

Timbaruka Sutta (S 12.18, PTS ii.22)

Jayarava, Dec 2010.

Staying at Sāvattḥī. Then the wanderer Timbaruka approached the Bhagavan, and having exchanged pleasantries, he sat to one side and asked a question.

Are happiness and unhappiness (*sukhadukkha*) made by one's-self (*sayamkatam*)?¹

No, Timbaruka, that's not it, replied the Bhagavan.

Are happiness and unhappiness made by another (*paramkatam*)?

No, that's not it.

Are happiness and unhappiness made by one's-self and others?

No, that's not it.

Do happiness and unhappiness appear without any reason?

No, that's not it.

Is there no such thing as happiness and unhappiness?

It's not that there is no happiness and unhappiness. Clearly there is happiness and unhappiness.

Is it that you don't know or see happiness and unhappiness?

It's not that I don't know or see happiness and unhappiness. I do know them, and see them.

Gotama, you've answered 'no' to all my questions. Please explain to me what you mean. Explain happiness and unhappiness to me.

Well, Timbaruka, I do not say "happiness and unhappiness are caused by one's-self" because underlying that is the eternalist view that the experience (*vedanā*) and the one experiencing (*so vedayati*) are the same.²

I do not say "happiness and unhappiness are caused by another" because underlying that is the view of one overcome by sensations that the experience and the one experiencing are different.³

Avoiding both of these positions I point to a foundation (*dhamma*) in the middle. With ignorance (*avijjā*) as condition there are volitions (*saṅkhārā*), and with volitions as condition there is consciousness etc... [i.e. the *nidāna* chain] and thus the whole mass of disappointment comes about. With the complete cessation ignorance,

¹ In S 12.17 the questions only concern *dukkha*.

² cf S 12.17 in the same place in the narrative. The Buddha says to Kassapa: “[Thinking] ‘The one who acts, is the one who experiences [the result]’, indeed Kassapa, is because of [the view] ‘myself from the beginning’ (*ādito sato*); saying ‘disappointment is self-made’ amounts to eternalism.” (*so karoti so paṭisaṃvedayatīti kho, kassapa, ādito sato ‘sayamkatam dukkha’nti iti vadam sassatam etam pareti.*)

³ S 12.17 “[Thinking] ‘the one who experiences [the result] is different from the one who acts’, indeed Kassapa, because one is overwhelmed by sensations; saying ‘disappointment is made by another’ amounts to nihilism.” (*añño karoti añño paṭisaṃvedayatīti kho, kassapa, vedanābhitunnassa sato ‘paramkatam dukkha’nti iti vadam ucchedam etam pareti*)

volitions cease, with the cessation of volitions, ignorance ceases, etc...
thus the whole mass of disappointment ceases.

When this was said the wanderer Timbaruka said Gotama I go for refuge to the Bhagavan Gotama, to the Dhamma and the community of Bhikkhus. Please remember me as a non-monastic disciple from this day forward.