

# MN 18: Madhupiṇḍika Sutta

## *The Lump of Honey*

Translated by Suddhāso Bhikkhu

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Park. Then, after dressing in the morning and taking his bowl and robe, the Blessed One entered Kapilavatthu for alms. After going for alms in Kapilavatthu and returning from almsround after [his] meal, he approached the Great Grove for the day's abiding. After plunging into the Great Grove, he sat at the root of a young Beluva tree for the day's abiding. Daṇḍapāṇi<sup>1</sup> the Sakyan, while walking and wandering about for exercise, approached the Great Grove. After plunging into the Great Grove, he approached the young Beluva tree where the Blessed One was [seated]; after approaching, he exchanged greetings with the Blessed One. After engaging in the customary polite speech, he stood to one side, leaning on [his] staff. While he was standing to one side, Daṇḍapāṇi the Sakyan said to the Blessed One, "What is the Contemplative's doctrine? What is his declaration?" "Venerable, [my] doctrine is such that no one in the world with its angels, demons, gods, contemplatives, and priests, in this generation with its celestial and human beings, can argue with me; such that identifications do not persist in the subconscious of a holy man dwelling unbound by sensualities, free of doubt, with restlessness cut off, and without craving for existence or non-existence. This is my doctrine, Venerable, this is my declaration."

When this was said, Daṇḍapāṇi the Sakyan shook his head, wagged his tongue, and raised his eyebrows, wrinkling his forehead into three lines. Then he left, leaning on his staff.

Then when the Blessed One emerged from retreat in the evening, he approached the Banyan Park; after approaching, he sat on the designated seat. After sitting, the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Here, monks, after I dressed in the morning and took my bowl and robe, I entered Kapilavatthu for alms... When this was said, monks, Daṇḍapāṇi the Sakyan shook his head, wagged his tongue, and raised his eyebrows, wrinkling his forehead into three lines. Then he left, leaning on his staff."

When this was said, a certain monk said to the Blessed One, "Bhante, what is the Blessed One's doctrine, such that no one in the world with its angels, demons, gods, contemplatives, and priests, in this generation with its celestial and human beings, can argue with him? And, Bhante, how do identifications not persist in the subconscious of a holy man dwelling unbound by sensualities, free of doubt, with restlessness cut off, and without craving for existence or non-existence?"

"Monk, from whatever source identification and conceptualization based on proliferation beset a man, if there is nothing there to be delighted in, welcomed, and attached to, then just this is the end of the subconscious tendency towards passion, just this is the end of the subconscious tendency towards aversion, just this is the end of the subconscious tendency towards [false] perspectives, just this is the end of the subconscious tendency

1 Lit. "stick-hand." As indicated later in the story, he was carrying a staff or walking-stick of some sort.

towards doubt, just this is the end of the subconscious tendency towards conceit, just this is the end of the subconscious tendency towards the lust for existence, just this is the end of the subconscious tendency towards ignorance, just this is the end of the raising of cudgels, the raising of swords, dispute, conflict, contention, blame, malice, and lies. Here these harmful, unwholesome phenomena cease without remainder.” This is what the Blessed One said. After saying this, the Sublime One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling.

Then, not long after the Blessed One left, it occurred to those monks: “Venerables, after giving this brief statement, the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling without explaining its meaning in detail: 'Monk, from whatever source... these harmful, unwholesome phenomena cease without remainder.' Who might explain in detail the meaning of this brief statement that the Blessed One gave without explaining its meaning in detail?” Then it occurred to those monks: “Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna is praised and esteemed by the Teacher and by wise companions in the Holy Life. Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna is able to explain in detail the meaning of this brief statement that the Blessed One gave without explaining its meaning in detail. Perhaps we could approach Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna; after approaching him, we could ask him about the meaning of this.”

Then those monks approached Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna and exchanged greetings with him. After engaging in the customary polite speech, they sat to one side. When they were seated to one side, those monks said to Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna, “Venerable Kaccāna, after giving this brief statement to us, the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling without explaining its meaning in detail: 'Monk, from whatever source... these harmful, unwholesome phenomena cease without remainder.' Venerable Kaccāna, not long after the Blessed One left, it occurred to us: 'Venerables, after giving this brief statement... we could ask him about the meaning of this.' Let Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna explain it to us.”

“Venerables, just like a man who needed heartwood, who was seeking heartwood, who was going in search of heartwood, was by a large tree which had heartwood, and he neglected the root and trunk, and instead thought that heartwood was to be sought for in the branches and leaves; in this way, when the Venerables were in front of the Teacher, they neglected the Blessed One, and thought that I was to be asked about the meaning of this. For, Venerables, knowing, the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees; he has become vision, he has become knowledge, he has become Dhamma, he has become divine; he is the initiator and the continuer; he is the guide to the meaning; he is the giver of the deathless; he is the Dhamma-master; he is the Truth-finder. And that was the time for this; you could have asked the Blessed One about the meaning of this. You could have remembered it according to the way that the Blessed One would have explained it to you.” “Certainly, Venerable Kaccāna, knowing, the Blessed One knows... he is the Truth-finder. And that was the time for this; we could have asked the Blessed One about the meaning of this. As the Blessed One would have explained it to us, we could have remembered it. However, Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna is praised and esteemed by the Teacher and by wise companions in the Holy Life. Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna is able to explain in detail the meaning of this brief statement that the Blessed One gave without explaining its meaning

in detail. Let Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna explain it to us, if it is not burdensome.”  
“Therefore, Venerables, listen and carefully pay attention. I will speak.” “Yes, Venerable,” those monks replied to Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna. Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna said this:

“Venerables, dependent on [the existence of] an eye and a visible object, eye-consciousness arises. The combination of the three is sense-contact. Because of sense-contact, there is feeling. What one feels, one identifies;<sup>2</sup> what one identifies, one thinks about; what one thinks about, one proliferates about; what one proliferates about, with that as its source, identification and conceptualization based on proliferation beset a man in regard to visible objects cognizable by the eye in the past, present, and future. Venerables, when there is an ear and a sound... a nose and a fragrance... a tongue and a taste... a body and a tangible object... a mind and a mental object, mind-consciousness arises. The combination of the three is contact. Because of contact, there is feeling. What one feels, one identifies; what one identifies, one thinks about; what one thinks about, one proliferates about; what one proliferates about, with that as its source, identification and conceptualization based on proliferation beset a man in regard to mental objects cognizable by the mind in the past, present, and future.

“Venerables, when there is an eye, a visible object, and eye-consciousness, it is possible that one could point out a manifestation of sense-contact. When there is a manifestation of sense-contact, it is possible that one could point out feeling. When there is a manifestation of feeling, it is possible that one could point out identification. When there is a manifestation of identification, it is possible that one could point out thought. When there is a manifestation of thought, it is possible that one could point out the onset of identification and conceptualization based on proliferation. Venerables, when there is an ear... a nose... a tongue... a body... a mind, a mental object, and mind-consciousness, it is possible that one could point out a manifestation of sense-contact. When there is a manifestation of sense-contact, it is possible that one could point out feeling. When there is a manifestation of feeling, it is possible that one could point out identification. When there is a manifestation of identification, it is possible that one could point out thought. When there is a manifestation of thought, it is possible that one could point out the onset of identification and conceptualization based on proliferation.

“Venerables, when there is no eye, no visible object, and no eye-consciousness, it is impossible that one could point out a manifestation of sense-contact. When there is no manifestation of sense-contact, it is impossible that one could point out feeling. When there is no manifestation of feeling, it is impossible that one could point out identification. When there is no manifestation of identification, it is impossible that one could point out thought. When there is no manifestation of thought, it is impossible that one could point out the onset of identification and conceptualization based on proliferation. Venerables, when there is no ear... nose... tongue... body... mind, no mental object, and no mind-consciousness, it is impossible that one could point out a manifestation of sense-contact. When there is no manifestation of sense-contact, it is impossible that one could point out feeling. When there is no manifestation of feeling, it is impossible that one could point out

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<sup>2</sup> *Sañjānāti*. Lit. *saṃ* (together) + *jānāti* (knows). This is the verb from which we get the noun *saññā*, which is often translated “perception” or “recognition.”

identification. When there is no manifestation of identification, it is impossible that one could point out thought. When there is no manifestation of thought, it is impossible that one could point out the onset of identification and conceptualization based on proliferation.

“Venerables, regarding the brief statement which the Blessed One gave to you, after which he rose from his seat and entered his dwelling without explaining its meaning in detail: 'Monk, from whatever source... these harmful, unwholesome phenomena cease without remainder,' Venerables, as I understand it, this is the detailed meaning of the brief statement which the Blessed One gave. If the Venerables wish, they may approach the Blessed One and ask him about the meaning. You may remember it according to the way that the Blessed One explains it to you.”

Then those monks, after delighting and rejoicing in Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna's speech, rose from their seats and approached the Blessed One; after approaching and paying respects to the Blessed One, they sat to one side. When they were seated to one side, those monks said to the Blessed One, “Bhante, there was this brief statement which the Blessed One gave to us, after which he rose from his seat and entered his dwelling without explaining its meaning in detail: 'Monk, from whatever source... these harmful, unwholesome phenomena cease without remainder.' Bhante, not long after the Blessed One left, it occurred to us: 'Venerables, after giving this brief statement... we could ask him about the meaning of this.' Then, Bhante, we approached Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna; after approaching, we asked him about the meaning of this. Bhante, the meaning was explained to us by Venerable Mahā-Kaccāna using these methods, words, and phrases.” “Monks, Mahā-Kaccāna is wise; Monks, Mahā-Kaccāna has great wisdom. Monks, if you had asked me about the meaning of this, I would have explained it in the same way that Mahā-Kaccāna explained it. That is the meaning of this. Remember it in this way.”

When this was said, Venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One, “Bhante, just as a person who was afflicted with hunger and weakness came upon a lump of honey, wherever he tasted it, he would get a pleasant and pure taste; in the same way, Bhante, wherever a competent monk investigates with wisdom the meaning of this Dhamma-discourse, he would get satisfaction, he would gain confidence of mind. Bhante, what is the name of this Dhamma-discourse?” “Therefore, Ānanda, remember this Dhamma-discourse as the 'Lump of Honey Discourse.'”

This is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda delighted in the Blessed One's speech.