

THE FIRE SERMON¹

(*Adittapariyaya-sutta*)

Thus have I heard. The Blessed One was once living at Gayasisa in Gaya with a thousand bhikkhus. There he addressed the bhikkhus:

'Bhikkhus, all is burning. And what is the all that is burning?

'Bhikkhus, the eye is burning, visible forms are burning, visual consciousness is burning, visual impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the visual impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, aging and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

'The ear is burning, sounds are burning, auditory consciousness is burning, auditory impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the auditory impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust

'The nose is burning, odours are burning, olfactory consciousness is burning, olfactory impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the olfactory impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust. . . .

'The tongue is burning, flavours are burning, gustative

is called *The Fire Sermon*. In the note to line 308: 'Burning burning burning burning', Eliot writes: 'The complete text of the Buddha's Fire Sermon (which corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount) from which these words are taken, will be found translated in the late Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translation* (Harvard Oriental Series). Mr. Warren was one of the great pioneers of Buddhist studies in the Occident.'

The translation of the *Sutta* given here, made by the present author specially for this edition, is from the original Pali of the *Samyutta-nikaya* of the *Sutta-pifaka*. Warren's translation was of the narrative as found in the *Mahavagga* of the *Vinaya-pifaka*.

consciousness is burning, gustative impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the gustative impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust. . . .

'The body is burning, tangible things are burning, tactile consciousness is burning, tactile impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the tactile sensation, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust. . . .

'The mind is burning, mental objects (ideas, etc.) are burning, mental consciousness is burning, mental impression is burning, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the mental impression, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, aging and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

'Bhikkhus, a learned and noble disciple, who sees (things) thus, becomes dispassionate with regard to the eye, becomes dispassionate with regard to visible forms, becomes dispassionate with regard to the visual consciousness, becomes dispassionate with regard to the visual impression, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of the visual impression, with regard to that too he becomes dispassionate. He becomes dispassionate with regard to the ear, with regard to sounds . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the nose . . . with regard to odours . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the tongue . . . with regard to flavours . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the body . . . with regard to tangible things . . . He becomes dispassionate with regard to the mind, becomes dispassionate with regard to mental objects (ideas, etc.), becomes dispassionate with regard to mental consciousness, becomes dispassionate with regard to mental impression, also whatever sensation, pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, arises on account of mental impression, with regard to that too he becomes dispassionate.

'Being dispassionate, he becomes detached; through detachment he is liberated. When liberated there is knowledge that he is liberated. And he knows: Birth is exhausted, the holy life has

been lived, what has to be done is done, there is no more left to be done on this account.'

This the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were glad, and they rejoiced at his words.

While this exposition was being delivered, the minds of those thousand bhikkhus were liberated from impurities, without attachment.

(Samyutta-nikaya, XXXV, 28)

UNIVERSAL LOVE

(Metta-sutta)

He who is skilled in good and who wishes to attain that state of Calm should act (thus):

He should be able, upright, perfectly upright, compliant, gentle, and humble.

Contented, easily supported, with few duds, of simple livelihood, controlled in senses, discreet, not impudent, he should not be greedily attached to families.

He should not commit any slight wrong such that other wise men might censure him. (Then he should cultivate his thoughts thus:)

May all beings be happy and secure; may their minds be contented.

Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong, long (or tall), stout, or medium, short, small, or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born—may all beings, without exception, be happy-minded!

Let not one deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place. In anger or illwill let not one wish any harm to another.

Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

Let one's thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world—above, below and across—without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.