MN 133 — MN 133 Mahā Kaccāna & the Auspicious Day | MahāKaccāna Bhaddekaratta Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Mahā Kaccāna & the Auspicious Day

MahāKaccāna Bhaddekaratta Sutta (MN 133)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha at Tapodā monastery. Then Ven. Samiddhi, as night was ending, got up & went to the Tapodā Hot Springs to bathe his limbs. Having bathed his limbs and gotten out of the springs, he stood wearing only his lower robe, letting his limbs return to normal.1

Then a certain devatā, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entire Tapodā Hot Springs, went to Ven. Samiddhi and, on arrival, stood to one side.

As she was standing there, she said to him, “Monk, have you memorized the summary & analysis of the auspicious day?”

“No, friend, I haven’t memorized the summary & analysis of the auspicious day. Have you memorized the summary & analysis of the auspicious day?”

“No, monk, I, too, haven’t memorized the summary & analysis of the auspicious day. Have you memorized the verses of the auspicious day?

“No, friend, I haven’t memorized the verses of the auspicious day. Have you memorized the verses of the auspicious day?”

“No, monk, I, too, haven’t memorized the verses of the auspicious day.

“Learn the summary & analysis of the auspicious day, monk. Master the summary & analysis of the auspicious day, monk. Remember the summary & analysis of the auspicious day, monk. Connected with the goal are the summary & analysis of the auspicious day, monk, and basic to the holy life.”

That is what the devatā said. Having said it, she vanished right there.

Then, when night had ended, Ven. Samiddhi went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he [told the Blessed One what had happened, adding:] “It would be good, lord, if you would teach me the summary & analysis of the auspicious day.”

“In that case, monk, listen well & pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, lord,” Ven. Samiddhi responded to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said:

“You shouldn’t chase after the past

or place expectations on the future.

What is past

is left behind.

The future

is as yet unreached.

Whatever quality is present

you clearly see right there,

right there.

Not taken in,

unshaken,

that's how you develop the heart.

Ardently doing

what should be done today,

for—who knows?— tomorrow

death.

There is no bargaining

with Mortality & his mighty horde.

Whoever lives thus ardently,

relentlessly

both day & night,

has truly had an auspicious day:

So says the Peaceful Sage."

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said it, the One Well-Gone got up from his seat and went into his dwelling.

Then, not long after the Blessed One had left, this thought occurred to the monks: "This brief statement the Blessed One made, after which he went into his dwelling without analyzing the detailed meaning—

'You shouldn't chase after the past

or place expectations on the future.

What is past

is left behind.

The future

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Whatever quality is present

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both day & night,

has truly had an auspicious day:

So says the Peaceful Sage':

"Now who might analyze the unanalyzed detailed meaning of this brief statement?" Then the thought occurred to them, "Ven. Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and esteemed by his observant companions in the holy life. He is capable of analyzing the unanalyzed detailed meaning of this brief statement. Suppose we were to go to him and, on arrival, cross-question him about this matter."

So the monks went to Ven. Mahā Kaccāna and, on arrival exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, they sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they [told him what had happened, and added,] "Analyze the meaning, Ven. Mahā Kaccāna!"

[He replied:] "Friends, it's as if a man needing heartwood, looking for heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood—passing over the root & trunk of a standing tree possessing heartwood—were to imagine that heartwood should be sought among its branches & leaves. So it is with you, who—having bypassed the Blessed One when you were face to face with him, the Teacher—imagine that I should be asked about this matter. For knowing, the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees. He is the Eye, he is Knowledge, he is Dhamma, he is Brahmā. He is the speaker, 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 questioned him about this matter. However he answered, that was how you should have remembered it."

"Yes, friend Kaccāna: Knowing, the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees. He is the Eye, he is Knowledge, he is Dhamma, he is Brahmā. He is the speaker, the proclaimer, the elucidator

of meaning, the giver of the Deathless, the lord of the Dhamma, the Tathāgata. That was the time when we should have questioned him about this matter. However he answered, that was how we should have remembered it. But you are praised by the Teacher and esteemed by your observant companions in the holy life. You are capable of analyzing the unanalyzed detailed meaning of this brief statement. Analyze the meaning, Ven. Mahā Kaccāna, without making it difficult!"

"In that case, my friends, listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, friend," the monks responded to him.

Ven. Mahā Kaccāna said this: "Concerning the brief statement the Blessed One made, after which he entered his dwelling without analyzing the detailed meaning—

'You shouldn't chase after the past

or place expectations on the future.

What is past

is left behind.

The future

is as yet unreached.

Whatever quality is present

you clearly see right there,

right there.

Not taken in,

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that's how you develop the heart.

Ardently doing

what should be done today,

for—who knows?— tomorrow

death.

There is no bargaining

with Mortality & his mighty horde.

Whoever lives thus ardently,

relentlessly

both day & night,

has truly had an auspicious day:

So says the Peaceful Sage':

"I understand the detailed meaning to be this:

"And how, friends, does one chase after the past? Consciousness gets carried away with the desire & passion of 'In the past I had such an eye & such forms.' When consciousness gets carried away with desire & passion, one delights there. Delighting there, one chases after the past.

"Consciousness gets carried away with the desire & passion of 'In the past I had such an ear & such sounds' … 'In the past I had such a nose & such aromas' … 'In the past I had such a tongue & such flavors' … 'In the past I had such a body & such tactile sensations' … 'In the past I had such an intellect & such ideas.' When consciousness gets carried away with desire & passion, one delights there. Delighting there, one chases after the past. This is how one chases after the past.

"And how does one not chase after the past? Consciousness does not get carried away with the desire & passion of 'In the past I had such an eye & such forms.' When consciousness does not get carried away with desire & passion, one doesn't delight there. Not delighting there, one doesn't chase after the past.

Consciousness does not get carried away with the desire & passion of 'In the past I had such an ear & such sounds' … 'In the past I had such a nose & such aromas' … 'In the past I had such a tongue & such flavors' … 'In the past I had such a body & such tactile sensations' … 'In the past I had such an intellect & such ideas.' When consciousness does not get carried away with desire & passion, one doesn't delight there. Not delighting there, one doesn't chase after the past. This is how one doesn't chase after the past.

"And how does one place expectations on the future? One directs one's heart to the attainment of what hasn't been attained: 'In the future may I have such an eye & such forms.' With the directing of awareness as a condition, there is delight there. Delighting there, one places expectations on the future.

"One directs one's heart to the attainment of what hasn't been attained: 'In the future may I have such an ear & such sounds' … 'In the future may I have such a nose & such aromas' … 'In the future may I have such a tongue & such flavors' … 'In the future may I have such a body & such tactile sensations' … 'In the future may I have such an intellect & such ideas.' With the directing of awareness as a condition, there is delight there. Delighting there, one places expectations on the future. This is how one places expectations on the future.

"And how does one not place expectations on the future? One doesn't direct one's heart to the attainment of what hasn't been attained: 'In the future may I have such an eye & such

forms.' With the non-directing of awareness as a condition, there is no delight there. Not delighting there, one doesn't place expectations on the future.

"One doesn't direct one's heart to the attainment of what hasn't been attained: 'In the future may I have such an ear & such sounds' … 'In the future may I have such a nose & such aromas' … 'In the future may I have such a tongue & such flavors' … 'In the future may I have such a body & such tactile sensations' … 'In the future may I have such an intellect & such ideas.' With the non-directing of awareness as a condition, there is no delight there. Not delighting there, one does not place expectations on the future. This is how one doesn't place expectations on the future.

"And how is one taken in with regard to present qualities?

"With regard to the eye & forms that are both present, consciousness gets carried away with the desire & passion for what is present. When consciousness gets carried away with desire & passion, one delights there. Delighting there, one is taken in with regard to present qualities.

"With regard to the ear & sounds that are both present … the nose & aromas that are both present … the tongue & flavors that are both present … the body & tactile sensations that are both present …

"With regard to the intellect & ideas that are both present, consciousness gets carried away with the desire & passion for what is present. When consciousness gets carried away with desire & passion, one delights there. Delighting there, one is taken in with regard to present qualities. This is how one is taken in with regard to present qualities.

"And how is one not taken in with regard to present qualities?

"With regard to the eye & forms that are both present, consciousness doesn't get carried away with the desire & passion for what is present. When consciousness doesn't get carried away with desire & passion, one doesn't delight there. Not delighting there, one isn't taken in with regard to present qualities.

"With regard to the ear & sounds that are both present … the nose & aromas that are both present … the tongue & flavors that are both present … the body & tactile sensations that are both present …

"With regard to the intellect & ideas that are both present, consciousness doesn't get carried away with the desire & passion for what is present. When consciousness doesn't get carried away with desire & passion, one doesn't delight there. Not delighting there, one isn't taken in with regard to present qualities. This is how one isn't taken in with regard to present qualities.

"So, concerning the brief statement the Blessed One made, after which he entered his dwelling without analyzing the detailed meaning—

‘You shouldn’t chase after the past

or place expectations on the future.

What is past

is left behind.

The future

is as yet unreached.

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Whoever lives thus ardently,

relentlessly

both day & night,

has truly had an auspicious day:

So says the Peaceful Sage’—

this is how I understand the detailed meaning. Now, friends, if you wish, having gone to the Blessed One, question him about this matter. However he answers is how you should remember it.”

Then the monks, delighting in & approving of Ven. Mahā Kaccāna’s words, rose from their seats and went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to him, they sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they [told him what had happened after he had gone into his dwelling, and ended by saying,] “Then Ven. Mahā Kaccāna analyzed the meaning using

these words, these statements, these phrases.”

“Mahā Kaccāna is wise, monks. He is a person of great discernment. If you had asked me about this matter, I too would have answered in the same way he did. That is its meaning, and that is how you should remember it.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Note

1. Pubbāpayamāno. In the parallel passage in SN 1:20, the verb is sukkhāpayamāno, “letting his limbs dry out.” The commentary here states that pubbāpayamāno also means “letting x dry,” but given that Ven. Samiddhi has just stepped out of the hot spring, he may also be allowing his limbs to cool down.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 18; MN 138; SN 22:3; SN 35:191; AN 6:61