SN 47.8 — SN 47:8 The Cook | Sūda Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

The Cook

Sūda Sutta (SN 47:8)

“Suppose that there is a foolish, incompetent, unskillful cook who has presented a king or a king’s minister with various kinds of curry: mainly sour, mainly bitter, mainly peppery, mainly sweet, alkaline or non-alkaline, salty or non-salty. He doesn’t take note of his master, thinking, ‘Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry, or he praises that curry. Today my master likes mainly sour curry.... Today my master likes mainly bitter curry... mainly peppery curry... mainly sweet curry... alkaline curry... non-alkaline curry... salty curry... Today my master likes non-salty curry, or he reaches out for non-salty curry, or he takes a lot of non-salty curry, or he praises non-salty curry.’ As a result, he is not rewarded with clothing or wages or gifts. Why is that?

Because the foolish, incompetent, unskillful cook doesn't take note of his own master.

"In the same way, there is the case where a foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, his mind doesn't become concentrated, his defilements [Commentary: the five hindrances] are not abandoned. He doesn't take note of that fact. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves… the mind in & of itself… mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, his mind doesn't become concentrated, his defilements are not abandoned. He doesn't take note of that fact. As a result, he is not rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, nor with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the foolish, incompetent, unskillful monk doesn't take note of his own mind.

"Now suppose that there is a wise, competent, skillful cook who has presented a king or a king's minister with various kinds of curry: mainly sour, mainly bitter, mainly peppery, mainly sweet, alkaline or non-alkaline, salty or non-salty. He takes note of his master, thinking, 'Today my master likes this curry, or he reaches out for that curry, or he takes a lot of this curry or he praises that curry. Today my master likes mainly sour curry…. Today my master likes mainly bitter curry… mainly peppery curry… mainly sweet curry… alkaline curry… non-alkaline curry… salty curry… Today my master likes non-salty curry, or he reaches out for non-salty curry, or he takes a lot of non-salty curry, or he praises non-salty curry.' As a result, he is rewarded with clothing, wages, & gifts. Why is that? Because the wise, competent, skillful cook takes note of his own master.

"In the same way, there is the case where a wise, competent, skillful monk remains focused on the body in & of itself… feelings in & of themselves… the mind in & of itself… mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. As he remains thus focused on mental qualities in & of themselves, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He takes note of that fact. As a result, he is rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, together with mindfulness & alertness. Why is that? Because the wise, competent, skillful monk takes note of his own mind."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 101; SN 46:53; SN 51:20; AN 3:103; AN 8:70