

1 *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*

The Root of All Things

- [1] 1. THUS HAVE I HEARD.¹ On one occasion the Blessed One was living in Ukkaṭṭhā in the Subhaga Grove at the root of a royal sāla tree. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Bhikkhus.”² – “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Blessed One said this:
2. “Bhikkhus, I shall teach you a discourse on the root of all things.³ Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.” – “Yes, venerable sir,” the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

(THE ORDINARY PERSON)

3. “Here, bhikkhus, an untaught ordinary person,⁴ who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, perceives earth as earth.⁵ Having perceived earth as earth, he conceives [himself as] earth, he conceives [himself] in earth, he conceives [himself apart] from earth, he conceives earth to be ‘mine,’ he delights in earth.⁶ Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.⁷
4. “He perceives water as water. Having perceived water as water, he conceives [himself as] water, he conceives [himself] in water, he conceives [himself apart] from water, he conceives water to be ‘mine,’ he delights in water. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.
5. “He perceives fire as fire. Having perceived fire as fire, he conceives [himself as] fire, he conceives [himself] in fire, he conceives [himself apart] from fire, he conceives fire to be ‘mine,’ he delights in fire. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.
6. “He perceives air as air. Having perceived air as air, he conceives [himself as] air, he conceives [himself] in air, he conceives

[himself apart] from air, he conceives air to be 'mine,' he delights in air. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say. [2]

7. "He perceives beings as beings.⁸ Having perceived beings as beings, he conceives beings, he conceives [himself] in beings, he conceives [himself apart] from beings, he conceives beings to be 'mine,' he delights in beings. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

8. "He perceives gods as gods.⁹ Having perceived gods as gods, he conceives gods, he conceives [himself] in gods, he conceives [himself apart] from gods, he conceives gods to be 'mine,' he delights in gods. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

9. "He perceives Pajāpati as Pajāpati.¹⁰ Having perceived Pajāpati as Pajāpati, he conceives Pajāpati, he conceives [himself] in Pajāpati, he conceives [himself apart] from Pajāpati, he conceives Pajāpati to be 'mine,' he delights in Pajāpati. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

10. "He perceives Brahmā as Brahmā.¹¹ Having perceived Brahmā as Brahmā, he conceives Brahmā, he conceives [himself] in Brahmā, he conceives [himself apart] from Brahmā, he conceives Brahmā to be 'mine,' he delights in Brahmā. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

11. "He perceives the gods of Streaming Radiance as the gods of Streaming Radiance.¹² Having perceived the gods of Streaming Radiance as the gods of Streaming Radiance, he conceives the gods of Streaming Radiance, he conceives [himself] in the gods of Streaming Radiance, he conceives the gods of Streaming Radiance to be 'mine,' he delights in the gods of Streaming Radiance. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

12. "He perceives the gods of Refulgent Glory as the gods of Refulgent Glory.¹³ Having perceived the gods of Refulgent Glory as the gods of Refulgent Glory, he conceives the gods of Refulgent Glory, he conceives [himself] in the gods of Refulgent Glory, he conceives [himself apart] from the gods of Refulgent Glory, he conceives the gods of Refulgent Glory to be 'mine,' he delights in the gods of Refulgent Glory. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

13. "He perceives the gods of Great Fruit as the gods of Great Fruit.¹⁴ Having perceived the gods of Great Fruit as the gods of Great Fruit, he conceives the gods of Great Fruit, he conceives [himself] in the gods of Great Fruit, he conceives [himself apart] from the gods of Great Fruit, he conceives the gods of Great Fruit to be 'mine,' he delights in the gods of Great Fruit. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

14. "He perceives the Overlord as the Overlord.¹⁵ Having perceived the Overlord as the Overlord, he conceives the Overlord, he conceives [himself] in the Overlord, he conceives [himself apart] from the Overlord, he conceives the Overlord to be 'mine,' he delights in the Overlord. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

15. "He perceives the base of infinite space as the base of infinite space.¹⁶ Having perceived the base of infinite space as the base of infinite space, he conceives [himself as] the base of infinite space, he conceives [himself] in the base of infinite space, he conceives [himself apart] from the base of infinite space, he conceives the base of infinite space to be 'mine,' he delights in the base of infinite space. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

16. "He perceives the base of infinite consciousness as the base of infinite consciousness. Having perceived the base of infinite consciousness as the base of infinite consciousness, [3] he conceives [himself as] the base of infinite consciousness, he conceives [himself] in the base of infinite consciousness, he conceives [himself apart] from the base of infinite consciousness, he conceives the base of infinite consciousness to be 'mine,' he delights in the base of infinite consciousness. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

17. "He perceives the base of nothingness as the base of nothingness. Having perceived the base of nothingness as the base of nothingness, he conceives [himself as] the base of nothingness, he conceives [himself] in the base of nothingness, he conceives [himself apart] from the base of nothingness, he conceives the base of nothingness to be 'mine,' he delights in the base of nothingness. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

18. "He perceives the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception as the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Having perceived the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception

as the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he conceives [himself as] the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he conceives [himself] in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he conceives [himself apart] from the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he conceives the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception to be 'mine,' he delights in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

19. "He perceives the seen as the seen.¹⁷ Having perceived the seen as the seen, he conceives [himself as] the seen, he conceives [himself] in the seen, he conceives [himself apart] from the seen, he conceives the seen to be 'mine,' he delights in the seen. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

20. "He perceives the heard as the heard. Having perceived the heard as the heard, he conceives [himself as] the heard, he conceives [himself] in the heard, he conceives [himself apart] from the heard, he conceives the heard to be 'mine,' he delights in the heard. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

21. "He perceives the sensed as the sensed. Having perceived the sensed as the sensed, he conceives [himself as] the sensed, he conceives [himself] in the sensed, he conceives [himself apart] from the sensed, he conceives the sensed to be 'mine,' he delights in the sensed. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

22. "He perceives the cognized as the cognized. Having perceived the cognized as the cognized, he conceives [himself as] the cognized, he conceives [himself] in the cognized, he conceives [himself apart] from the cognized, he conceives the cognized to be 'mine,' he delights in the cognized. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

23. "He perceives unity as unity.¹⁸ Having perceived unity as unity, he conceives [himself as] unity, he conceives [himself] in unity, he conceives [himself apart] from unity, he conceives unity to be 'mine,' he delights in unity. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

24. "He perceives diversity as diversity. Having perceived diversity as diversity, he conceives [himself as] diversity, he conceives [himself] in diversity, he conceives [himself apart] from diversity, he conceives diversity to be 'mine,' he delights

in diversity. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

25. "He perceives all as all.¹⁹ Having perceived all as all, he conceives [himself as] all, [4] he conceives [himself] in all, he conceives [himself apart] from all, he conceives all to be 'mine,' he delights in all. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

26. "He perceives Nibbāna as Nibbāna.²⁰ Having perceived Nibbāna as Nibbāna, he conceives [himself as] Nibbāna, he conceives [himself] in Nibbāna, he conceives [himself apart] from Nibbāna, he conceives Nibbāna to be 'mine,' he delights in Nibbāna. Why is that? Because he has not fully understood it, I say.

(THE DISCIPLE IN HIGHER TRAINING)

27. "Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is in higher training,²¹ whose mind has not yet reached the goal, and who is still aspiring to the supreme security from bondage, directly knows earth as earth.²² Having directly known earth as earth, he should not conceive [himself as] earth, he should not conceive [himself] in earth, he should not conceive [himself apart] from earth, he should not conceive earth to be 'mine,' he should not delight in earth. Why is that? So that he may fully understand it, I say.²³

28–49. "He directly knows water as water...He directly knows all as all...

50. "He directly knows Nibbāna as Nibbāna. Having directly known Nibbāna as Nibbāna, he should not conceive [himself as] Nibbāna, he should not conceive [himself] in Nibbāna, he should not conceive [himself apart] from Nibbāna, he should not conceive Nibbāna to be 'mine,' he should not delight in Nibbāna. Why is that? So that he may fully understand it, I say.

(THE ARAHANT – I)

51. "Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is an arahant with taints destroyed, who has lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached the true goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and is completely liberated through final knowledge,²⁴ directly knows earth as earth. Having directly

known earth as earth, he does not conceive [himself as] earth, he does not conceive [himself] in earth, he does not conceive [himself apart] from earth, he does not conceive earth to be 'mine,' he does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because he has fully understood it, I say.²⁵

52-74. "He directly knows water as water...Nibbāna as Nibbāna... Why is that? Because he has fully understood it, I say.

(THE ARAHANT - II)

75. "Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is an arahant...completely liberated through final knowledge. [5] directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, he does not conceive [himself as] earth, he does not conceive [himself] in earth, he does not conceive [himself apart] from earth, he does not conceive earth to be 'mine,' he does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because he is free from lust through the destruction of lust.²⁶

76-98. "He directly knows water as water...Nibbāna as Nibbāna... Why is that? Because he is free from lust through the destruction of lust.

(THE ARAHANT - III)

99. "Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is an arahant...completely liberated through final knowledge, directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, he does not conceive [himself as] earth, he does not conceive [himself] in earth, he does not conceive [himself apart] from earth, he does not conceive earth to be 'mine,' he does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because he is free from hate through the destruction of hate.

100-122. "He directly knows water as water...Nibbāna as Nibbāna... Why is that? Because he is free from hate through the destruction of hate.

(THE ARAHANT - IV)

123. "Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is an arahant...completely liberated through final knowledge, directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, he does not conceive [himself as] earth, he does not conceive [himself] in earth, he

does not conceive [himself apart] from earth, he does not conceive earth to be 'mine,' he does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because he is free from delusion through the destruction of delusion.

124-146. "He directly knows water as water...Nibbāna as Nibbāna... Why is that? Because he is free from delusion through the destruction of delusion.

(THE TATHĀGATA - I)

147. "Bhikkhus, the Tathāgata,²⁷ accomplished and fully enlightened, directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, he does not conceive [himself as] earth, he does not conceive [himself] in earth, he does not conceive [himself apart] from earth, he does not conceive earth to be 'mine,' he does not delight in earth. [6] Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has fully understood it to the end, I say.²⁸

148-170. "He directly knows water as water...Nibbāna as Nibbāna... Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has fully understood it to the end, I say.

(THE TATHĀGATA - II)

171. "Bhikkhus, the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, he does not conceive [himself as] earth, he does not conceive [himself] in earth, he does not conceive [himself apart] from earth, he does not conceive earth to be 'mine,' he does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because he has understood that delight is the root of suffering, and that with being [as condition] there is birth, and that for whatever has come to be there is ageing and death.²⁹ Therefore, bhikkhus, through the complete destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of cravings, the Tathāgata has awakened to supreme full enlightenment, I say.³⁰

172-194. "He directly knows water as water...Nibbāna as Nibbāna... Why is that? Because he has understood that delight is the root of suffering, and that with being [as condition] there is birth, and that for whatever has come to be there is ageing and death. Therefore, bhikkhus, through the complete destruction,

fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of cravings, the Tathāgata has awakened to supreme full enlightenment, I say.”

That is what the Blessed One said. But those bhikkhus did *not* delight in the Blessed One’s words.³¹