

MN 133
Mahākaccāna Bhaddekaratta Sutta
“Mahākaccāna & The Ideal Lover of Solitude”
Translated by Candana Bhikkhu

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I have personally heard this.

At one time, the Blessed One was living in the monastery by the hot springs, in the royal city of Rājagaha.

It was during that time when the Venerable Samiddhi, having already risen in the last watch of the night, went to wash himself at the hot springs.

After bathing, he came out of the water and stood with his under robe, drying his body. Suddenly, a glorious deva appeared while illuminating the whole of the forest, as he approached the Venerable Samiddhi, stood to one side, and said: “Bhikkhu, do you remember the summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude?’”

“Friend, I do not remember the summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude.’” And in turn, Ven. Samiddhi asked the radiant deva: “How about you Friend, do *you* remember it?”

The deva replied: “*Bhikkhu, I too do not remember the summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude.’ Bhikkhu, you must memorize and learn the summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude,’ for it is crucial in understanding the fundamentals of the Holy Life.*”

Having spoken his words, the deva disappeared. Later in the day, the Venerable Samiddhi approached the Blessed One, and after paying homage to Him, sat to one side, and said:

“Bhante, earlier today, having already risen in the last watch of the night, I went to wash at the hot springs. After bathing, as I came out of the water and stood with my under robe, drying my body, suddenly, a glorious deva appeared while illuminating the whole of the forest, as he approached me, stood to one side, and said: “Bhikkhu, do you remember the short summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude?’”

And I answered:

“Friend, I do not remember the short summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude,’” and in turn, I asked the radiant deva the question: “How about you Friend? Do you remember the short summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude?’”

Then, the deva replied:

“Bhikkhu, I too do not remember the short summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude.’ Bhikkhu, you must memorize and learn the short summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude,’ for it is crucial in understanding the fundamentals of the Holy Life.”

“And having spoken his words, the deva disappeared from there. Bhante, please teach me the short summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude.’”

Then the Blessed One replied:

“In that case Bhikkhu, listen carefully to what I shall say, and pay close attention, for I will teach you the short summary and the detailed explanation of the ‘Ideal Lover of Solitude.’”

***“Do not resuscitate the past, nor expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future,
The past is over with, and the future has not yet come.
But things arising in the present, he discerns with insight, as they occur.
The Immovable, unagitated,
He maintains the course of wisdom, steadfast.
Today is the time for the Work to be done,
Tomorrow? It may very well be too late, as Death might already be here.
For no bargain can be struck with Death and its mighty armies.
But, for him who lives, working by day and by night, untiringly,
Him, the Tranquil Sage has called ‘The Ideal Lover of Solitude.’”***

Once He finished giving this short summary, the Blessed One arose from his seat and went into his kuti. But soon after the Blessed One had left, it occurred to those Bhikkhus: “Friends, the Blessed One has now gone back to his kuti, after giving us this short summary but without giving us the detailed explanation of what He meant by:

***“Do not resuscitate the past, nor expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future,
The past is over with, and the future has not yet come.
But things arising in the present, he discerns with insight, as they occur.
The Immovable, unagitated,
He maintains the course of wisdom, steadfast.
Today is the time for the Work to be done,
Tomorrow? It may very well be too late, as Death might already be here.
For no bargain can be struck with Death and its mighty armies.
But, for him who lives, working by day and by night, untiringly,
Him, the Tranquil Sage has called ‘The Ideal Lover of Solitude.’”***

And the Bhikkhus reflected: “Now, *who* could give us the detailed explanation of this short summary?”

Then, it occurred to those Bhikkhus:

“The Venerable Mahākaccāna is praised by the Teacher, as well as considered wise and held in such high regard by his fellow companions in the Holy Life. The Venerable Mahākaccāna is

capable in giving us the detailed explanation for this short summary given by the Blessed One. What if we approached the Venerable Mahākaccāna and asked him about this?”

Then, those Bhikkhus went and approached the Venerable Mahākaccāna, and after exchanging friendly greetings with him, they sat down to one side and said:

“Friend, Mahākaccāna, the Blessed One gave us a short summary but without giving the detailed explanation for it, and right after uttering His words, He arose from His seat and returned to His kuti. This is the summary of the Teaching He gave us:

**“Do not resuscitate the past, nor expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future,
The past is over with, and the future has not yet come.
But things arising in the present, he discerns with insight, as they occur.
The Immovable, unagitated,
He maintains the course of wisdom, steadfast.
Today is the time for the Work to be done,
Tomorrow? It may very well be too late, as Death might already be here.
For no bargain can be struck with Death and its mighty armies.
But, for him who lives, working by day and by night, untiringly,
Him, the Tranquil Sage has called ‘The Ideal Lover of Solitude.’”**

“Now, we have come asking if the Venerable Mahākaccāna could please provide us with the detailed explanation for this short summary?”

Then the Venerable Mahākaccāna addressed the Bhikkhus thus:

“Friends, much like a man in need of heartwood going in search of it and coming across a standing huge tree that is full of heartwood, he ignores the heartwood, the roots and the trunk, and instead considers the branches or leaves to be its heartwood. In the same way, you, Venerable ones, while being face to face with the Teacher, have completely ignored Him and have come instead asking me for the explanation! For He is the Buddha, the Blessed One, who knows and sees. He is vision itself, He is knowledge, He is Truth, He has become the Dhamma, and is Brahmā. He is The Teacher, the One who instructs and is the clarifier of meanings; He has given us the Deathless. He is the Lord of the Dhamma, the Tathāgata. You must have approached the Blessed One and asked the Teacher Himself, for then it was the right time to ask for the detailed explanation of this summary. And as the Blessed One explains it, so should you remember and bear it in your hearts.”

“Indeed, friend Mahākaccāna, the Teacher is the Buddha, the Blessed One, who knows and sees. He is vision itself, He is knowledge, He is Truth, He has become the Dhamma and is Brahmā. He is The Teacher, the One who instructs and is the clarifier of meanings. He has given us the Deathless. He is the Lord of the Dhamma, the Tathāgata. We must have approached the Blessed One and asked the Teacher Himself, for then it was the right time to ask for the detailed explanation of this summary. Nevertheless, the Venerable Mahākaccāna is praised by the Blessed One Himself, as well as considered wise and held in such high regard by his fellow companions in the Holy Life. The Venerable Mahākaccāna is capable in giving us the detailed explanation for this short summary given by the Blessed One.

“We kindly ask that friend Mahākaccāna may not find our request troublesome, and please explain this to us?”

“In that case, friends, listen carefully to what I shall say, and pay close attention.”

“Yes, friend,” those Bhikkhus replied.

And the Venerable Mahākaccāna continued:

“In returning back to His kuti, the Blessed One, not having given you the detailed explanation to His short summary that instructs:”

***“Do not resuscitate the past, nor expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future,
The past is over with, and the future has not yet come.
But things arising in the present, he discerns with insight, as they occur.
The Immovable, unagitated,
He maintains the course of wisdom, steadfast.
Today is the time for the Work to be done,
Tomorrow? It may very well be too late, as Death might already be here.
For no bargain can be struck with Death and its mighty armies.
But, for him who lives, working by day and by night, untiringly,
Him, the Tranquil Sage has called ‘The Ideal Lover of Solitude.’”***

“Now, the way I understand and explain the Blessed One’s short summary here, is as follows:

1. “And how do you resuscitate the past? By reflecting with delight and lust on how in the past, the eyes made contact with pleasing visible objects and sights, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such sights, which traps one in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past to reoccur. In this manner, you resuscitate the past.

“By reflecting with delight and lust on how in the past, the ears made contact with pleasing sounds, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such sounds, which traps one in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past to reoccur. In this manner, you resuscitate the past.

“By reflecting with delight and lust on how in the past, the nose made contact with pleasing scents and fragrances, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such smells, which traps one in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past to reoccur. In this manner, you resuscitate the past.

“By reflecting with delight and lust on how in the past, the tongue made contact with pleasing flavors and tastes, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such flavors, which traps one in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past to reoccur. In this manner, you resuscitate the past.

“By reflecting with delight and lust on how in the past, the body made contact with pleasing touches and tactile experiences, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such tactile experiences, which traps one in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past to reoccur. In this manner, you resuscitate the past.

“By reflecting with delight and lust on how in the past, the mind made contact with pleasing thoughts and mental states, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such mental states, which traps one in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past to reoccur. In this manner, you resuscitate the past.

“Friends, it is in this way that one resuscitates the past.

2. *“And how do you **not** resuscitate the past? By **not** reflecting with delight nor lust on how in the past, the eyes might have made contact with pleasing visible objects and sights, and as a result, consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such sights, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past. In this manner, you do **not** resuscitate the past.*

*“By **not** reflecting with delight nor lust on how in the past, the ears might have made contact with pleasing sounds, and as a result, consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such sounds, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past. In this manner, you do **not** resuscitate the past.*

*“By **not** reflecting with delight nor lust on how in the past, the nose might have made contact with pleasing scents and fragrances, and as a result, consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such smells, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past. In this manner, you do **not** resuscitate the past.*

*“By **not** reflecting with delight nor lust on how in the past, the tongue might have made contact with pleasing flavors and tastes, and as a result, consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such flavors, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past. In this manner, you do **not** resuscitate the past.*

*“By **not** reflecting with delight nor lust on how in the past, the body might have made contact with pleasing touches and tactile experiences, and as a result, consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such tactile experiences, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past. In this manner, you do **not** resuscitate the past.*

*“By **not** reflecting with delight nor lust on how in the past, the mind might have made contact with pleasing thoughts and mental states, and as a result, consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such mental states, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences from the past. In this manner, you do **not** resuscitate the past.*

*“Friends, it is in this way that one does **not** resuscitate the past.*

3. “And how do you expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future? By hoping with delight and lust for the eyes to make contact with pleasing visible objects and sights in the future, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such sights, which traps one in the longing for pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future.

“By hoping with delight and lust for the ears to make contact with pleasing sounds in the future, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such sounds, which traps one in the longing for pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future.

“By hoping with delight and lust for the nose to make contact with pleasing scents and fragrances in the future, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such smells, which traps one in the longing for pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future.

“By hoping with delight and lust for the tongue to make contact with pleasing flavors and tastes in the future, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such flavors, which traps one in the longing for pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future.

“By hoping with delight and lust for the body to make contact with pleasing touches and tactile experiences in the future, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such tactile perceptions, which traps one in the longing for pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future.

“By hoping with delight and lust for the mind to make contact with pleasing thoughts and mental states in the future, and as a result, there arises consciousness that is bound up with delight and lust for such mental states, which traps one in the longing for pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future.

“Friends, it is in this way that one expects (or becomes anxious for) what may lie in the future.

*4. “And how do you **not** expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future? By **not** hoping with delight and lust for the eyes to make contact with pleasing visible objects and sights in the future, and as a result, the consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such sights, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you do **not** expect (nor be anxious for) what may lie in the future.*

*By **not** hoping with delight and lust for the ears to make contact with pleasing sounds in the future, and as a result, the consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such sounds, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the*

*pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you do **not** expect (nor be anxious for) what may lie in the future.*

*By **not** hoping with delight and lust for the nose to make contact with pleasing scents and fragrances in the future, and as a result, the consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such smells, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you do **not** expect (nor be anxious for) what may lie in the future.*

*By **not** hoping with delight and lust for the tongue to make contact with pleasing flavors and tastes in the future, and as a result, the consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such flavors, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you do **not** expect (nor be anxious for) what may lie in the future.*

*By **not** hoping with delight and lust for the body to make contact with pleasing touches and tactile experiences in the future, and as a result, the consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such tactile experiences, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you do **not** expect (nor be anxious for) what may lie in the future.*

*By **not** hoping with delight and lust for the mind to make contact with thoughts and mental states in the future, and as a result, the consciousness does **not** arise that would otherwise be bound up with delight or lust for such mental states, and thus, one does **not** get trapped in the longing for the pleasurable experiences to occur in the future. In this manner, you do **not** expect (nor be anxious for) what may lie in the future.*

*“Friends, it is in this way that one does **not** expect (nor be anxious for) what may lie in the future.*

*5. “And how friends, do you falter, getting lost in whatever arises in the present? Friends, when the eyes and visible objects arise together in the present, **if** there is delight and lust for pleasing visible objects and sights, then the consciousness that follows, becomes bound up by delight and lust, taking pleasure in what is being seen. In this manner, you falter, getting lost in whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the ears and sounds arise together in the present, **if** there is delight and lust for pleasing sounds, then the consciousness that follows, becomes bound up by delight and lust, taking pleasure in what is being heard. In this manner, you falter, getting lost in whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the nose and fragrances arise together in the present, **if** there is delight and lust for pleasing smells, then the consciousness that follows, becomes bound up by delight and lust, taking pleasure in what is being smelled. In this manner, you falter, getting lost in whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the tongue and flavors arise together in the present, **if** there is delight and lust for pleasing flavors, then the consciousness that follows, becomes bound up by delight and lust, taking pleasure in what is being tasted. In this manner, you falter, getting lost in whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the body and touches arise together in the present, **if** there is delight and lust for pleasing tactile experiences, then the consciousness that follows, becomes bound up by delight and lust, taking pleasure in what is being touched. In this manner, you falter, getting lost in whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the mind and thoughts arise together in the present, **if** there is delight and lust for pleasing mental states, then the consciousness that follows, becomes bound up by delight and lust, taking pleasure in what is being mentally experienced. In this manner, you falter, getting lost in whatever arises in the present.*

“Friends, it is in this way that one falters, getting lost in whatever arises in the present.

6. *“And how, friends, do you **not** falter, as you remain immovable, discerning with insight whatever arises in the present? Friends, when the eyes and visible objects arise together in the present, if there is **neither** delight **nor** lust for pleasing visible objects and sights, then the consciousness that follows, is **not** bound up by delight nor lust, therefore, **not** taking pleasure in what is being seen. In this manner, you do **not** falter, as you discern with insight whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the ears and sounds arise together in the present, if there is **neither** delight **nor** lust for pleasing sounds, then the consciousness that follows, is **not** bound up by delight nor lust, therefore, **not** taking pleasure in what is being heard. In this manner, you do **not** falter, as you discern with insight whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the nose and fragrances arise together in the present, if there is **neither** delight **nor** lust for pleasing smells, then the consciousness that follows, is **not** bound up by delight nor lust, therefore, **not** taking pleasure in what is being smelled. In this manner, you do **not** falter, as you discern with insight whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the tongue and flavors arise together in the present, if there is **neither** delight **nor** lust for pleasing flavors, then the consciousness that follows, is **not** bound up by delight nor lust, therefore, **not** taking pleasure in what is being tasted. In this manner, you do **not** falter, as you discern with insight whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the body and touches arise together in the present, if there is **neither** delight **nor** lust for pleasing tactile experiences, then the consciousness that follows, is **not** bound up by delight nor lust, therefore, **not** taking pleasure in what is being touched. In this manner, you do **not** falter, as you discern with insight whatever arises in the present.*

*“And when the mind and thoughts arise together in the present, if there is **neither** delight **nor** lust for pleasing mental states, then the consciousness that follows, is **not** bound up by delight*

*nor lust, therefore, **not** taking pleasure in what is being mentally experienced. In this manner, you do **not** falter, as you discern with insight whatever arises in the present.*

“Friends, it is in this way that one does not falter, as one remains immovable, discerning with insight whatever arises in the present.

“Friends, this is how I understand and explain the Blessed One’s short summary, which states:

***“Do not resuscitate the past, nor expect (or be anxious for) what may lie in the future,
The past is over with, and the future has not yet come.
But things arising in the present, he discerns with insight, as they occur.
The Immovable, unagitated,
He maintains the course of wisdom, steadfast.
Today is the time for the Work to be done,
Tomorrow? It may very well be too late, as Death might already be here.
For no bargain can be struck with Death and its mighty armies.
But, for him who lives, working by day and by night, untiringly,
Him, the Tranquil Sage has called ‘The Ideal Lover of Solitude.’”***

“Now friends, if you wish, please go and approach the Blessed One and ask Him about it. And as the Blessed Lord explains it to you, you should listen carefully, remembering and bearing it in your hearts.

“Yes, friend,” replied those Bhikkhus, delighted and grateful for the words of the Venerable Mahākaccāna, as they arose from their seats, and went to the Blessed One. And after paying homage to the Teacher, they sat down to one side and then recounted all that had taken place, while adding:

“Bhante, having requested from him, the Venerable Mahākaccāna explained in detail the short summary You had given us, which he did in this manner, while using these words and phrases.”

In hearing their words, the Blessed One replied:

*“Mahākaccāna is wise, Bhikkhus. Mahākaccāna possesses penetrating insight. If you had approached **me** asking for the detailed explanation to this summary, I would have explained it in the **exact same** manner, as did Mahākaccāna. For, **that indeed** is its meaning, and that is how you should remember and bear it in your hearts.”*

This is what the Blessed One said. And those Bhikkhus were even more delighted in hearing the Teacher’s words.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu