DN 30 — The Marks of a Great Man

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Text

Long Discourses 30

The Marks of a Great Man

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"There are thirty-two marks of a great man. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the householder, and the commander as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who has cast off the world's veil.

And what are the thirty-two marks?

He has well-planted feet.

On the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail.

He has stretched heels.

He has long fingers.

His hands and feet are soft and tender.

He has serried hands and feet.

The tops of his feet are arched.

His calves are like those of an antelope.

When standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees.

His private parts are sheathed in a foreskin.

He is golden colored; his skin shines like lustrous gold.

He has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don’t stick to his body.

His hairs grow one per pore.

His hairs stand up; they’re blue-black and curl clockwise.

His body is tall and straight-limbed.

He has bulging muscles in seven places.

His chest is like that of a lion.

He is filled out between the shoulders.

He has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree: the span of his arms equals the height of his body.

His torso is cylindrical.

He has ridged taste buds.

His jaw is like that of a lion.

He has forty teeth.

His teeth are even.

His teeth have no gaps.

His teeth are perfectly white.

He has a large tongue.

He has the voice of the Divinity, like a cuckoo’s call.

His eyes are indigo.

He has eyelashes like a cow’s.

Between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool.

The crown of his head is like a turban.

These are the thirty-two marks of a great man. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other.

Seers who are outsiders remember these marks, but they do not know the specific deeds performed in the past to obtain each mark.

1. Well-Planted Feet

In some past lives, past existences, past abodes the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He firmly and persistently undertook skillful behaviors such as good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, giving and sharing, taking precepts, observing the sabbath, paying due respect to mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, honoring the elders in the family, and various other things pertaining to skillful behaviors. Due to performing,

accumulating, heaping up, and amassing those deeds, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. There he surpassed the other gods in ten respects: heavenly lifespan, beauty, happiness, glory, sovereignty, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. When he passed away from there and came back to this place he obtained this mark of a great man: he has well-planted feet. He places his foot on the ground evenly, raises it evenly, and touches the ground evenly with the whole sole of his foot.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the householder, and the commander as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea—free of harassment by bandits, successful and prosperous, safe, blessed, free of pests—he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. And what does he obtain as king? He can't be stopped by any human foe or enemy. That's what he obtains as king. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who has cast off the world's veil. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He can't be stopped by any foe or enemy whether internal or external; nor by greed, hate, or delusion; nor by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"Truth, principle, self-control, and restraint;

purity, precepts, and observing the sabbath;

giving, harmlessness, delighting in non-violence—

firmly undertaking these things, he lived accordingly.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,

where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.

After passing away from there to here,

he steps evenly on this rich earth.

The gathered soothsayers predicted

that there is no stopping one of such even tread,

as householder or renunciate.

That's the meaning shown by this mark.

While living at home he cannot be stopped,

he defeats his foes, and cannot be beaten.

Due to the fruit of that deed,

he cannot be stopped by any human.

But if one such chooses the life gone forth,

seeing clearly, loving renunciation,

not even the best can ever stop him;

this is the nature of the supreme man.”

2. Wheels on the Feet

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He conveyed happiness to many people, casting out threats, terror, and danger, providing just protection and security, and giving gifts with all the trimmings. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: on the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail and well divided inside.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a large following of brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a fully awakened Buddha. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a large following of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

“In olden days, in past lives,

he brought happiness to many people,

ridding them of fear, terror, and danger,

eagerly guarding and protecting them.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,

where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.

After passing away from there to here,

wheels on his two feet are found,

all rimmed around and thousand-spoked.

The gathered soothsayers predicted,

seeing the prince with the hundred-fold mark of merits,

that he’d have a following, subduing foes,

which is why he has wheels all rimmed around.

If one such doesn’t choose the life gone forth,

he'll roll the wheel and rule the land.

The aristocrats will be his vassals,

flocking to his glory.

But if one such chooses the life gone forth,

seeing clearly, loving renunciation,

the gods, humans, titans, Sakka, and monsters;

centaurs and dragons, birds and beasts,

will flock to his glory,

the supreme, honored by gods and humans."

3–5. Stretched Heels, Etc.

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He gave up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. He was scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these three marks: he has stretched heels, long fingers, and his body is tall and straight-limbed.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He's long-lived, preserving his life for a long time. No human foe or enemy is able to take his life before his time. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He's long-lived, preserving his life for a long time. No foes or enemies—nor any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or anyone in the world—is able to take his life before his time. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"Realizing for himself the horrors of death,

he refrained from killing other creatures.

By that good conduct he went to heaven,

where he enjoyed the fruit of deeds well done.

Passing away, on his return to here,

he obtained these three marks:

his stretched heels are abundant and long,

and like the Divinity, he's straight and beautiful, with well-formed limbs.

Fair of arm, youthful, of good posture and breeding,

his fingers are soft and tender and long.

By these three marks of an excellent man,

they indicated that the prince's life would be long:

'As a householder he will live long;

longer still if he goes forth, due to

mastery in the development of psychic power.

Thus this is the sign of long life.'"

6. Seven Bulging Places

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was a donor of delicious and tasty cooked and fresh foods, and drinks that were sweet and succulent. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: he has bulging muscles in seven places. Both hands, both feet, both shoulders, and his chest are all bulging.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He gets delicious and tasty cooked and fresh foods, and drinks that are sweet and succulent. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He gets delicious and tasty cooked and fresh foods, and drinks that are sweet and succulent. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"He used to give the very best of flavors—

scrumptious foods of every kind.

Because of that good deed,

he rejoiced long in the Garden of Delight.

On returning to here, he is rounded in seven places,

and tender hands and feet are found.

The soothsayers expert in signs declared:

'He'll get tasty foods of all sorts

as a householder, that's what that means.

But even if he goes forth he'll get the same,

supreme in gaining tasty foods of all sorts,

cutting all bonds of the lay life.'"

7–8. Tender and Serried Hands

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He brought people together using the four ways of being inclusive: giving, kindly words,

taking care, and equality. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: his hands and feet are soft and tender, and they are serried.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue is inclusive, cohesive, and well-managed. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue is inclusive and well-managed. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"By giving and helping others,

kindly speech, and equal treatment,

such action and conduct as brought people together,

he went to heaven due to his esteemed virtue.

Passing away, on his return to here,

the young baby prince obtained

hands and feet so tender and serried,

lovely, graceful, and good-looking.

His retinue is loyal and manageable,

staying agreeably all over this broad land.

Speaking kindly, seeking happiness,

he implements agreeable qualities.

But if he gives up all sensual enjoyments,

as victor he speaks Dhamma to the people.

Devoted, they respond to his words;

after listening, they practice in line with the teaching."

9–10. Arched Feet and Upright Hair

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. His speech was meaningful and principled. He educated many people, bringing welfare and happiness, offering the teaching. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: the tops of his feet are arched and his hairs stand up.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is the foremost, best, chief, highest, and finest of those who enjoy sensual pleasures. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is the foremost, best, chief, highest, and finest of all sentient beings. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"His word was meaningful and principled,

moving the people with his explanations.

He brought welfare and happiness to creatures,

unstintingly offering up teaching.

Because of that good deed,

he advanced to heaven and there rejoiced.

On return to here two marks are found,

of excellence and supremacy.

His hairs stand upright,

and his ankles well-shaped.

Swollen with flesh and blood, encased in skin,

gracing above the feet.

If that sort lives in the home, he becomes

the best of those who enjoy sensual pleasures.

There'll be none better than him;

he'll proceed having mastered all the Black Plum Tree Land.

But going forth the peerless renunciate

turns into the best of all creatures.

There'll be none better than him,

he'll live having mastered the whole world."

11. Antelope Calves

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was a thorough teacher of a profession, a branch of knowledge, conduct, or action, thinking: 'How might they quickly learn and practice, without getting exhausted?' Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: his calves are like those of an antelope.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He quickly obtains the things worthy of a king, the factors, supports, and things befitting a king. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He quickly obtains the things worthy of an ascetic, the factors, supports, and things befitting an ascetic. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"In professions, knowledge, conduct, and deeds,

he thought of how they might easily learn.

Quickly, without tiresome delays,

he taught them things that harm no one at all.

Having done that skillful deed whose outcome is happiness,

he gains prominent and elegant calves.

Well-formed in graceful spirals,

he's covered in delicate rising hairs.

They say that individual has antelope calves,

and that this is the mark of swift success.

If he desires the things fitting the household life,

not going forth, they'll quickly be his.

But if one such chooses the life gone forth,

seeing clearly, loving renunciation,

the peerless renunciate will quickly find

what is fitting and suitable."

12. Delicate Skin

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He approached an ascetic or brahmin and asked: 'Sirs, what is skillful? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? Doing what leads to my lasting harm and suffering? Doing what leads to my lasting welfare and happiness?' Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: he has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don't stick to his body.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has great wisdom. Of those who enjoy sensual pleasures, none is his equal or better in wisdom. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain

as Buddha? He has great wisdom, widespread wisdom, laughing wisdom, swift wisdom, sharp wisdom, and penetrating wisdom. No sentient being is his equal or better in wisdom. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"In olden days, in past lives,

eager to understand, he asked questions.

Keen to learn, he waited on renunciates,

heeding their explanation with pure intent.

Due to that deed of acquiring wisdom,

as a human being his skin is delicate.

At his birth the soothsayers expert in signs prophesied:

'He'll discern delicate matters.'

If one such doesn't choose the life gone forth,

he'll roll the wheel and rule the land.

Among those with material things who have been educated,

none equal or better than him is found.

But if one such chooses the life gone forth,

seeing clearly, loving renunciation,

gaining wisdom that's supreme and distinguished,

the one of superb, vast intelligence attains awakening."

13. Golden Skin

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He wasn't irritable or bad-tempered. Even when heavily criticized he didn't lose his temper, become annoyed, hostile, and hard-hearted, or display annoyance, hate, and bitterness. He donated soft and delicate mats and blankets, and cloaks of delicate linen, cotton, silk, and wool. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: he is golden colored; his skin shines like lustrous gold.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He obtains soft and delicate mats and blankets, and delicate cloaks of linen, cotton, silk, and wool. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He obtains soft and delicate mats and blankets, and cloaks of delicate linen, cotton, silk, and wool. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

“Fixated on good will, he gave gifts.

In an earlier life he poured forth cloth

fine and soft to touch,

like a god pouring rain on this broad earth.

So doing he passed from here to heaven,

where he enjoyed the fruits of deeds well done.

Here he wins a figure shining like honey-yellow gold,

like Indra, the finest of gods.

If that man stays in the house, not wishing to go forth,

he conquers and rules this vast, broad earth,

together with the seven treasures here.

He gets immaculate, delicate, pure skin,

receiving clothing, cloth, and the finest cloaks

if he chooses the life gone forth.

For he still partakes of past deed’s fruit;

what’s been done is never lost.”

14. Privates in Foreskin

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He reunited long-lost and long-separated relatives, friends, loved ones, and comrades. He reunited mother with child and child with mother; father with child and child with father; brother with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, and sister with sister, bringing them together with rejoicing. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: his private parts are sheathed in a foreskin.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has many sons, over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has many sons, many thousands of sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

“In olden days, in past lives,

he reunited long-lost

and long-separated comrades and family,

bringing them together with joy.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,

where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.

After passing away from there to here,

his private parts are sheathed in a foreskin.

That sort has many sons,

over a thousand descendants,

valiant and heroic, devastating foes,

a layman's joy, speaking kindly.

But if he lives the renunciate life

he has even more sons following his word.

As householder or renunciate,

that's the meaning shown by this mark."

The first recitation section is complete.

15–16. Equal Proportions and Touching the Knees

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. Examining the gathered population, he knew what they had in common and what was their own; he knew each person, and he knew the distinctions between people. In each case, he made appropriate distinctions between people: 'This one deserves that; that one deserves this.' Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: he has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree; and when standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, lots of money and grain, and a full treasury and storehouses. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is rich, affluent, and wealthy. He has these kinds of wealth: the wealth of faith, ethics, conscience, prudence, learning, generosity, and wisdom. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"Examining the many people in a community,

he weighed, evaluated, and judged each case:

‘This one deserves that.’

That’s how he used to draw distinctions between people.

Now standing without bending

he can touch his knees with both hands.

With the remaining ripening of the fruit of good deeds,

his circumference was that of a great tree.

Learned experts in the many different

signs and marks prophesied:

‘The young prince will obtain

many different things that householders deserve.

Here there are many suitable pleasures

for the ruler of the land to enjoy as householder.

But if he gives up all sensual enjoyments,

he will gain the supreme, highest peak of wealth.’”

17–19. A Lion’s Chest, Etc.

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He wanted what’s best, the welfare, the comfort, and sanctuary of the people, thinking: ‘How might they flourish in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, teachings, and wisdom; in wealth and grain, fields and land, birds and beasts, children and partners; in bondservants, workers, and staff; in family, friends, and kin?’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these three marks: his chest is like that of a lion; he is filled out between the shoulders.; and his torso is cylindrical.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He’s not liable to decline. He doesn’t decline in wealth and grain, fields and land, birds and beasts, children and partners; in bondservants, workers, and staff; in family, friends, and kin. He doesn’t decline in any of his accomplishments. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He’s not liable to decline. He doesn’t decline in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. He doesn’t decline in any of his accomplishments. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

“His wish was this: ‘How may others not decline

in faith, ethics, learning, and intelligence,

in generosity, teachings, and much good else,

in coin and grain, fields and lands,

in children, partners, and livestock,

in family, friends, and kin,

in strength, and both beauty and happiness?’

And so he ever desired their success.

His chest was shaped like that of a lion,

filled out between the shoulders, and torso cylindrical.

Due to the well-done deeds of the past,

he had that portent of non-decline.

Even as layman he grows in coin and grain,

in wives, children, and livestock.

But once gone forth, owning nothing, he attains

the supreme awakening which may never decline.”

20. Ridged Taste Buds

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He would never hurt any sentient being with fists, stones, rods, or swords. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: he has ridged taste buds. His raised taste receptors, originating in the throat, disperse evenly.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is rarely ill or unwell. His stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is rarely ill or unwell. His stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

“Not with fist or rod or stone,

or sword or beating to death,

or by bondage or threats

did he ever harm anyone.

For that very reason he rejoiced in heaven after passing away,

finding happiness as a fruit of happy deeds.

With taste receptors prominent and evenly spreading nutrition,

on his return here he has ridged taste buds.

That's why the clever prophets said:

'This man will have much happiness

as householder or renunciate.

That's the meaning shown by this mark.'"

21–22. Indigo Eyes

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. When looking at others he didn't glare, look askance, or avert his eyes. Being straightforward, he reached out to others with straightforward intentions, looking at people with kindly eyes. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: his eyes are indigo, and he has eyelashes like a cow's.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? The people look on him with kindly eyes. He is dear and beloved to the brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? The people look on him with kindly eyes. He is dear and beloved to the monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"With not a glare or glance askance,

nor averting of the eyes;

straightforward, he reached out straightforwardly,

looking at people with kindly eyes.

In good rebirths he enjoyed the fruit

and result, rejoicing there.

But here he has a cow's eyelashes,

and indigo eyes so fair to see.

Many soothsayers, men clever

and learned in prognostic texts,

expert in cow-like lashes, indicated

he'd be looked upon with kindly eyes.

Even as a householder he'd be regarded kindly,

beloved of the people.

But if he becomes an ascetic, not lay,

as destroyer of sorrow he'll be loved by many."

23. Crown Like a Turban

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was the leader and forerunner of people in skillful behaviors such as good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, giving and sharing, taking precepts, observing the sabbath, paying due respect to mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, honoring the elders in the family, and various other things pertaining to skillful behaviors. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: the crown of his head is like a turban.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a large following of brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a large following of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"Among people of good conduct, he was the leader,

devoted to a life of principle among the principled.

The people followed him,

and he experienced the fruit of good deeds in heaven.

Having experienced that fruit,

he gains a head crowned like a turban.

The experts in omens and signs prophesied:

'He will be leader of the people.

Assistants serve him here among men,

as they did for him then in the past.

If he becomes an aristocrat, ruler of the land,

he'll gain the service of the people.

But if that man goes forth,

he'll be sophisticated, proficient in the teachings.

Devoted to the virtues of his instruction,

the people will become his followers.’”

24–25. One Hair Per Pore, and a Tuft

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from lying. He spoke the truth and stuck to the truth. He was honest and dependable, and didn’t trick the world with his words. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: his hairs grow one per pore, and between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has many close adherents among the brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has many close adherents among the monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

“In past lives he was true to his promise,

with no forked tongue, he shunned lies.

He never broke his word to anyone,

but spoke what was true, real, and factual.

A tuft so very white like cotton-wool

grew prettily between his eyebrows.

And never two, but only one,

hair grew in each of his pores.

Many soothsayers learned in marks

and expert in signs gathered and prophesied:

‘One like this, with tuft and hair so prominent,

will have many as his close adherents.

Even as householder many people will follow him,

due to the power of deeds in the past.

But once gone forth, owning nothing,

as Buddha the people will follow him.’”

26–27. Forty Gapless Teeth

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from backbiting. He didn’t repeat in one place what he heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, he reconciled those who were divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: he has forty teeth, and his teeth have no gaps.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue cannot be divided. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue cannot be divided. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

“He spoke no divisive words splitting the united,

creating disputes that foster division,

acting improperly by fostering quarrels,

sowing division in those who are united.

He spoke kind words to foster harmony,

uniting those who are divided.

He cast aside quarrels among the people,

rejoicing together with the united.

In good rebirths he enjoyed the fruit

and result, rejoicing there.

Here his teeth are gapless, close-set,

forty standing prominent in his mouth.

If he becomes an aristocrat, ruler of the land,

his assembly will be indivisible.

And as an ascetic, stainless, immaculate,

his assembly will follow him, unshakable.”

28–29. A Large Tongue and the Voice of the Divinity

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from harsh speech. He spoke in a way that’s mellow, pleasing to the ear,

endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: he has a large tongue, and the voice of the Divinity, like a cuckoo's call.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a compelling voice. His words are compelling to brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a compelling voice. His words are compelling to monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"He never spoke a loud harsh word,

insulting, quarrelsome,

causing harm, rude, crushing the people.

His speech was sweet, helpful, and courteous.

He uttered words dear to the mind,

going to the heart, pleasing to the ear.

He enjoyed the fruit of his good verbal conduct,

experiencing the fruit of good deeds in heaven.

Having experienced that fruit,

on his return to here he acquired the voice of the Divinity.

His tongue was long and wide,

and his speech was compelling.

Even as householder his speech brings prosperity.

But if that man goes forth,

speaking often to the people,

they'll be compelled by his fair words."

30. A Lion-Like Jaw

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from talking nonsense. His words were timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. He said things at the right time which were valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this place he obtained this mark: his jaw is like that

of a lion.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He can't be destroyed by any human foe or enemy. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He can't be destroyed by any foe or enemy whether internal or external; nor by greed, hate, or delusion; nor by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"Neither nonsensical nor silly,

his way of speaking was never loose.

He cast aside what was unbeneficial,

and spoke for the welfare and happiness of the people.

So doing he passed from here to be reborn in heaven,

where he enjoyed the fruit of deeds well done.

Passing away, on his return to here,

he gained a jaw like the finest of beasts.

He became a king so very hard to defeat,

a mighty lord and ruler of mankind.

He was equal to the best in the city of the Third Heaven,

like Indra, the finest of gods.

One such as that is not easily beaten by centaurs,

titans, spirits, monsters, or gods.

If he becomes of that sort,

he illuminates the quarters and in-between."

31–32. Even and White Teeth

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He gave up wrong livelihood and earned a living by right livelihood. He refrained from falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence. Due to performing, accumulating, heaping up, and amassing those deeds, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. There he surpassed the other gods in ten respects: heavenly lifespan, beauty, happiness, glory, sovereignty, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. When he came back to this place he obtained these two marks: his teeth are even and perfectly white.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the householder, and the commander as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea—free of harassment by bandits, successful and prosperous, safe, blessed, free of pests—he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue is pure. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasurers and chief ministers, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, councillors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king.

But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who has cast off the world's veil. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue is pure. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, titans, dragons, and centaurs. That's what he obtains as Buddha." The Buddha spoke this matter.

On this it is said:

"He abandoned wrong livelihood, and created

a way of life that's fair, pure, and just.

He cast aside what was unbeneficial,

and lived for the welfare and happiness of the people.

Having done what's praised by the clever, the wise, and the good,

that man experienced the fruit in heaven.

Equal to the best in the Third Heaven,

he enjoyed himself with pleasure and play.

From there he passed back to a human life.

With the remaining ripening of the fruit of good deeds,

he obtained teeth that are even,

gleaming, bright, and white.

Many soothsayers regarded as wise men

gathered and predicted of him:

'With twice-born teeth so even, so white, so clean and bright

his retinue will be so pure.

As king, his people will also be pure,

when he rules having conquered this earth so broad.

They won’t harm the country,

but will live for the welfare and happiness of the people.

But if he goes forth he’ll be an ascetic free of ill,

his passions quelled, the veil cast off.

Rid of stress and weariness,

he sees this world and the next.

Those who do his bidding, both lay and renunciate,

shake off wickedness, impure and blameworthy.

He’s surrounded by pure people, who cast aside

stains, callousness, sin, and corruptions.’”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.