

# In the Buddha's Words

*An anthology of Discourse From the Pali Canon*

Bikkhu Bodhi (ed.)

## I. The Human Condition

### (2) *The Vicissitudes of Life*

"These eight worldly conditions, monks, keep the world turning around, and the world turns around these eight worldly conditions. What eight? **Gain and loss, fame and disrepute, praise and blame, pleasure and pain.**

"These eight worldly conditions, monks, are encountered by an uninstructed worldling, and they are also encountered by an instructed noble disciple. What now is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between an instructed noble disciple and an uninstructed worldling?"

"Venerable sir, our knowledge of these things has its roots in the Blessed One; it has the Blessed One as guide and resort. It would be good, venerable sir if the Blessed One would clarify the meaning of that statement. Having heard it from him, the monks will bear it in mind."

"Listen then, monks, and attend carefully. I shall speak."

"Yes, venerable sir," the monks replied. The Blessed One then spoke thus:

"When an uninstructed worldling, monks, comes upon gain, he does not reflect on it thus: 'This gain that has come to me is impermanent, bound up with suffering, subject to change.' He does not know it as it really is. And when he comes upon loss, fame, and disrepute, praise and blame, he does not reflect on them thus: 'All these are impermanent, bound up with suffering, subject to change.' He does not know them as they really are. With such a person, gain and loss, fame and disrepute, praise and blame, pleasure and pain keep his mind engrossed. When gain comes he is elated and when he meets with loss he is dejected. When fame comes he is elated and when he meets with disrepute he is dejected. When he experiences pleasure he is elated and when he experiences pain he is dejected. Being thus involved in likes and dislikes, he will not be freed from birth, aging, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair; he will not be freed from suffering, I say.

"But, monks, when an instructed noble disciple comes upon gain, he reflects on it thus: 'This gain that has come to me is impermanent, bound up with suffering subject to change.' And so he will reflect when loss and so forth come upon him. He understands all these things as they really are, and they do not engross his mind. Thus he will not be elated by gain and dejected by loss; elated by fame and dejected by disrepute; elated by praise and dejected by blame; elated by pleasure and dejected by pain. Having thus given up likes and dislikes, he will be freed from birth, aging, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair; he will be freed from suffering, I say.

"This, monks, is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between an instructed noble disciple and an uninstructed worldling." (AN8:6; IV 157-59)