

# In the Buddha's Words by Bhikkhu Bodhi



The Buddha's teachings, as presented in the Pali canon, are like thousands of squares on a giant Rubik's cube. Each square represents an aspect of the Dharma, each is meant to guide us to a life with less and less suffering until ultimately we reach liberation and end suffering completely. The Buddha answered questions, gave guidelines, presented concepts: all meant to bring us to peace and harmony, to joy and loving kindness, to freedom and liberation.

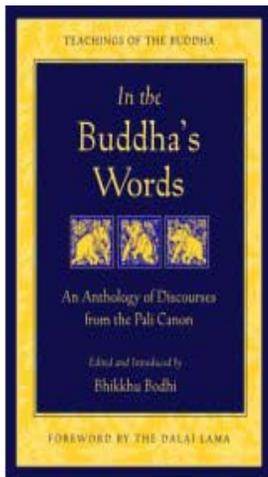
He was not presenting a fully developed philosophy with a clear and systematic structure. Rather, the Buddha presented his teachings in ways that made it easy to understand for those who sought his guidance. Like any great teacher, the Buddha often taught the same idea or concept over and over in different ways so that those listening understood what he was saying.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, the renowned scholar monk who has translated or edited virtually the entire Pali canon into modern, readable English, compiled this collection of sutras with an eye toward presenting them in a systematic way that allows the reader not only to see a framework that underpins the Buddha's teaching, but also to grasp the incredible spectrum of thought that is presented in the Pali canon.

In the Buddha's Words, An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon has ten chapters, each with an insightful introduction and a handful of sutras, many newly translated, edited and condensed to make them more manageable for the non-scholar. The book begins with a rich explanatory General Introduction that alone would be worth the purchase of the book.

The excerpts below, in which we see the world condition as the Buddha himself saw it, illustrate how readable and accessible this anthology had made the teachings to those interested in exploring the Pali Canon—be they novices or stream-enterers.

The tables are not part of the book, but were added by rightview's editor.



### The Origin of Conflict From AN 2 iv; I 66

The Brahmin Aramadanda approached the Venerable Mahakaccana and asked him: “Why is it that khattiyas fight with khattiyas, Brahmins with Brahmins, and householders with householders?”

Mahakaccana answered: “It is because of attachment to sensual pleasures, adherence to sensual pleasures, fixation on sensual pleasures, holding firmly to sensual pleasures that khattiyas fight with khattiyas, Brahmins with Brahmins, and householders with householders.”

“Then why is it,” the Brahmin continued, “that ascetics fight with ascetics?”

“It is because of attachment to views, adherence to views, fixation on views, addiction to views, obsession with views, holding firmly to views that ascetics fight with ascetics.”

# The Dark Chain of Causation

*From DN 15, II.58*

Thus, Ananda, in dependence on feeling there is craving; in dependence on craving there is pursuit; in dependence on pursuit there is gain; in dependence on gain there is decision-making; in dependence on decision-making there is desire and lust; in dependence on desire and lust, there is attachment; in dependence on desire and lust there is attachment; in dependence on attachment, there is possessiveness; in dependence on possessiveness there is niggardliness; in dependence on niggardliness, there is defensiveness; and because of defensiveness, various evil unwholesome things originate—the taking up of arms and weapons, conflicts, quarrels, and disputes, insults, slander, and falsehood.

In dependence upon	feeling	there is	craving
“	craving	“	pursuit
“	pursuit	“	gain
“	gain	“	decision-making
“	decision-making	“	desire and lust
“	desire and lust	“	attachment
“	attachment	“	possessiveness
“	possessiveness	“	niggardliness
“	niggardliness	“	defensiveness

Because of defensiveness various evil unwholesome things originate: the taking up of weapons, conflict, quarrels, disputes, insults, slander, and falsehoods.

“And what gives rise to desire?”

“Desire arises from thinking.”

“But, Sir, what gives rise to thinking?”

“Thinking arises from elaborated perceptions and notions\*. When elaborated perceptions and notions are present, thinking arises. When elaborated perceptions and notions are absent, thinking does not arise.

\* These are ideas that have become infected by subjective biases, elaborated by the tendencies to craving, conceit, and distorted views.

Envy and niggardliness	Arise(s) from	liking and disliking
Liking and disliking	“	desire
Desire	“	thinking
Thinking	“	elaborated perceptions and notions

*Texts above from In The Buddha's Words, An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon by Bhikkhu Bodhi, preface by His Holiness Venerable Tenzin Gyato, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama; Wisdom Publications, July, 2005; tables and abridgement by Xian Yang*