — Old Age

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Text

Anthology of Discourses 4.6

Old Age

Short, alas, is this life;

you die before a hundred years.

Even if you live a little longer,

you still die of old age.

People grieve over belongings,

yet there is no such thing as permanent possessions.

Separation is a fact of life; when you see this,

you wouldn’t stay living at home.

Whatever a person thinks of as belonging to them,

that too is given up when they die.

Knowing this, an astute follower of mine

would not be bent on ownership.

Just as, upon awakening, a person does not see

what they encountered in a dream;

so too you do not see your loved ones

when they are dead and gone.

You used to see and hear those folk,

and call them by their name.

Yet the name is all that’s left to tell

of a personage when they’re gone.

Those who are greedy for belongings

don’t give up sorrow, lamentation, and stinginess.
That’s why the sages, seers of sanctuary,
left possessions behind and wandered.
For a mendicant who lives withdrawn,
frequenting a secluded seat,
they say it’s fitting
to not show themselves in a home.
The sage is independent everywhere,
they don’t form likes or dislikes.
Lamentation and stinginess
slip off them like water from a leaf.
Like a droplet slips from a lotus-leaf,
like water from a lotus flower;
the sage doesn’t cling to that
which is seen or heard or thought.
For the one who is cleansed does not conceive
in terms of things seen, heard, or thought.
They do not wish to be purified by another;
they are neither passionate nor growing dispassioned.