Noble Eightfold Path

In

Early Buddhism

Rooted In Craving (AN 9.23)

Mendicants, I will teach you about nine things rooted in craving.

And what are the nine things rooted in craving?

1) Craving is a condition for seeking

2) Seeking is a condition for gaining material possessions.

3) Gaining material possessions is a condition for assessing.

4) Assessing is a condition for desire and lust.

5) Desire and lust is a condition for attachment.

6) Attachment is a condition for possessiveness.

7) Possessiveness is a condition for stinginess.

8) Stinginess is a condition for safeguarding.

Owing to safeguarding, many bad, unskillful things come to be: taking up the rod and the sword, quarrels, arguments, and fights, accusations, divisive speech, and lies.

(AN 9.23)

Craving (*Taṇha*)
=> seeking (*pariyesanā*)
=> gaining material possessions (*lābha*)
=> assessing (*vinicchaya*)
=> desire & lust (*chandarāga*)
=> attachment (*ajjhosāna*)
=> possessiveness (*pariggaha*)
=> stinginess (*macchariya*)
=> safeguarding (*ārakkha*)
=> many bad unskillful actions
(*aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā sambhavanti*).

The Great Discourse on Causation (DN 15)

Owing to safeguarding, many bad, unskillful things come to be: taking up the rod and the sword, quarrels, arguments, and fights, accusations, divisive speech, and lies'—that's what I said.

And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no safeguarding for anyone anywhere.

When there's no safeguarding at all, with the cessation of safeguarding, would those many bad, unskillful things still come to be?
– No, sir.

Right Speech (*sammāvācā*)

Factors of N8P

(1) Right View, *sammādiṭṭhi*

(2) Right Intention, *sammāsaṅkappo*

(3) Right Speech, *sammāvācā*

(4) Right Action, *sammākammanto*

(5) Right Livelihood, *sammāājīvo*

(6) Right Effort, *sammāvāyāmo*

(7) Right Mindfulness, *sammāsati*

(8) Right Stillness, *sammāsamādhi*

Right speech (SN 45.8)

And what is right speech?
Avoiding speech that's:

- False
- Divisive
- Harsh
- Frivolous/idle

Speaking truthfully (MN 27)

They give up lying.

They speak the truth and stick to the truth.

They’re honest and trustworthy, and don’t trick the world with their words.

The People of Sālā (MN 41) – Not Lying

When a certain person gives up lying. They're summoned to a council, an assembly, a family meeting, a guild, or to the royal court, and asked to bear witness: 'Please, mister, say what you know.' Not knowing, they say 'I don't know.' Knowing, they say 'I know.' Not seeing, they say 'I don't see.' And seeing, they say 'I see.'

So they don't **deliberately** lie for the sake of themselves or another, or for some trivial worldly reason.

Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhika (MN 61)

Rāhula, do you see this little bit of water left in the pot? – Yes, sir.

That's how little of the ascetic's nature is left in those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.

Do you see this little bit of water that was tossed away? – Yes, sir.

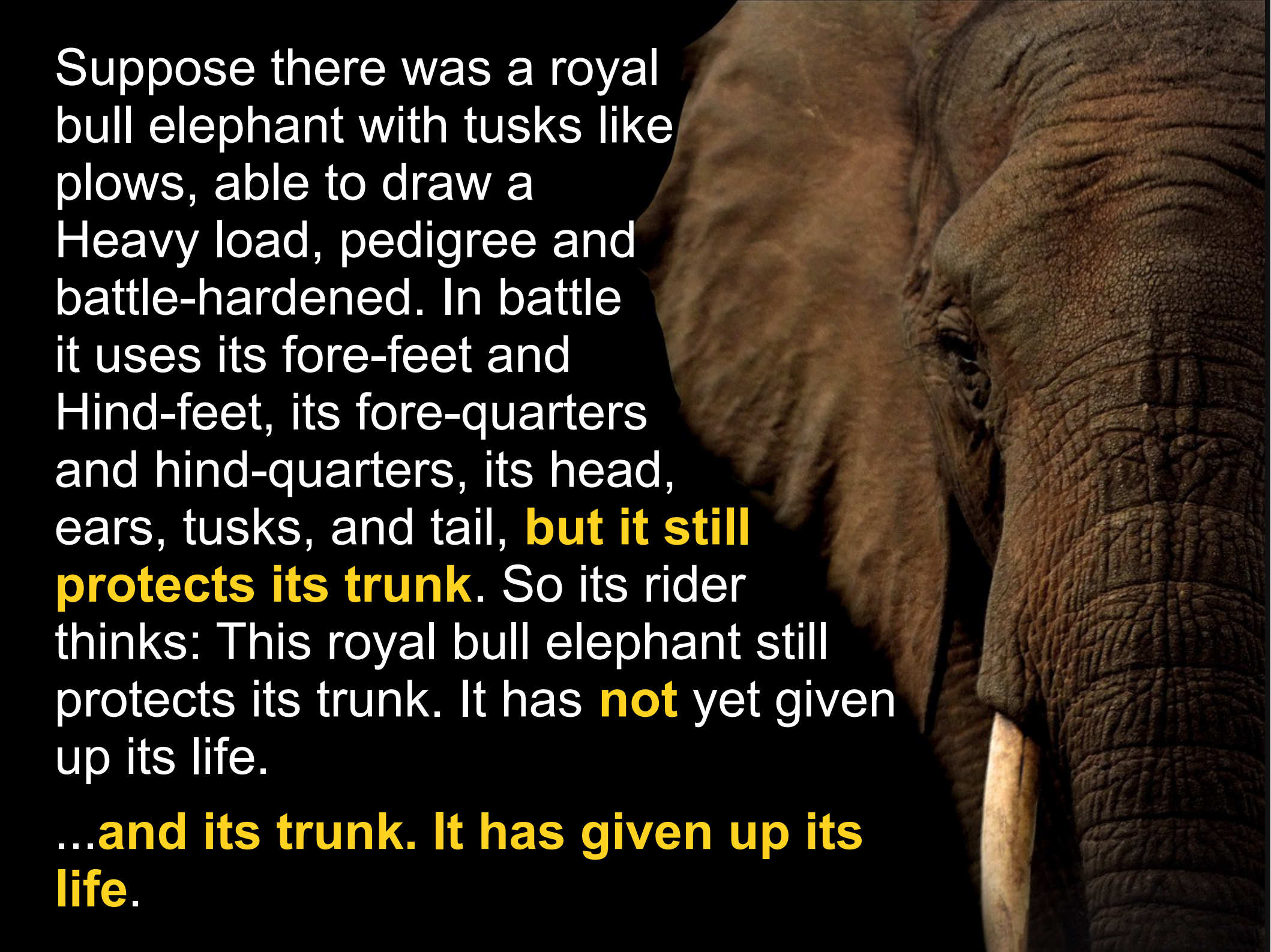
That's how the ascetic's nature is tossed away in those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.

Do you see how this pot is turned upside down? – Yes, sir.

That's how the ascetic's nature is turned upside down in those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.

Do you see how this pot is vacant and hollow? – Yes, sir.

That's how vacant and hollow the ascetic's nature is in those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.



Suppose there was a royal bull elephant with tusks like plows, able to draw a Heavy load, pedigree and battle-hardened. In battle it uses its fore-feet and Hind-feet, its fore-quarters and hind-quarters, its head, ears, tusks, and tail, **but it still protects its trunk**. So its rider thinks: This royal bull elephant still protects its trunk. It has **not** yet given up its life.

…**and its trunk. It has given up its life**.

Now there is nothing that royal bull elephant would not do.

In the same way, when someone is not ashamed to tell a **deliberate** lie, there is no bad deed they would not do, I say.

So you should train like this:

I will not tell a lie, even for a joke.

(MN 61)

Caution, it's a Slippery Slope...

One lie can very easily lead to another and another and so forth. Before one knows it, a new habit has established itself and is gaining momentum and dragging one down a very slippery slope.

One therefore needs to be very careful. Honesty and truthfulness with oneself and consequently also with others is crucial on the spiritual path.

Recitation of the Monastic Rules at Bodhinyana Monastery

Bhikkhu Patimokkha - Introduction (Kd2)

If you remember an offence but do not say so before the third announcement, you have **lied in full awareness**. **Lying is called an obstruction by the Buddha**.

If you remember an offence and you seek purification, you should therefore disclose it. You will then be at ease.

Valuing truth more than punishment

“Lying has benefits. Telling the truth is dangerous.” - Please change this notion.

Make sure your children, your partner or your colleagues know when they tell you the truth, that they will not be punished or blasted, but helped and supported.

Also don't criticise the person,
but rather the action/behaviour.

Non-divisive speech (MN 27)

“They give up divisive speech. They don’t repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other.

Instead, they reconcile those who are divided, supporting unity, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony.”

Non-divisive speech (AN 4.100)

“This is the best:
criticizing those deserving criticism
at the right time, truthfully and rightly;
and praising those deserving of praise
at the right time, truthfully and rightly.
Why? Because understanding time
and context is the best.” (AN 4.100)

Gentle speech (MN 41)

“They speak harshly. They use the kinds of words that are cruel, nasty, hurtful, offensive, bordering on anger, leading away from stillness.
...
They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that’s gentle, pleasing to the ear, lovely, going to the heart, polite, likeable, and agreeable to the people.”

Gentle speech (MN 58)

“Such speech as the Buddha knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others:

the Buddha knows the right time to use such speech.”

Idle chatter (MN 41)

“They give up idle chatter.

Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.” (MN 41)

Idle chatter (MN 75)

Then so-and-so went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him.
When the greetings and polite conversation were over … (e.g. MN 75)

Other forms of good/bad speech (AN 4.3)

"When a foolish, incompetent bad person has four qualities they are broken and damaged:

Without investigating and scrutinizing, he speaks praise of one who deserves dispraise. ...

Without investigating and scrutinizing, he speaks dispraise of one who deserves praise."

Other forms of good/bad speech (AN 4.73)

"A good person does not disclose the faults of others even when asked about them, how much less then when not asked.

But when he is asked about them, then, though led on by questions, he speaks about the faults of others with gaps and omissions, not fully or in detail."

Other forms of good/bad speech (AN 5.214)

“There are these five dangers for a person who speaks much.

He speaks falsely; he speaks divisively; he speaks harshly; he speaks idle chatter; after death, he is reborn in the lower world.

Other forms of good/bad speech (AN 5.198)

"When speech has five qualities, it is well spoken; it is blameless and beyond reproach by the wise.

It is spoken:

- At the proper time
- Truthfully
- Gently
- Beneficially
- With a mind of loving-kindness."

Topics of Discussion (1st) (AN 10.69)

There are, mendicants, these ten topics of discussion.

What ten?

1) Talk about fewness of wishes (*appiccha*),
2) contentment (*santuṭṭhi*),
3) seclusion (*paviveka*),
4) aloofness (*asaṃsagga*),
5) arousing energy (*vīriyārambha*),

6) ethics (*sīla*),
7) immersion (*samādhi*),
8) wisdom (*paññā*),
9) freedom (*vimutti*), and
10) the knowledge and vision of freedom (*vimuttiñāṇadassana*).

These are the ten topics of discussion.

Mendicants, if you bring up these topics of conversation again and again then your glory could surpass even the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful, let alone the wanderers who follow other paths.