

SN 12.67
Nidāna Saṃyutta
(*Connected Discourses On Causation*)
Mahā Vagga
The Great Section

Naḷakalāpī Sutta
“Bundles of Reeds”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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On one occasion, the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahākotṭhita were both staying at Varāṇasī’s Deer Park, in Isipatana.

Then, when it was evening, the Venerable Mahākotṭhita came out from his seclusion and went to see the Venerable Sāriputta. After exchanging friendly greetings with the Venerable Sāriputta, he sat down at one side and asked:

1. “Friend Sāriputta, is the process of getting old and dying something that is produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, the process of getting old and dying is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author; nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, rebirth serves as the very condition for the process of both getting old and dying to manifest.”

2. “In that case, friend Sāriputta, is birth something that is produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, birth is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author; nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, the desire for rebecoming serves as the very condition for the process of birth to manifest.”

3. “How about the desire for rebecoming, friend Sāriputta, is it something that is produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, the desire for rebecoming is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author; nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, grabbing itself serves as the very condition for rebecoming to manifest.”

4. “Well then, friend Sāriputta, is grabbing something that is produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, the grabbing is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, craving itself serves as the very condition for grabbing to manifest.”

5. “In that case, friend Sāriputta, is craving something that is produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, the craving is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, feeling itself serves as the very condition for craving to manifest.”

6. “Friend Sāriputta, is feeling then, something that is produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, feeling is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, contact itself serves as the very condition for feeling to manifest.”

7. “How about contact, Friend Sāriputta, is it then something that is produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, contact is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, the six sense spheres themselves serve as the very condition for contact to manifest.”

8. “Then, Friend Sāriputta, are the six sense spheres produced by oneself, or are they produced by another? Or are they produced by both oneself and by another? Or are they simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, the six sense spheres are not things that are produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, name and form themselves serve as the very condition for the six sense spheres to manifest.”

9. “In that case, Friend Sāriputta, is name and form (*nāmarūpa*) produced by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, name and form (*nāmarūpa*) is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, consciousness itself serves as the very condition for name and form to manifest.”

10. “And how, Friend Sāriputta, is consciousness produced? Is it by oneself, or is it produced by another? Or is it produced by both oneself and by another? Or is it simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, being neither produced by oneself nor by another?”

“No, Friend Koṭṭhita, consciousness is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, name and form (*nāmarūpa*) itself serves as the very condition for consciousness, to manifest.”

Just now, we heard and understood Friend Sāriputta to tell us:

‘No, Friend Koṭṭhita, name and form (nāmarūpa), is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, consciousness itself serves as the very condition for name and form (nāmarūpa) to manifest.’

But right after, we also heard and understood Friend Sāriputta to tell us:

‘No, Friend Koṭṭhita, consciousness is not something that is produced by oneself, nor produced by another, nor produced by both oneself and by another, nor simply produced randomly or by chance, without an author, nor being neither produced by oneself or by another. But rather, name and form (nāmarūpa) itself serves as the very condition for consciousness to manifest.’

“How then, Friend Sāriputta, should the meaning of these two statements be understood?”

“In that case, Friend, I can offer you a simile, seeing that intelligent beings understand the meaning of what is being explained through analogies and similes.

“Imagine there were two bundles of reeds, each tightly wrapped, where both bundles are standing upright, but while leaning on each other, for support.

“In just the same way, Friend Koṭṭhita, when there is name and form (*nāmarūpa*), then consciousness manifests (due to the presence of its necessary condition). Similarly, when there is consciousness, then name and form manifests (due to the presence of its necessary condition).

“Also, because of name and form (*nāmarūpa*) being present, then you have the very condition for the six sense spheres, as its result.

“Further, because of the six sense spheres being present, then you have the very condition for contact, as its result.

“Further, because of contact being present, then you have the very condition for feeling, as its result.

“Further, because of feeling being present, then you have the very condition for craving, as its result.

“Further, because of craving being present, then you have the very condition for grabbing, as its result.

“Further, because of grabbing being present, then you have the very condition for desire for rebecoming, as its result.

“Further, because of the desire for rebecoming being present, then you have the very condition for birth, as its result.

“And, because of birth being present, then you have the very condition for getting old and dying, which bring along with them grieving, wailing, distress, torment, depression, and anguish.

“This, therefore, is how the entire mass of suffering starts.

“However, Friend, if any one of the two bundles of reeds were to be pulled away and thus removed, then the other of the two would simply collapse, no longer able to stand on its own!

“And in just the same way, Friend, when name and form (*nāmarūpa*) comes to an end, then consciousness also comes to an end, ceasing for good (due to the absence of its necessary condition). Similarly, when consciousness comes to an end, then name and form (*nāmarūpa*) also comes to an end, ceasing for good (due to the absence of its necessary condition).

“Also, because of name and form (*nāmarūpa*) coming to an end, then the six sense spheres also come to an end, as its result.

“Further, because of the six sense spheres coming to an end, then contact also comes to an end, as its result.

“Further, because of contact coming to an end, then feeling also comes to an end, as its result.

“Further, because of feeling coming to an end, then craving also comes to an end, as its result.

“Further, because of craving coming to an end, then grabbing also comes to an end, as its result.

“Further, because of grabbing coming to an end, then the desire for rebecoming comes to an end, as its result.

“Further, because of the desire for rebecoming coming to an end, then birth comes to an end, as its result.

“And, because of birth coming to an end, then getting old and dying also come to an end, which would have brought with them grieving, wailing, distress, torment, depression, and anguish, all of which come to an end, as a result.

“This, therefore, is how the entire mass of suffering finally comes to an end.

“It is superbly wonderful, Friend Sāriputta! It is simply amazing, how beautifully this has been explained by Friend Sāriputta!

“Thus, with much delight, we fully concur with the Venerable Sāriputta’s statements on these thirty-six points.

1. “In fact, Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, to gain freedom from **getting old and dying**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, to gain freedom from **getting old and dying**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **getting old and dying**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

2. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **birth**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **birth**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **birth**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

3. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **the desire for rebecoming**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **the desire for rebecoming**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **the desire for rebecoming**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

4. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **grabbing**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **grabbing**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **grabbing**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

5. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **craving**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **craving**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **craving**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

6. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **feeling**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **feeling**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **feeling**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

7. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **contact**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **contact**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **contact**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

8. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **the six sense spheres**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **the six sense spheres**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **the six sense spheres**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

9. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **name and form** (*nāmarūpa*), by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **name and form** (*nāmarūpa*), for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **name and form** (*nāmarūpa*), having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

10. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **consciousness**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **consciousness**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **consciousness**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

11. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **habitual tendencies** (*saṅkhārā*), by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **habitual tendencies** (*saṅkhārā*), for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **habitual tendencies** (*saṅkhārā*), having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

12. “Friend, if a Bhikkhu is teaching the Dhamma for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **stupidity**, by ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who deserves to be a speaker on the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of experiencing disenchantment, for becoming passionless, and to gain freedom from **stupidity**, for ending that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who is practicing according to the Dhamma.

“And if, Friend, a Bhikkhu is released from the tendency to grab, through experiencing disenchantment, by becoming passionless, and by realizing freedom from **stupidity**, having ended that ceaseless cycle of misery, then, truly he is to be recognized as a Bhikkhu, who has attained Nibbāna, in this very birth.

Sādhu

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