

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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18 *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*

The Honeyball

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Sakyan country at Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha's Park.

2. Then, when it was morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Kapilavatthu for alms. When he had wandered for alms in Kapilavatthu and had returned from his almsround, after his meal he went to the Great Wood for the day's abiding, and entering the Great Wood, sat down at the root of a bilva sapling for the day's abiding.

3. Daṇḍapāṇi the Sakyan, while walking and wandering for exercise, also went to the Great Wood, and when he had entered the Great Wood, he went to the bilva sapling where the Blessed One was and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he stood at one side leaning on his stick and asked the Blessed One: "What does the recluse assert, what does he proclaim?"²²⁶

4. "Friend, I assert and proclaim [my teaching] in such a way that one does not quarrel with anyone in the world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and its people; in such a way that perceptions no more underlie that brahmin who abides detached from sensual pleasures, without perplexity, shorn of worry, free from craving for any kind of being."²²⁷

5. When this was said, Daṇḍapāṇi the Sakyan shook his head, [109] wagged his tongue, and raised his eyebrows until his forehead was puckered in three lines.²²⁸ Then he departed, leaning on his stick.

6. Then, when it was evening, the Blessed One rose from meditation and went to Nigrodha's Park, where he sat down on a seat made ready for him and told the bhikkhus what had taken place. Then a certain bhikkhu asked the Blessed One:

7. “But, venerable sir, how does the Blessed One assert and proclaim [his teaching] in such a way that he does not quarrel with anyone in the world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and its people? And, venerable sir, how is it that perceptions no more underlie the Blessed One, that brahmin who abides detached from sensual pleasures, without perplexity, shorn of worry, free from craving for any kind of being?”

8. “Bhikkhu, as to the source through which perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendency to lust, of the underlying tendency to aversion, [110] of the underlying tendency to views, of the underlying tendency to doubt, of the underlying tendency to conceit, of the underlying tendency to desire for being, of the underlying tendency to ignorance; this is the end of resorting to rods and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malicious words, and false speech; here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.”²²⁹

9. That is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Sublime One rose from his seat and went into his dwelling.

10. Then, soon after the Blessed One had gone, the bhikkhus considered: “Now, friends, the Blessed One has risen from his seat and gone into his dwelling after giving a summary in brief without expounding the detailed meaning. Now who will expound this in detail?” Then they considered: “The venerable Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and esteemed by his wise companions in the holy life.²³⁰ He is capable of expounding the detailed meaning. Suppose we went to him and asked him the meaning of this.”

11. Then the bhikkhus went to the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, they sat down to one side and told him what had taken place, [111] adding: “Let the venerable Mahā Kaccāna expound it to us.”

12. [The venerable Mahā Kaccāna replied:] “Friends, it is as though a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, thought that heartwood should be sought for among the branches and leaves of a great tree standing possessed of heartwood, after he had passed over the root

and the trunk. And so it is with you, venerable sirs, that you think that I should be asked about the meaning of this, after you passed the Blessed One by when you were face to face with the Teacher. For knowing, the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees; he is vision, he is knowledge, he is the Dhamma, he is the holy one;²³¹ he is the sayer, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the giver of the Deathless, the lord of the Dhamma, the Tathāgata. That was the time when you should have asked the Blessed One the meaning. As he told you, so you should have remembered it."

13. "Surely, friend Kaccāna, knowing, the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees; he is vision...the Tathāgata. That was the time when we should have asked the Blessed One the meaning. As he told us, so we should have remembered it. Yet the venerable Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and esteemed by his wise companions in the holy life. The venerable Mahā Kaccāna is capable of expounding the detailed meaning of this summary given in brief by the Blessed One without expounding the detailed meaning. Let the venerable Mahā Kaccāna expound it without finding it troublesome."

14. "Then listen, friends, and attend closely to what I shall say."—"Yes, friend," the bhikkhus replied. The venerable Mahā Kaccāna said this:

15. "Friends, when the Blessed One rose from his seat and went into his dwelling after giving a summary in brief without expounding the detailed meaning, that is: 'Bhikkhu, as to the source through which perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome, and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendency to lust...this is the end of resorting to rods and weapons...here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder,' I understand the detailed meaning of it to be as follows:

16. "Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition there is feeling. What one feels, that one perceives. [112] What one perceives, that one thinks about. What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates. With what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man with respect to past, future, and present forms cognizable through the eye."²³²

“Dependent on the ear and sounds...Dependent on the nose and odours...Dependent on the tongue and flavours...Dependent on the body and tangibles...Dependent on the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition there is feeling. What one feels, that one perceives. What one perceives, that one thinks about. What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates. With what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man with respect to past, future, and present mind-objects cognizable through the mind.

17. “When there is the eye, a form, and eye-consciousness, it is possible to point out the manifestation of contact.²³³ When there is the manifestation of contact, it is possible to point out the manifestation of feeling. When there is the manifestation of feeling, it is possible to point out the manifestation of perception. When there is the manifestation of perception, it is possible to point out the manifestation of thinking. When there is the manifestation of thinking, it is possible to point out the manifestation of besetment by perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation.

“When there is the ear, a sound, and ear-consciousness...When there is the nose, an odour, and nose-consciousness...When there is the tongue, a flavour, and tongue-consciousness...When there is the body, a tangible, and body-consciousness...When there is the mind, a mind-object, and mind-consciousness...it is possible to point out the manifestation of besetment by perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation.

18. “When there is no eye, no form, and no eye-consciousness, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of contact. When there is no manifestation of contact, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of feeling. When there is no manifestation of feeling, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of perception. When there is no manifestation of perception, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of thinking. When there is no manifestation of thinking, it is impossible to point out the manifestation of besetment by perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation.

“When there is no ear, no sound, and no ear-consciousness... When there is no nose, no odour, and no nose-consciousness... When there is no tongue, no flavour, and no tongue-

consciousness... When there is no body, no tangible, and no body-consciousness...When there is no mind, no mind-object, and no mind-consciousness...it is impossible to point out the manifestation of besetment by perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation.

19. "Friends, when the Blessed One [113] rose from his seat and went into his dwelling after giving a summary in brief without expounding the detailed meaning, that is: 'Bhikkhu, as to the source through which perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome, and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendency to lust, of the underlying tendency to aversion, of the underlying tendency to views, of the underlying tendency to doubt, of the underlying tendency to conceit, of the underlying tendency to desire for being, of the underlying tendency to ignorance; this is the end of resorting to rods and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malicious words, and false speech; here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder,' I understand the detailed meaning of this summary to be thus. Now, friends, if you wish, go to the Blessed One and ask him about the meaning of this. As the Blessed One explains it to you, so you should remember it."

20. Then the bhikkhus, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Mahā Kaccāna's words, rose from their seats and went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to him, they sat down at one side and told the Blessed One all that had taken place after he had left, adding: "Then, venerable sir, we went to the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and asked him about the meaning. [114] The venerable Mahā Kaccāna expounded the meaning to us with these terms, statements, and phrases."

21. "Mahā Kaccāna is wise, bhikkhus, Mahā Kaccāna has great wisdom. If you had asked me the meaning of this, I would have explained it to you in the same way that Mahā Kaccāna has explained it. Such is the meaning of this, and so you should remember it."

22. When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, just as if a man exhausted by hunger and weakness came upon a honeyball,²³⁴ wherever he would taste it he would find a sweet delectable flavour; so too, venerable sir, any able-minded bhikkhu, wherever he might

scrutinize with wisdom the meaning of this discourse on the Dhamma, would find satisfaction and confidence of mind. Venerable sir, what is the name of this discourse on the Dhamma?"

"As to that, Ānanda, you may remember this discourse on the Dhamma as 'The Honeyball Discourse.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ānanda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.