

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

The
Middle Length
Discourses
of the
Buddha



A Translation of the
Majjhima Nikāya



Translated from the Pāli

ORIGINAL TRANSLATION
by

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Third Edition



WISDOM PUBLICATIONS • BOSTON

in association with the

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

131 *Bhaddekaratta Sutta*

A Single Excellent Night

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD.¹²⁰⁹ On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Bhikkhus, I shall teach you the summary and exposition of 'One Who Has Had a Single Excellent Night.'¹²¹⁰ Listen and attend closely to what I shall say."—"Yes, venerable sir," the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

3. "Let not a person revive the past
Or on the future build his hopes;¹²¹¹
For the past has been left behind
And the future has not been reached.
Instead with insight let him see
Each presently arisen state;¹²¹²
Let him know that and be sure of it,
Invincibly, unshakeably.¹²¹³
Today the effort must be made;
Tomorrow Death may come, who knows?
No bargain with Mortality
Can keep him and his hordes away,
But one who dwells thus ardently,
Relentlessly, by day, by night—
It is he, the Peaceful Sage has said,¹²¹⁴
Who has had a single excellent night. [188]

4. "How, bhikkhus, does one revive the past? One nurtures delight there thinking, 'I had such material form in the past.'¹²¹⁵ One nurtures delight there thinking, 'I had such feeling in the past,'... 'I had such perception in the past,'... 'I had such formations

in the past,'... 'I had such consciousness in the past.' That is how one revives the past.

5. "And how, bhikkhus, does one not revive the past? One does not nurture delight there thinking, 'I had such material form in the past.'¹²¹⁶ One does not nurture delight there thinking, 'I had such feeling in the past,'... 'I had such perception in the past,'... 'I had such formations in the past,'... 'I had such consciousness in the past.' That is how one does not revive the past.

6. "And how, bhikkhus, does one build up hope upon the future? One nurtures delight there thinking, 'May I have such material form in the future!'¹²¹⁷ One nurtures delight there thinking, 'May I have such feeling in the future!'... 'May I have such perception in the future!'... 'May I have such formations in the future!'... 'May I have such consciousness in the future!' That is how one builds up hope upon the future.

7. "And how, bhikkhus, does one not build up hope upon the future? One does not nurture delight there thinking, 'May I have such material form in the future!' One does not nurture delight there thinking, 'May I have such feeling in the future!'... 'May I have such perception in the future!'... 'May I have such formations in the future!'... 'May I have such consciousness in the future!' That is how one does not build up hope upon the future.

8. "And how, bhikkhus, is one vanquished in regard to presently arisen states?¹²¹⁸ Here, bhikkhus, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, regards material form as self, or self as possessed of material form, or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He regards feeling as self... perception as self... formations as self [189]... consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how one is vanquished in regard to presently arisen states.

9. "And how, bhikkhus, is one invincible in regard to presently arisen states? Here, bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple, who has regard for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, does not regard material form as self, or self as possessed of material form, or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He does not regard feeling as

self...perception as self...formations as self...consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how one is invincible in regard to presently arisen states.

10. "Let not a person revive the past...
Who has had a single excellent night.

11. "So it was with reference to this that it was said: 'Bhikkhus, I shall teach you the summary and exposition of "One Who Has Had a Single Excellent Night."'"

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.