

AN 6.61
Majjhe Sutta
“Discourse on ‘The Middle’”
Translated by Candana Bhikkhu

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This is what I personally heard.

At one time, The Blessed One was living in the Deer Park at Isipatana, in the city of Benares. It was at that time when many senior Bhikkhus had gathered, after having already returned from the alms round and taken their meal, as they now sat together in the circular hall, discussing and sharing their thoughts, thus:

“Friends, this was the response given by The Blessed One in verse to ‘*The Questions of Metteyya*,’ as found in the Pārāyana Vagga:”

*“He who, having understood both ends,
The one with wisdom, who does not get attached to the middle,
It is he, whom I call ‘a Great Man’
For he has bypassed the ‘seamstress’ in this world!”*

“Now, Friends, what is the ‘one end,’ what is the ‘second end,’ what is the ‘middle’ and who is the ‘seamstress?’”

When this was said, one of the Bhikkhus said to his fellow senior Bhikkhus:

“Friends, contact is the ‘one end,’ the arising of contact is the ‘second end,’ and the cessation of contact is the ‘middle,’ whereas craving is the ‘seamstress.’ It is craving that keeps stitching for him a new rebecoming here and there. Friends, by knowing this much, the Bhikkhu can thoroughly know and understand what should be thoroughly known and understood, and as he experiences what should be experienced here and now, he thereby puts an end to suffering.”

When this was said, another Bhikkhu said this to his fellow senior Bhikkhus:

“Friends, the past is the ‘one end,’ the future is the ‘second end,’ and the present is the ‘middle,’ whereas craving is the ‘seamstress.’ It is craving that keeps stitching for him a new rebecoming here and there. Friends, by knowing this much, the Bhikkhu can thoroughly know and understand what should be thoroughly known and understood, and as he experiences what should be experienced here and now, he thereby puts an end to suffering.”

When this was said, another Bhikkhu said this to his fellow senior Bhikkhus:

“Friends, pleasant feeling is the ‘one end,’ painful feeling is the ‘second end,’ and neither painful nor pleasant feeling is the ‘middle,’ whereas craving is the ‘seamstress.’ It is craving that keeps

stitching for him a new rebecoming here and there. Friends, by knowing this much, the Bhikkhu can thoroughly know and understand what should be thoroughly known and understood, and as he experiences what should be experienced here and now, he thereby puts an end to suffering.”

When this was said, another Bhikkhu said this to his fellow senior Bhikkhus:

“Friends, name is the ‘one end,’ form is the ‘second end,’ and consciousness is the ‘middle,’ whereas craving is the ‘seamstress.’ It is craving that keeps stitching for him a new rebecoming here and there. Friends, by knowing this much, the Bhikkhu can thoroughly know and understand what should be thoroughly known and understood, and as he experiences what should be experienced here and now, he thereby puts an end to suffering.”

When this was said, another Bhikkhu said this to his fellow senior Bhikkhus:

“Friends, the six internal sense bases are the ‘one end,’ the external sense bases are the ‘second end,’ and awareness of the six senses is the ‘middle,’ whereas craving is the ‘seamstress.’ It is craving that keeps stitching for him a new rebecoming here and there. Friends, by knowing this much, the Bhikkhu can thoroughly know and understand what should be thoroughly known and understood, and as he experiences what should be experienced here and now, he thereby puts an end to suffering.”

When this was said, another Bhikkhu said this to his fellow senior Bhikkhus:

“Friends, self-identification is the ‘one end,’ the origin of self-identification is the ‘second end,’ and the cessation of self-identification is the ‘middle,’ whereas craving is the ‘seamstress.’ It is craving that keeps stitching for him a new rebecoming here and there. Friends, by knowing this much, the Bhikkhu can thoroughly know and understand what should be thoroughly known and understood, and as he experiences what should be experienced here and now, he thereby puts an end to suffering.”

When this was said, another Bhikkhu said this to his fellow senior Bhikkhus:

“Friends, we have now all shared our interpretation of this verse given by the Blessed One, according to each of our individual understanding. Let us now go and approach The Blessed One, and report all this to Him, and as The Blessed One explains the intended meaning of His verse, we shall remember and bear it in our hearts, and practice according to it.”

Having collectively agreed to the suggestion made, the senior Bhikkhus went and approached The Blessed One, and after paying homage to Him, they all sat to one side, and proceeded to inform The Blessed One of their earlier discussion, as they followed up with a question:

“Bhante, who among us has spoken well?”

“Bhikkhus, in a way, all of you have spoken well.

“But Bhikkhus, listen attentively to learn the intended meaning behind the response I gave in the following verse to ‘*the Questions of Metteyya*,’ as found within the Pārāyana Vagga.

*“He who, having understood both ends,
The one with wisdom, who does not get attached to the middle,
It is he, whom I call ‘a Great Man’
For he has bypassed the ‘seamstress’ in this world!”*

“Yes, Bhante. We will listen and attend carefully to the Blessed One, in order to learn its intended meaning,” those Bhikkhus replied.

Then The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikkhus, contact is the ‘one end,’ the arising of contact is the ‘second end,’ the cessation of contact is the ‘middle.’ Craving is the ‘seamstress.’ It is craving that keeps stitching for him a new rebecoming here and there. Friends, by knowing this much, the Bhikkhu can thoroughly know and understand what should be thoroughly known and understood, as he experiences what should be experienced here and now, and thereby putting an end to suffering.”

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu