

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses (1. Dīgha Nikāya)

2. The Great Chapter (2. Mahāvaggapāḷi)

8. The Discourse on Sakka's Questions (8. Sakkapañhasuttaṃ)

[DN 21, PTS 2.263–2.289]



PaliVerse

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses

2. The Great Chapter

8. The Discourse on Sakka's Questions

344. Thus have I heard - On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Magadhans, to the east of Rājagaha there is a brahmin village named Ambasaṇḍā, to the north of that on the Vedyaka mountain in the Indasāla cave. Now at that time zeal arose in Sakka, the lord of the gods, to see the Blessed One. Then this occurred to Sakka, the lord of the gods - "Where now is the Blessed One dwelling at present, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One?" Sakka, the lord of the gods, saw the Blessed One dwelling among the Magadhans, to the east of Rājagaha there is a brahmin village named Ambasaṇḍā, to the north of that on the Vedyaka mountain in the Indasāla cave. Having seen this, he addressed the gods of the Thirty-three - "This Blessed One, sirs, is dwelling among the Magadhans, to the east of Rājagaha there is a brahmin village named Ambasaṇḍā, to the north of that on the Vedyaka mountain in the Indasāla cave. What if, sirs, we were to approach that Blessed One for an audience, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One?" "Yes, venerable sir," the gods of the Thirty-three assented to Sakka, the lord of the gods.

345. Then Sakka, the lord of the gods, addressed Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god - "This, dear Pañcasikha, the Blessed One is dwelling among the Magadhans, to the east of Rājagaha there is a brahmin village named Ambasaṇḍā, to the north of that on the Vedyaka mountain in the Indasāla cave. What if, dear Pañcasikha, we were to approach that Blessed One for an audience, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One?" "Yes, venerable sir," Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god, having assented to Sakka, the lord of the gods, taking his yellow beluva-wood lute, approached to accompany Sakka, the lord of the gods.

346. Then Sakka, the lord of the gods, surrounded by the Tāvatiṃsa gods, with Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god, at the fore, just as a strong man might extend his bent arm or bend his extended arm; even so, having vanished from the Tāvatiṃsa gods, to the east of Rājagaha among the Magadhans there is a brahmin village named Ambasaṇḍā, to the north of that he appeared on the Vedyaka mountain. Now at that time the Vedyaka mountain was excessively radiant, and the brahmin village of Ambasaṇḍā, as is the case with the divine power of the gods. And people in the surrounding villages said thus: "Is the Vedyaka mountain on fire today? Is the Vedyaka mountain burning today? Is the Vedyaka mountain ablaze today? Why is the Vedyaka mountain excessively radiant today, and the brahmin village of Ambasaṇḍā?" They were agitated, with their hair standing on end.

347. Then Sakka, the lord of the gods, addressed Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god - "Truth-finders are difficult to approach by one such as me, dear Pañcasikha, being meditators, delighting in meditative absorption, and at that time in seclusion. If, however, you, dear Pañcasikha, were to first gladden the Blessed One, after he has been first gladdened by you, dear, we might then approach that Blessed One for an

audience, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One." "Yes, venerable sir," Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god, having assented to Sakka, the lord of the gods, taking his yellow beluva-wood lute, approached the Indasāla cave; having approached, thinking "At this distance the Blessed One will be neither too far nor too near, and he will hear my sound," he stood to one side.

The Verses of Pañcasikha's Song

348. Standing to one side, Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god, played his yellow beluva-wood lute, and spoke these verses connected with the Buddha, connected with the Teaching, connected with the Community, connected with the Worthy Ones, connected with sensual pleasure -

"I pay homage to your father, dear lady, Timbaru, O Sūriyavacchasā;
By whom you were born, beautiful one, you who generate joy in me.

"As wind is pleasant to one who is sweating, as drinking water to one who is thirsty;
O radiant one, you are dear to me, as the Teaching is to the Worthy Ones.

"As medicine to one who is sick, as food to one who is hungry;
Quench me, dear lady, as one burning is quenched with water.

"A pond with cool water, endowed with lotus pollen;
Like an elephant oppressed by heat, I would plunge into your breast and belly.

"Like an elephant beyond the goad, the pike and spear are conquered by me;
I do not understand the reason, intoxicated by her with beautiful thighs.

"My mind is bound to you, my consciousness is transformed;
I am unable to turn back, like a fish that has swallowed a hook.

"O beautiful-thighed one, embrace me, dear lady, embrace me, O soft-eyed one;
Enfold me, beautiful one, this is what I long for.

"Small indeed was my desire, being at peace, for her with curly hair;
It has arisen in many forms, like an offering to the Worthy Ones.

"Whatever merit I have made, among such Worthy Ones;
May that ripen for me, O beautiful in every limb, together with you.

"Whatever merit I have made, in this circle of the earth;
May that ripen for me, O beautiful in every limb, together with you.

"Like a Sakyan son through meditative absorption, unified, prudent, mindful;
The sage seeking the Deathless - so I seek you, O Sūriyavacchasā.

"Just as the sage would rejoice, having attained the highest enlightenment;
So would I rejoice, beautiful one, having come to union with you.

"If Sakka, the lord of the Tāvatiṃsa gods, were to grant me a boon;

I would choose you, dear lady - so strong is my desire.

"Like a sāla tree not long in bloom, your father, O wise one;
Paying homage, I revere him, whose offspring is such as this."

349. When this was said, the Blessed One said this to Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god - "Your sound of the lute, Pañcasikha, fits together with your singing voice, and your singing voice with the sound of the lute; and yet, Pañcasikha, your sound of the lute does not surpass your singing voice, nor does your singing voice surpass the sound of the lute. But when, Pañcasikha, were these verses composed by you, connected with the Buddha, connected with the Teaching, connected with the Community, connected with the Worthy Ones, connected with sensual pleasure?" "On one occasion, venerable sir, the Blessed One was dwelling at Uruvelā on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at the goatherd's banyan tree, newly fully enlightened. Now at that time, venerable sir, I longed for Bhaddā Sūriyavacchasā, the daughter of Timbaru, the gandhabba king. But that lady, venerable sir, was in love with another; she longed for Sikhaṇḍī, the son of Mātali the charioteer. Since I, venerable sir, could not obtain that lady by any means, then I, taking my yellow beluva-wood lute, approached the dwelling of Timbaru, the gandhabba king; having approached, I played my yellow beluva-wood lute, and spoke these verses connected with the Buddha, connected with the Teaching, connected with the Community, connected with the Worthy Ones, connected with sensual pleasure -

"I pay homage to your father, dear lady, Timbaru, O Sūriyavacchasā;
By whom you were born, beautiful one, you who generate joy in me.Etc.

Like a sāla tree not long in bloom, your father, O wise one;
Paying homage, I revere him, whose offspring is such as this."

"When this was said, venerable sir, Bhaddā Sūriyavacchasā said this to me - 'I have not, sir, seen that Blessed One face to face, but I have heard of that Blessed One while dancing for the gods of the Thirty-three in the Sudhammā assembly hall. Since you, sir, praise that Blessed One, let there be a meeting between us today.' That indeed, venerable sir, was our meeting with that lady. And not since then."

The Approach to Sakka

350. Then this occurred to Sakka, the lord of the gods - "Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god, exchanges friendly greetings with the Blessed One, and the Blessed One with Pañcasikha." Then Sakka, the lord of the gods, addressed Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god - "Pay respect on my behalf, dear Pañcasikha, to the Blessed One - 'Venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, together with his ministers, together with his retinue, pays respect with his head at the Blessed One's feet.'" "Yes, venerable sir," Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god, having assented to Sakka, the lord of the gods, paid respect to the Blessed One - "Venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, together with his ministers, together with his retinue, pays respect with his head at the Blessed One's feet." "May Sakka, the lord of the gods, together with his ministers, together with his retinue, be thus happy, Pañcasikha; for gods, humans, titans, serpents, gandhabbas, and whatever other beings there are of various classes desire happiness."

351. And thus Truth-finders greet such influential demons. Having been greeted, Sakka, the lord of the gods, having entered the Indasāla cave of the Blessed One, having paid respect to the Blessed One, stood to one side. The gods of the Thirty-three too, having entered the Indasāla cave, having paid respect to the Blessed One, stood to one side. Pañcasikha too, the gandhabba young god, having entered the Indasāla cave, having paid respect to the Blessed One, stood to one side.

Now at that time the Indasāla cave, being uneven, became level; being confined, became spacious; the darkness in the cave disappeared; light arose, as is the case with the divine power of the gods.

352. Then the Blessed One said this to Sakka, the lord of the gods - "This is wonderful of the Venerable Kosiya, this is marvellous of the Venerable Kosiya, who has so much to do, so many duties to perform, that is to say, this coming here." "Long since, venerable sir, I have wished to approach the Blessed One for an audience; but I was occupied with various duties to be done for the gods of the Thirty-three; thus I was not able to approach the Blessed One for an audience. On one occasion, venerable sir, the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattṥī in the Salaḷa-scented hut. Then, venerable sir, I went to Sāvattṥī to see the Blessed One. Now at that time, venerable sir, the Blessed One was seated in a certain concentration, and a goddess named Bhujatī, an attendant of the Great King Vessavaṇa, was standing in attendance upon the Blessed One, with joined palms, paying homage. Then, venerable sir, I said this to Bhujatī - 'Pay respect on my behalf, sister, to the Blessed One - "Venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, together with his ministers, together with his retinue, pays respect with his head at the Blessed One's feet." When this was said, venerable sir, that Bhujatī said this to me - 'It is not the right time, sir, to see the Blessed One; the Blessed One is in seclusion.' 'Then, sister, when the Blessed One has emerged from that concentration, pay respect to the Blessed One in my name - "Venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, together with his ministers, together with his retinue, pays respect with his head at the Blessed One's feet." Did that sister, venerable sir, pay respect to the Blessed One on my behalf? Does the Blessed One remember the words of that sister?' "That sister did pay respect to me, lord of the gods, I remember the words of that sister. And indeed I emerged from that concentration by the sound of the Venerable One's chariot wheel." "Those gods, venerable sir, who were reborn in the company of the Thirty-three before us, from them I heard face to face, I received face to face - 'When Truth-finders arise in the world, Worthy Ones, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, the divine hosts are filled, the titan hosts diminish.' This, venerable sir, has been seen by me with my own eyes, since the Truth-finder has arisen in the world, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, the divine hosts are being filled, the titan hosts are diminishing.

The Story of Gopaka

353. "Right here, venerable sir, at Kapilavattu, there was a Sakyan daughter named Gopikā, who was devoted to the Buddha, devoted to the Teaching, devoted to the Community, and one who fulfilled the moral precepts. She, having discarded femininity and having developed masculinity, upon the body's collapse at death, was reborn in a fortunate realm, in a heavenly world. She attained the company of the gods of the Thirty-three, the status of a son of ours. There too they know him thus - 'The young god Gopaka, the young god Gopaka.' Also, venerable sir, three other

monks, having lived the holy life under the Blessed One, were reborn in the inferior class of gandhabbas. They, endowed and furnished with the five types of sensual pleasure, being entertained, come to our state room to serve us. When they came to our state room to serve us, the young god Gopaka reproved them - 'With what kind of face did you, sirs, hear the Teaching of that Blessed One - for I, being a woman, devoted to the Buddha, devoted to the Teaching, devoted to the Community, one who fulfilled the moral precepts, having discarded femininity and having developed masculinity, upon the body's collapse at death, was reborn in a fortunate realm, in a heavenly world, attained the company of the gods of the Thirty-three, the status of a son of Sakka, the lord of the gods. Here too they know me thus: "The young god Gopaka, the young god Gopaka." But you, sirs, having lived the holy life under the Blessed One, were reborn in the inferior class of gandhabbas. Indeed, friend, we have seen an unseemly sight, that we have seen companions in the Teaching reborn in the inferior class of gandhabbas.' Of those, venerable sir, who were reproved by the young god Gopaka, two gods, in this very life, regained mindfulness and attained the realm of the Brahma's ministers, but one god remained dwelling in sensual pleasures.

354. "'I was a female lay follower of the One with Vision,

And my name was "Gopikā";
Having faith in the Buddha and the Teaching,
I attended upon the Community with a confident mind.

"Through the good nature of the Teaching of that very Buddha,
I am a son of Sakka, of great majesty;
Of great radiance, reborn in the celestial abode,
Here too they know me as "Gopaka".

"Then I saw monks previously seen,
Dwelling having gone to the class of gandhabbas;
These were disciples of Gotama,
And we who were formerly human beings.

"We attended upon them with food and drink,
Having approached their feet at our own dwelling;
With what kind of face did these venerable ones
Receive the teachings of the Buddha?

"For the Teaching is to be individually experienced,
Well taught, understood by the One with Vision;
For I, attending upon you,
Having heard the well-spoken words of the noble ones.

"I am a son of Sakka, of great majesty,
Of great radiance, reborn in the celestial abode;
But you, attending upon the best,
Having lived the unsurpassed holy life.

"You venerable ones have been reborn in an inferior class,
Your rebirth is not in conformity;

Indeed we have seen an unseemly sight,
Companions in the Teaching reborn in an inferior class.

"You venerable ones, having gone to the class of gandhabbas,
Come to serve the gods;
While I was dwelling in a house,
See this distinction.

"Having been a woman, today I am a male god,
Endowed with divine sensual pleasures';
They, urged by the disciple of Gotama,
Felt spiritual urgency upon meeting Gopaka.

"Come, let us strive, let us exert ourselves,
Let us not be servants of others';
Two of them aroused energy,
Remembering the teachings of Gotama.

"Having purified their minds right here,
They saw the danger in sensual pleasures;
Those bonds and fetters of sensual desire,
The bonds of Māra, difficult to overcome.

"Like an elephant having cut its bonds,
They surpassed the Thirty-three gods;
The gods with Indra, with Pajāpati,
All seated in the Sudhammā assembly hall.

"As they were seated, they approached,
Heroes, dispassionate, making the stainless;
Seeing them, Vāsava felt religious emotion,
The overlord of the gods, in the midst of the host of gods.

"These, reborn in an inferior realm,
Are approaching the Thirty-three gods';
Having heard the words of him who had felt religious emotion,
That Gopaka spoke in the midst to Vāsava.

"There is a Buddha, lord of men, in the human world,
Conqueror of sensual pleasures, known as the Sakyan Sage;
These sons of his were lacking in mindfulness,
They were reproved by me so that they might regain mindfulness.

"Of those three, one dwelt here,
A master gone to the gandhabba realm;
But two, following the path to enlightenment,
Despise even the gods, being concentrated in mind.

"Such is the proclamation of the Teaching here,
No disciple has any doubt about it;

We venerate the Buddha, who has crossed the flood, cut off doubt,
The Victor, the lord of men.'

"That Teaching of yours, having understood it here,
They attained distinction;
The realm of Brahma's ministers,
Two of them attained distinction.

"For the attainment of that Teaching,
We have come, sir;
If given opportunity by the Blessed One,
We would ask a question, sir."

355. Then this occurred to the Blessed One: "This demon has been pure for a long time. Whatever question he will ask me, all that he will ask connected with benefit only, not connected with harm. And whatever I, being asked, will answer, he will understand that quickly."

356. Then the Blessed One addressed Sakka, the lord of the gods, in verse -

"Ask me a question, Vāsava, whatever you wish in your mind;
For each and every question, I shall make an end of it for you."

The first recitation section is concluded.

357. Having been given the opportunity by the Blessed One, Sakka, the lord of the gods, asked the Blessed One this first question:

"Fettered by what, sir, are gods, humans, titans, serpents, gandhabbas, and whatever other beings there are of various classes, that they - 'May we dwell without enmity, without violence, without hostility, without ill-will, free from enmity' - thus is their wish, and yet they dwell with enmity, with violence, with hostility, with ill-will, full of enmity?" Thus Sakka, the lord of the gods, asked the Blessed One the question. The Blessed One, being asked, answered his question:

"Fettered by jealousy and stinginess, lord of the gods, are gods, humans, titans, serpents, gandhabbas, and whatever other beings there are of various classes, that they - 'May we dwell without enmity, without violence, without hostility, without ill-will, free from enmity' - thus is their wish, and yet they dwell with enmity, with violence, with hostility, with ill-will, full of enmity." Thus the Blessed One, being asked, answered the question of Sakka, the lord of the gods. Delighted, Sakka, the lord of the gods, rejoiced in and approved of what the Blessed One had said: 'So it is, Blessed One, so it is, Fortunate One. My uncertainty about this has been crossed over, my bewilderment has gone, having heard the Blessed One's answering of the question.'

358. Thus Sakka, the lord of the gods, having delighted in and given thanks for what the Blessed One had said, asked the Blessed One a further question -

"But, sir, what is the source of jealousy and stinginess, what is their origin, what gives birth to them, what is their production; when what exists do jealousy and stinginess exist; when what is absent do jealousy and stinginess not exist?" "Jealousy and stinginess, lord of the gods, have the dear and the not dear as their source, have the

dear and the not dear as their origin, are born from the dear and the not dear, are produced from the dear and the not dear; when the dear and the not dear exist, jealousy and stinginess exist; when the dear and the not dear are absent, jealousy and stinginess do not exist."

"But, sir, what is the source of the dear and the not dear, what is their origin, what gives birth to them, what is their production; when what exists do the dear and the not dear exist; when what is absent do the dear and the not dear not exist?" "The dear and the not dear, lord of the gods, have desire as their source, have desire as their origin, are born from desire, are produced from desire; when desire exists, the dear and the not dear exist; when desire is absent, the dear and the not dear do not exist."

"But, sir, what is the source of desire, what is its origin, what gives birth to it, what is its production; when what exists does desire exist; when what is absent does desire not exist?" "Desire, lord of the gods, has applied thought as its source, has applied thought as its origin, is born from applied thought, is produced from applied thought; when applied thought exists, desire exists; when applied thought is absent, desire does not exist."

"But, sir, what is the source of applied thought, what is its origin, what gives birth to it, what is its production; when what exists does applied thought exist; when what is absent does applied thought not exist?" "Applied thought, lord of the gods, has the category of obsessive perception as its source, has the category of obsessive perception as its origin, is born from the category of obsessive perception, is produced from the category of obsessive perception; when the category of obsessive perception exists, applied thought exists; when the category of obsessive perception is absent, applied thought does not exist."

"But, sir, how has a monk practised who has practised the practice suitable for and leading to the cessation of the category of obsessive perception?"

The Meditation Subject on Feeling

359. "Pleasure, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised. Displeasure, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised. Equanimity, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised.

360. "'Pleasure, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be cultivated and not to be cultivated' - thus indeed this was said. Dependent on what was this said? Therein, whatever pleasure one would know thus: 'When I cultivate this pleasure, unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline' - such pleasure should not be cultivated. Therein, whatever pleasure one would know thus: 'When I cultivate this pleasure, unwholesome mental states decline and wholesome mental states increase' - such pleasure should be cultivated. Therein, whatever is with applied thought and sustained thought, and whatever is without applied thought and without sustained thought - those without applied thought and without sustained thought are more sublime. Pleasure, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be cultivated and not to be cultivated. Thus what was said, this was said dependent on that.

361. "Displeasure, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be cultivated and not to be cultivated. Thus indeed this was said. Dependent on what was this said? Therein, whatever displeasure one would know thus: 'When I cultivate this displeasure, unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline' - such displeasure should not be cultivated. Therein, whatever displeasure one would know thus: 'When I cultivate this displeasure, unwholesome mental states decline and wholesome mental states increase' - such displeasure should be cultivated. Therein, whatever is with applied thought and sustained thought, and whatever is without applied thought and without sustained thought - those without applied thought and without sustained thought are more sublime. 'Displeasure, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be cultivated and not to be cultivated' - thus what was said, this was said dependent on that.

362. "'Equanimity, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be cultivated and not to be cultivated' - thus indeed this was said. Dependent on what was this said? Therein, whatever equanimity one would know thus: 'When I cultivate this equanimity, unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline' - such equanimity should not be cultivated. Therein, whatever equanimity one would know thus: 'When I cultivate this equanimity, unwholesome mental states decline and wholesome mental states increase' - such equanimity should be cultivated. Therein, whatever is with applied thought and sustained thought, and whatever is without applied thought and without sustained thought - those without applied thought and without sustained thought are more sublime. 'Equanimity, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be cultivated and not to be cultivated' - thus what was said, this was said dependent on that.

363. "A monk who has practised thus, lord of the gods, has practised the practice suitable for and leading to the cessation of the category of obsessive perception." Thus the Blessed One, being asked, answered the question of Sakka, the lord of the gods. Delighted, Sakka, the lord of the gods, rejoiced in and approved of what the Blessed One had said: "So it is, Blessed One, so it is, Fortunate One, my uncertainty about this has been crossed over, my bewilderment has gone, having heard the Blessed One's answering of the question."

Restraint by the Pātimokkha

364. Thus Sakka, the lord of the gods, having delighted in and given thanks for what the Blessed One had said, asked the Blessed One a further question -

"But, sir, how has a monk practised who has practised for restraint by the Pātimokkha?" "Bodily conduct, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised. Verbal conduct, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised. Quest, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised."

"'Bodily conduct, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be practised and not to be practised' - thus indeed this was said. Dependent on what was this said? Therein, whatever bodily conduct one would know thus: 'When I practise this bodily conduct, unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline' - such bodily conduct should not be practised. Therein, whatever bodily conduct one would know thus: 'When I practise this bodily conduct, unwholesome mental states decline

and wholesome mental states increase' - such bodily conduct should be practised. Bodily conduct, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised - thus what was said, this was said dependent on that.

"Verbal conduct, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised." Thus indeed this was said. Dependent on what was this said? Therein, whatever verbal conduct one would know thus: 'When I practise this verbal conduct, unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline' - such verbal conduct should not be practised. Therein, whatever verbal conduct one would know thus: 'When I practise this verbal conduct, unwholesome mental states decline and wholesome mental states increase' - such verbal conduct should be practised. Verbal conduct, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised - thus what was said, this was said dependent on that.

"Quest, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised - thus indeed this was said. Dependent on what was this said? Therein, whatever quest one would know thus: 'When I practise this quest, unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline' - such quest should not be practised. Therein, whatever quest one would know thus: 'When I practise this quest, unwholesome mental states decline and wholesome mental states increase' - such quest should be practised. Quest, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised - thus what was said, this was said dependent on that.

"A monk who has practised thus, lord of the gods, has practised for restraint by the Pātimokkha." Thus the Blessed One, being asked, answered the question of Sakka, the lord of the gods. Delighted, Sakka, the lord of the gods, rejoiced in and approved of what the Blessed One had said: 'So it is, Blessed One, so it is, Fortunate One. My uncertainty about this has been crossed over, my bewilderment has gone, having heard the Blessed One's answering of the question.'

Restraint of the Faculties

365. Thus Sakka, the lord of the gods, having delighted in and given thanks for what the Blessed One had said, asked the Blessed One a further question -

"But, sir, how has a monk practised who has practised for restraint of the faculties?" "Form cognisable by the eye, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised. Sound cognisable by the ear, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised. Odour cognisable by the nose, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be practised and not to be practised. Flavour cognisable by the tongue, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be practised and not to be practised. Tangible object cognisable by the body, lord of the gods, I say is twofold -to be practised and not to be practised. Mental object cognisable by the mind, lord of the gods, I say is twofold - to be cultivated and not to be cultivated."

When this was said, Sakka, the lord of the gods, said this to the Blessed One -

"I, venerable sir, understand in detail the meaning of what the Blessed One has spoken in brief thus. Whatever form cognisable by the eye, venerable sir, when cultivating which unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline, such form cognisable by the eye should not be cultivated. And whatever form

cognisable by the eye, venerable sir, when cultivating which unwholesome mental states decline and wholesome mental states increase, such form cognisable by the eye should be cultivated. And whatever sound cognisable by the ear, venerable sir, when cultivating... etc. odour cognisable by the nose when cultivating... flavour cognisable by the tongue when cultivating... tangible object cognisable by the body when cultivating... mental object cognisable by the mind when cultivating which unwholesome mental states increase and wholesome mental states decline, such mental object cognisable by the mind should not be cultivated. And whatever mental object cognisable by the mind, venerable sir, when cultivating which unwholesome mental states decline and wholesome mental states increase, such mental object cognisable by the mind should be cultivated.

"My uncertainty about this, venerable sir, has been crossed over, my bewilderment has gone, having heard the Blessed One's answering of the question, as I understand in detail the meaning of what the Blessed One has spoken in brief."

366. Thus Sakka, the lord of the gods, having delighted in and given thanks for what the Blessed One had said, asked the Blessed One a further question -

"Are all ascetics and brahmins indeed, sir, of one view, of one morality, of one desire, of one holding?" "Indeed not, lord of the gods, all ascetics and brahmins are not of one view, of one morality, of one desire, of one holding."

"But why, sir, are not all ascetics and brahmins of one view, of one morality, of one desire, of one holding?" "The world, lord of the gods, is of many elements, of various elements. In that world of many elements, of various elements, whatever element beings cling to, that very thing they hold onto with tenacity and adherence, and declare - 'Only this is the truth, anything else is vain.' Therefore, not all ascetics and brahmins are of one view, of one morality, of one desire, of one holding."

"Have all ascetics and brahmins, sir, reached the ultimate goal, the ultimate security from bondage, the ultimate holy life, and the ultimate consummation?" "No, lord of the gods, not all ascetics and brahmins have reached the ultimate goal, the ultimate security from bondage, the ultimate holy life, and the ultimate consummation."

"But why, sir, have not all ascetics and brahmins reached the ultimate goal, the ultimate security from bondage, the ultimate holy life, and the ultimate consummation?" "Those monks, lord of the gods, who are liberated through the complete elimination of craving, are the ones who have reached the ultimate goal, the ultimate security from bondage, the ultimate holy life, and the ultimate consummation. Therefore, not all ascetics and brahmins have reached the ultimate goal, the ultimate security from bondage, the ultimate holy life, and the ultimate consummation."

Thus the Blessed One, being asked, answered the question of Sakka, the lord of the gods. Delighted, Sakka, the lord of the gods, rejoiced in and approved of what the Blessed One had said: 'So it is, Blessed One, so it is, Fortunate One. My uncertainty about this has been crossed over, my bewilderment has gone, having heard the Blessed One's answering of the question.'

367. Thus Sakka, the lord of the gods, having delighted in and given thanks for what the Blessed One had said, said this to the Blessed One -

"Craving, venerable sir, is a disease, craving is a boil, craving is a dart, craving drags this person along for the production of this or that existence. Therefore this person undergoes high and low states. Those questions, venerable sir, for which I did not even obtain permission from other ascetics and brahmins outside of this, those have been answered for me by the Blessed One. And the dart of doubt and bewilderment that had lain dormant in me for a long time, that too has been pulled out by the Blessed One."

"Do you recall, lord of the gods, having asked these questions of other ascetics and brahmins?" "I do recall, venerable sir, having asked these questions of other ascetics and brahmins." "In what way, then, lord of the gods, did they answer? If it is not troublesome for you, please speak." "It is not troublesome for me, venerable sir, where the Blessed One is seated, or one like the Blessed One." "Well then, lord of the gods, please speak." "Those ascetics and brahmins, venerable sir, whom I consider to be forest dwellers dwelling in remote lodgings, having approached them I ask these questions, but when asked by me they are not able to answer, and not being able to answer they ask me in return - 'What is the venerable one's name?' When asked by them I answer - 'I, sir, am Sakka, the lord of the gods.' They ask me further in return - 'But what action, venerable lord of the gods, did you do to attain this state?' To them I expound the Teaching as I have heard it, as I have learned it. They are satisfied with just that much - 'Sakka, the lord of the gods, has been seen by us, and what we asked him, that he has answered for us.' They surely become my disciples, but I do not become theirs. But I, venerable sir, am a disciple of the Blessed One, a stream-enterer, no longer subject to fall into lower realms, fixed in destiny, heading for the highest enlightenment."

The Discussion on the Attainment of Pleasure

368. "Do you recall, lord of the gods, having attained before such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure?" "I do recall, venerable sir, having attained before such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure." "In what way, then, lord of the gods, do you recall having attained before such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure?"

"Once upon a time, venerable sir, there was a battle between the gods and the titans that was fully engaged. In that battle, venerable sir, the gods won, the titans were defeated. Then, venerable sir, having completely conquered that battle, this occurred to me, the victor of the battle: 'Now the gods will enjoy both the divine nutritive essence and the titans' nutritive essence.' But that attainment of inspiration, that attainment of pleasure of mine, venerable sir, involved the use of the rod, involved the use of weapons, and does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. But this attainment of inspiration, this attainment of pleasure of mine, venerable sir, having heard the Blessed One's Teaching, is without the use of the rod, without the use of weapons, and leads exclusively to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna."

369. "But what reason do you, lord of the gods, see that you declared such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure?" "Indeed, venerable sir, seeing six reasons, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

"While standing right here, being a god, mindful;
Life has been obtained by me again, know this, sir.

"Seeing this first reason, venerable sir, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

"Having passed away from the divine body, having abandoned the non-human life;
Unconfused I shall enter a womb, where my mind delights.

"Seeing this second reason, venerable sir, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

"I, of unconfused wisdom, dwelling delighted in the Dispensation;
I shall dwell by the true method, fully aware and mindful.

"Seeing this third reason, venerable sir, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

"And if while practising by the true method, there will be highest enlightenment;
I shall dwell as one who has final knowledge, that itself will be the end.

"Seeing this fourth reason, venerable sir, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

"Having passed away from the human body, having abandoned the human life;
Again I shall become a god, the highest in the world of gods.

"Seeing this fifth reason, venerable sir, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

"Those more sublime gods, the Akaniṭṭha, glorious;
When the final existence is occurring, that will be my abode.

"Seeing this sixth reason, venerable sir, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

"Seeing these six reasons, venerable sir, I declare such an attainment of inspiration, an attainment of pleasure.

370. "With unfulfilled intention, with sceptical doubt, one who is doubtful,
I wandered for a long course of time, seeking the Truth-finder.

"Those ascetics whom I consider to be secluded dwellers,
Thinking them to be the Ones Enlightened by themselves, I go to attend upon them.

"How is there accomplishment, how is there failure?"

Thus questioned, they are not able to answer, regarding the path and the practices.

"When they know me, that Sakka, the lord of the gods, has come,
They ask me, 'Having done what did you attain this?'"

"To them I expound the Teaching as I have heard it, heard among the people;
By that they become delighted, 'Vāsava has been seen by us.'"

"And when I saw the Buddha, the one who overcomes sceptical doubt,
I am today free from fear, having attended upon the Enlightened by himself."

"The destroyer of the dart of craving, the Buddha without equal,
I pay homage to the Great Hero, the Buddha, kinsman of the sun."

"What we do for Brahmā, together with the gods, dear sir,
That today we shall do for you; come, let us ourselves do it for you."

"You alone are the Enlightened by himself, you are the unsurpassed Teacher;
In the world including the gods, there is no one equal to you."

371. Then Sakka, the lord of the gods, addressed Pañcasikha, the gandhabba young god - "You have been of great help to me, dear Pañcasikha, in that you first gladdened the Blessed One. After he was first gladdened by you, dear, we then approached that Blessed One for an audience, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One. I shall establish you in your father's position, you shall be king of the gandhabbas, and I give you Bhaddā Suriyavacchasā, for she is the one you have longed for."

Then Sakka, the lord of the gods, having touched the earth with his hand, uttered an inspired utterance three times - "Homage to that Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One."

And while this explanation was being spoken, in Sakka, the lord of the gods, the stainless, spotless eye of the Teaching arose - "Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of cessation." And in eighty thousand other deities also. Thus the questions that were requested and asked by Sakka, the lord of the gods, were answered by the Blessed One. Therefore the designation of this explanation is indeed "Sakka's Questions."

The Discourse on Sakka's Questions is concluded as eighth.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Tīkā), accompanied by interactive study tools. PaliVerse is an ongoing project. The AI translations are continuously improved through experts' revisions and feedback. This text is the latest translation as of the date of download.

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