Thag 8.1 — Mahākaccāna

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Verses of the Senior Monks 8.1

The Book of the Eights

Chapter One

Mahākaccāna

Don’t get involved in lots of work,

avoid people, and don’t try to acquire things.

If you’re eager and greedy for flavors,

you’ll miss the goal that brings such happiness.

They know it really is a bog,

this homage and veneration in respectable families.

Honor is a subtle dart, hard to extract,

and hard for a reprobate to give up.

The deeds of a mortal aren’t bad

because of what others do.

You yourself should not do bad,

for mortals have deeds as their kin.

You’re not a bandit because of what someone says,

you’re not a sage because of what someone says;

but as you know yourself,

so the gods will know you.

When others do not understand,

let us, who do understand this,

restrain ourselves in this regard;

for that is how conflicts are laid to rest.
A wise person lives on
even after loss of wealth;
but without gaining wisdom,
even a rich person doesn’t really live.
All is heard with the ear,
all is seen with the eye;
the attentive ought not discard
all that is seen and heard.
Though you have eyes, be as if blind;
though you have ears, be as if deaf;
though you have wisdom, be as if dumb;
though you have strength, be as if feeble.
And when issues come up
lie as still as a corpse.