

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Rajagāha, in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary.

2. Now on that occasion the venerable Samiddhi was living in a forest hut. Then the wanderer Potaliputta, while wandering and walking for exercise, went to the venerable Samiddhi and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the venerable Samiddhi:

“Friend Samiddhi, I heard and learned this from the recluse Gotama's own lips: ‘Bodily action is vain, verbal action is vain, only mental action is real.’ And: ‘There is that attainment on entering which one does not feel anything at all.’”

“Do not say so, friend Potaliputta, do not say so. Do not misrepresent the Blessed One; it is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One. The Blessed One would not speak thus: ‘Bodily action is vain, verbal action is vain, only mental action is real.’ But, friend, there is that attainment on entering which one does not feel anything at all.”

“How long is it since you went forth, friend Samiddhi?”

“Not long, friend: three years.”

“There now, what shall we say to the elder bhikkhus when a young bhikkhu thinks the Teacher is to be defended thus? Friend Samiddhi, having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind, what does one feel?”

“Having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind, one feels suffering, friend Potaliputta.”

Then, neither approving nor disapproving of the venerable Samiddhi's words, the wanderer Potaliputta rose from his seat and departed.

3. Soon after the wanderer Potaliputta had left, the venerable Samiddhi went to the venerable Ānanda and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and reported to the venerable Ānanda his entire conversation with the wanderer Potaliputta. After he had spoken, the venerable Ānanda told him: "Friend Samiddhi, this conversation should be told to the Blessed One. Come, let us approach the Blessed One and tell him this. As the Blessed One explains to us, so we shall bear it in mind." – "Yes, friend," the venerable Samiddhi replied.

4. Then the venerable Ānanda and the venerable Samiddhi went together to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, they sat down at one side. The venerable Ānanda reported to the Blessed One the entire conversation between the venerable Samiddhi and the wanderer Potaliputta.

5. When he had finished, the Blessed One told the venerable Ānanda: "Ānanda, I do not even recall ever having seen the wanderer Potaliputta, so how could there have been this conversation? Though the wanderer Potaliputta's question should have been analyzed before being answered, this misguided man Samiddhi answered it one-sidedly."

6. When this was said, the venerable Udāyin said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, perhaps the venerable Samiddhi spoke thus referring to [the principle]: 'Whatever is felt is included in suffering.'"

Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda: "See, Ānanda, how this misguided man Udāyin interferes. I knew, Ānanda, that this misguided man Udāyin would unduly interfere right now. From the start the wanderer Potaliputta had asked about the three kinds of feeling. This misguided man Samiddhi would have answered the wanderer Potaliputta rightly if, when asked thus, he would have explained: 'Friend Potaliputta, having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind [whose result is] to be felt as pleasant, one feels pleasure. Having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind [whose result is] to be felt as painful, one feels pain. Having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind [whose result is] to be felt as neither-pain-nor-pleasure, one feels neither-pain-nor-pleasure.' But who are these foolish, thoughtless wanderers of other sects, that they could understand the Tathāgata's great exposition of action? You should listen, Ānanda, to the Tathāgata as he expounds the

great exposition of action.”

7. “This is the time, Blessed One, this is the time, Sublime One, for the Blessed One to expound the great exposition of action. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the bhikkhus will remember it.”

“Then listen, Ānanda, and attend closely to what I shall say.”

“Yes, venerable sir,” the venerable Ānanda replied. The Blessed One said this:

8. “Ānanda, there are four kinds of persons to be found existing in the world. What four? Here some person kills living beings, takes what is not given, misconducts himself in sensual pleasures, speaks falsehood, speaks maliciously, speaks harshly, gossips; he is covetous, has a mind of ill will, and holds wrong view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.

“But here some person kills living beings...and holds wrong view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

“Here some person abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, from malicious speech, from harsh speech, from gossip; he is not covetous, his mind is without ill will, and he holds right view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.

“But here some person abstains from killing living beings...and he holds right view. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.

9. “Here, Ānanda, by means of ardor, endeavor, devotion, diligence, and right attention, some

recluse or brahmin attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees that person here who kills living beings...and holds wrong view, and he sees that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. He says thus: 'Indeed, there are evil actions, there is result of misconduct; for I saw a person here who killed living beings...and held wrong view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation...even in hell.' He says thus: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who kills living beings...and holds wrong view reappears in a state of deprivation...even in hell. Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken.' Thus he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

10. "But here, Ānanda, by means of ardor...some recluse or brahmin attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees that person here who kills living beings...and holds wrong view, and he sees that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. He says thus: 'Indeed, there are no evil actions, there is no result of misconduct; for I saw a person here who killed living beings...and held wrong view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.' He says thus: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who kills living beings...and holds wrong view reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken.' Thus he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

11. "Here, Ānanda, by means of ardor... some recluse or brahmin attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees that person here who abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view, and he sees that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. He says thus: 'Indeed, there are good actions, there is the result of good conduct; for I saw a person here who abstained from killing living beings...and held right view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world.' He says thus: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken.' Thus he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

12. "But here, Ānanda, by means of ardor...some recluse or brahmin attains such concentration of mind that, when his mind is concentrated, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses

the human, he sees that person here who abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view, and he sees that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. He says thus: 'Indeed, there are no good actions, there is no result of good conduct; for I saw a person here who abstained from killing living beings...and held right view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation...even in hell.' He says thus: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view reappears in a state of deprivation...even in hell. Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken.' Thus he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

13. "Therein, Ānanda, when a recluse or brahmin says: 'Indeed, there are evil actions, there is the result of misconduct,' I grant him this. When he says: 'I saw a person here who killed living beings...and held wrong view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation...even in hell,' I also grant him this. But when he says: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who kills living beings...and holds wrong view reappears in a state of deprivation...even in hell,' I do not grant him this. And when he says: 'Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken,' I also do not grant him this. And when he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong,' I also do not grant him this. Why is that? Because, Ānanda, the Tathāgata's knowledge of the great exposition of action is otherwise.

14. "Therein, Ānanda, when a recluse or brahmin says: 'Indeed, there are no evil actions, there is no result of misconduct,' I do not grant him this. When he says: 'I saw a person here who killed living beings...and held wrong view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world,' I grant him this. But when he says: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who kills living beings...and holds wrong view reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world,' I do not grant him this. And when he says: 'Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken,' I also do not grant him this. And when he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong,' I also do not grant him this. Why is that? Because, Ānanda, the Tathāgata's knowledge of the great exposition of action is otherwise.

15. "Therein, Ānanda, when a recluse or brahmin says: 'Indeed, there are good actions, there is the result of good conduct,' I grant him this. And when he says: 'I saw a person here who abstained from killing living beings...and held right view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world,' I also grant him this. But when he says: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who

abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world,' I do not grant him this. And when he says: 'Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken,' I also do not grant him this. And when he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong,' I also do not grant him this. Why is that? Because, Ānanda, the Tathāgata's knowledge of the great exposition of action is otherwise.

16. "Therein, Ānanda, when a recluse or brahmin says: 'Indeed, there are no good actions, there is no result of good conduct,' I do not grant him this. When he says: 'I saw a person here who abstained from killing living beings...and held right view, and I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation...even in hell,' I grant him this. But when he says: 'On the dissolution of the body, after death, everyone who abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view reappears in a state of deprivation...even in hell,' I do not grant him this. And when he says: 'Those who know thus know rightly; those who think otherwise are mistaken,' I also do not grant him this. And when he obstinately adheres to what he himself has known, seen, and discovered, insisting: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong,' I also do not grant him this. Why is that? Because, Ānanda, the Tathāgata's knowledge of the great exposition of action is otherwise.

17. "Therein, Ānanda, as to the person here who kills living beings...and holds wrong view, and on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a state of deprivation...even in hell: either earlier he did an evil action to be felt as painful, or later he did an evil action to be felt as painful, or at the time of death he acquired and undertook wrong view. Because of that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation...even in hell. And since he has here killed living beings...and held wrong view, he will experience the result of that either here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.

18. "Therein, Ānanda, as to the person here who kills living beings...and holds wrong view, and on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world: either earlier he did a good action to be felt as pleasant, or later he did a good action to be felt as pleasant, or at the time of death he acquired and undertook right view. Because of that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. But since he has here killed living beings...and held wrong view, he will experience the result of that either here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.

19. "Therein, Ānanda, as to the person here who abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view, and on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a happy destination,

even in the heavenly world: either earlier he did a good action to be felt as pleasant, or later he did a good action to be felt as pleasant, or at the time of death he acquired and undertook right view. Because of that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. And since he has here abstained from killing living beings...and held right view, he will experience the result of that either here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.

20. “Therein, Ānanda, as to the person here who abstains from killing living beings...and holds right view, and on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a state of deprivation...even in hell: either earlier he did an evil action to be felt as painful, or later he did an evil action to be felt as painful, or at the time of death he acquired and undertook wrong view. Because of that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation...even in hell. But since he has here abstained from killing living beings...and held right view, he will experience the result of that either here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.

21. “Thus, Ānanda, there is action that is incapable and appears incapable; there is action that is incapable and appears capable; there is action that is capable and appears capable; and there is action that is capable and appears incapable.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ānanda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

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Majjhima Nikāya 136

Part Three— The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipavāsaṅgāya)

The Division of Expositions (Vibhaṅgavagga)

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