

# AN 6.61: Majjhe Sutta

## *In The Middle*

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

Thus have I heard: On one occasion the Fortunate One was dwelling at Bārāṇasi, at Isipatana, in the Deer Park. On this occasion many senior monks had returned from almsround after their meals, and while they were sitting together in the Circle Hall, this topic of conversation came up:

“Venerables, in the Pārāyana, in the Questions of Metteyya, this was said by the Fortunate One:

“A sage who has known both ends  
And who does not stick in the middle -  
I call that one a great person  
Who has here transcended the seamstress.’

“Venerables, what is one end, what is the second end, what is in the middle, who is the seamstress?”

When this was said, one monk said to the senior monks, “Venerables, contact is one end, the origin of contact is the second end, the cessation of contact is in the middle, and craving is the seamstress; for it is craving that stitches one to the manifestation of one existence after another. Venerables, this is how a monk has superior knowledge of what is to be known with superior knowledge and completely knows what is to be completely known; having superior knowledge of what is to be known with superior knowledge and completely knowing what is to be completely known, one here and now brings suffering to its end.”

When this was said, another monk said to the senior monks, “Venerables, the past is one end, the future is the second end, the present is in the middle, and craving is the seamstress; for it is craving that stitches one to the manifestation of one existence after another. Venerables, this is how a monk... here and now brings suffering to its end.”

When this was said, another monk said to the senior monks, “Venerables, pleasant feeling is one end, painful feeling is the second end, neutral feeling is in the middle, and craving is the seamstress; for it is craving that stitches one to the manifestation of one existence after another. Venerables, this is how a monk... here and now brings suffering to its end.”

When this was said, another monk said to the senior monks, “Venerables, mind is one end, body is the second end, consciousness is in the middle, and craving is the seamstress; for it is craving that stitches one to the manifestation of one existence after another. Venerables, this is how a monk... here and now brings suffering to its end.”

When this was said, another monk said to the senior monks, “Venerables, the six internal sense-fields is one end, the six external sense-fields is the second end, consciousness is in the middle, and craving is the seamstress; for it is craving that stitches one to the

manifestation of one existence after another. Venerables, this is how a monk... here and now brings suffering to its end.”

When this was said, another monk said to the senior monks, “Venerables, self-identity is one end, the origin of self-identity is the second end, the cessation of self-identity is in the middle, and craving is the seamstress; for it is craving that stitches one to the manifestation of one existence after another. Venerables, this is how a monk... here and now brings suffering to its end.”

When this was said, another monk said to the senior monks, “Venerables, we have all explained according to our own inspiration. Come, Venerables, let us go to the Fortunate One and report this to him. We will remember whatever explanation the Fortunate One gives.”

“Yes, Venerable,” the senior monks replied to that monk. Then the senior monks went to the Fortunate One, paid respects to him, sat to one side, and reported the entire conversation to the Fortunate One. “Bhante, who spoke well?”

“Monks, all of you spoke well in some way. However, as for what I was referring to in the Pārāyana, in the Questions of Metteyya, when I said this:

“A sage who has known both ends  
And who does not stick in the middle -  
I call that one a great person  
Who has here transcended the seamstress.’

“Listen to this and carefully pay attention; I will speak.”

“Yes, Bhante,” the senior monks replied to the Fortunate One. The Fortunate One said this:

“Monks, contact is one end, the origin of contact is the second end, the cessation of contact is in the middle, and craving is the seamstress; for it is craving that stitches one to the manifestation of one existence after another. Venerables, this is how a monk has superior knowledge of what is to be known with superior knowledge and completely knows what is to be completely known; having superior knowledge of what is to be known with superior knowledge and completely knowing what is to be completely known, one here and now brings suffering to its end.”