AN 10.29 — AN 10:29 The Kosalan | Kosala Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

The Kosalan

Kosala Sutta (AN 10:29)

[1] “Monks, as far as Kāsi & Kosala extend, as far as the rule of King Pasenadi the Kosalan extends, King Pasenadi the Kosalan is reckoned supreme. Yet even in King Pasenadi the Kosalan there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[2] “As far as the sun & moon revolve, illumining the directions with their light, there extends the thousand-fold cosmos. In that thousand-fold cosmos there are a thousand moons, a thousand suns, a thousand Sunerus—kings of mountains; a thousand

Rose-apple continents,1 a thousand Deathless Ox-cart (continents), a thousand northern Kuru (continents), a thousand eastern Videha (continents); four thousand great oceans, four thousand Great Kings, a thousand (heavens of the) Four Great Kings, a thousand (heavens of the) Thirty-three, a thousand (heavens of the) Hours, a thousand (heavens of the) Contented, a thousand heavens of the Devas Delighting in Creation, a thousand heavens of the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others,2 and a thousand Brahmā worlds. And in that thousand-fold cosmos, the Great Brahmā is reckoned supreme. Yet even in the Great Brahmā there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[3] "There comes a time when this cosmos devolves. When the cosmos is devolving, most beings head to (the heaven of) the Radiant. There they remain for a long, long time—mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-radiant, faring through the sky, abiding in splendor. When the cosmos is devolving, the Radiant Devas are reckoned supreme. Yet even in the Radiant Devas, there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[4] "There are these ten totality-dimensions. Which ten? One perceives the earth-totality above, below, all-around: non-dual [advayaṁ], immeasurable. One perceives the water-totality... the fire-totality... the wind-totality... the blue-totality... the yellow-totality... the red-totality... the white-totality... the space-totality... the consciousness-totality above, below, all-around: non-dual, immeasurable. These are the ten totality-dimensions. Now, of these ten totality-dimensions, this is supreme: when one perceives the consciousness-totality above, below, all-around: non-dual, immeasurable. And there are beings who are percipient in this way. Yet even in the beings who are percipient in this way there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[5] "There are these eight dimensions of (mental) mastery. Which eight?

(a) "One percipient of form internally sees forms externally as limited, beautiful & ugly. Mastering them, he is percipient of 'I know; I see.' This is the first dimension of (mental) mastery.

(b) "One percipient of form internally sees forms externally as immeasurable, beautiful & ugly. Mastering them, he is percipient of 'I know; I see.' This is the second dimension of (mental) mastery.

(c) "One percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as limited, beautiful & ugly. Mastering them, he is percipient of 'I know; I see.' This is the third dimension of (mental) mastery.

(d) “One percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as immeasurable, beautiful & ugly. Mastering them, he is percipient of ‘I know; I see.’ This is the fourth dimension of (mental) mastery.

(e) “One percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as blue, blue in their color, blue in their features, blue in their glow. Just as a flax-flower is blue, blue in its color, blue in its features, blue in its glow, or just as Vārāṇasī muslin, smooth on both sides, is blue, blue in its color, blue in its features, blue in its glow, in the same way one percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as blue, blue in their color, blue in their features, blue in their glow. Mastering them, he is percipient of ‘I know; I see.’ This is the fifth dimension of (mental) mastery.

(f) “One percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as yellow, yellow in their color, yellow in their features, yellow in their glow. Just as a kaṇṇikāra-flower is yellow, yellow in its color, yellow in its features, yellow in its glow, or just as Vārāṇasī muslin, smooth on both sides, is yellow, yellow in its color, yellow in its features, yellow in its glow, in the same way one percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as yellow, yellow in their color, yellow in their features, yellow in their glow. Mastering them, he is percipient of ‘I know; I see.’ This is the sixth dimension of (mental) mastery.

(g) “One percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as red, red in their color, red in their features, red in their glow. Just as a bandha-jīvaka-flower is red, red in its color, red in its features, red in its glow, or just as Vārāṇasī muslin, smooth on both sides, is red, red in its color, red in its features, red in its glow, in the same way one percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as red, red in their color, red in their features, red in their glow. Mastering them, he is percipient of ‘I know; I see.’ This is the seventh dimension of (mental) mastery.

(h) “One percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as white, white in their color, white in their features, white in their glow. Just as the morning star is white, white in its color, white in its features, white in its glow, or just as Vārāṇasī muslin, smooth on both sides, is white, white in its color, white in its features, white in its glow, in the same way one percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as white, white in their color, white in their features, white in their glow. Mastering them, he is percipient of ‘I know; I see.’ This is the eighth dimension of (mental) mastery.

“These are the eight dimensions of mental mastery. Now, of these eight dimensions of mastery, this is supreme: when one percipient of the formless internally sees forms externally as white, white in their color, white in their features, white in their glow. And there are beings who are percipient in this way. Yet even in the beings who are percipient in this way there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[6] “There are these four modes of practice. Which four? Painful practice with slow intuition, painful practice with quick intuition, pleasant practice with slow intuition, and

pleasant practice with quick intuition.3 These are the four modes of practice. Now, of these four modes of practice, this is supreme: pleasant practice with quick intuition. And there are beings whose practice is like this. Yet even in the beings whose practice is like this there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[7] "There are these four perceptions. Which four? One perceives the limited [ordinary perceptions]. One perceives the enlarged [the mind in jhāna].4 One perceives the immeasurable [the mind in the brahmavihāras]. One perceives the dimension of nothingness: 'There is nothing.' These are the four perceptions. Now, of these four perceptions, this is supreme: when one perceives the dimension of nothingness: 'There is nothing.' And there are beings who are percipient in this way. Yet even in the beings who are percipient in this way there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[8] "The supreme view-point external (to the Dhamma) is this: 'I should not be; it should not occur to me; I will not be; it will not occur to me.' Of one with this view it may be expected that 'the unloathsomeness of becoming will not occur to him, and the loathsomeness of the cessation of becoming will not occur to him.' And there are beings who have this view. Yet even in the beings who have this view there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[9] "There are some contemplatives & brahmans who declare the foremost purity of the spirit.5 Now, of those who proclaim the foremost purity of the spirit, these are supreme: those who, with the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, enter & remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception and who, having directly known & realized this, teach their Dhamma. And there are beings who teach in this way. Yet even in the beings who teach in this way there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior.

[10] "There are some contemplatives & brahmans who proclaim the foremost unbinding in the here & now. Now, of those who proclaim the foremost unbinding in the here & now, this is supreme: liberation through non-clinging, having known, as they have come to be, the origination, the passing away, the allure, the drawbacks of, & the escape from the six sense-contact media. And when I teach that, when I point that out, some contemplatives & brahmans accuse me of being false, unfactual, hollow, vain, (saying,) 'The contemplative Gotama does not declare the full comprehension of sensuality, does not declare the full comprehension of forms, does not declare the full comprehension of feelings.' But I do declare the full comprehension of sensuality, I do declare the full comprehension of forms,

I do declare the full comprehension of feelings. Unhungering, unbound, cooled in the here & now, I declare total unbinding through lack of clinging/sustenance."

Notes

1. The Rose-apple continent is an ancient name for the Indian sub-continent. Classical Buddhist cosmology regarded the world as arranged in four continents around Mt. Suneru. On the south was the Rose-apple continent; on the west, the Deathless Ox-cart continent; on the north, the Northern Kuru continent; and on the east, the Eastern Videha continent.

2. The phrase, "a thousand heavens of the Devas Delighting in Creation, a thousand heavens of the Devas Wielding Power over the Creations of Others," is in the Sinhalese edition of the Pali Canon, but not in the Thai edition.

3. See AN 4:162—163.

4. Mahaggataṁ. This term is used, together with "immeasurable / unlimited," in the standard description of the awareness generated in the practice of the brahmavihāras (SN 42:8). According to Ven. Anuruddha in MN 127, however, an enlarged mind is not immeasurable. Its range of awareness is larger than the body but still measurable, ranging in distance from the shade of a tree to the earth bounded by the ocean.

5. See Sn 4:11, notes 2 and 4.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 1; MN 13–14; MN 102; MN 106