

MN 49
Majjhima Nikāya
The Middle Length Discourses

Brahmā Nimantanika Sutta
“Challenging & Instructing the Brahmā Gods”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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I have personally heard this.

Once, during the time when The Blessed One was staying at the monastery donated by Anāthapiṇḍika in Sāvattihī’s Jeta Park, He addressed the Bhikkhus by saying:

“Bhikkhus!”

“Yes, Bhante!” those Bhikkhus answered delightedly, and The Blessed One continued speaking:

“At one time, Bhikkhus, while I was staying at Ukkatthā by the Majestic Sāla Tree, there at the Subhaga Grove, a wrong view arose in the mind of the Brahmā God; the kind of evil belief that is truly harmful and destructive.

“Now, the wrong view that Baka, the Brahmā God was having in his heart was this:

‘This indeed is permanent! This state of mine is truly fixed, imperishable, and forever lasting! This is what is meant by being eternal! This is the entire absolute, where one is no longer liable to passing away and thus is beyond impermanence itself!

‘Here, there’s neither birth, nor ageing, nor death; things do not pass away, and there definitely is nothing higher, no further escape and safety beyond this!’

“Then, Bhikkhus, seeing that I knew what Baka the Brahmā God was pondering and entertaining in his heart, just as easily as a strong and agile man would stretch out his flexed arm or draw in his outstretched arm, I disappeared from Ukkatthā, and was no longer sitting by the Majestic Sāla Tree within the Subhaga Park, and immediately reappeared in that Brahmā world, where Baka the Brahmā God was at that moment.

“Now, Bhikkhus, the moment Baka the Brahmā God saw me approaching from the distance, he quickly greeted me by saying:

‘Welcome, Good Sir, you are most welcome indeed, Good Sir!’

‘At last, Good Sir, you did make this occasion to come and visit us here, where one finally finds permanence indeed! For this domain of mine is truly fixed, imperishable, and forever lasting! After all, this is what is meant by being eternal! This is the entire absolute, where one is no longer liable to passing away and thus is beyond impermanence itself!’

‘Here, there’s neither birth, nor ageing, nor death; and there definitely is nothing higher, no further escape and safety beyond this!’

“Now, Bhikkhus, once Baka the Brahmā God spoke these words, I replied to him by saying:

“Well, well...! It seems that Baka the Brahmā is steeped in ignorance, indeed!”

“It is truly sad that Baka the Brahmā has given himself to such deluded thinking and wrong view! For, he has indeed drenched himself in willful ignoring, seeing that he calls what is truly impermanent ‘permanent,’ even though there is nothing to speak of, that is truly fixed, imperishable, or forever lasting!”

“After all, in a place where one is absolutely liable to passing away and thus most certainly is within the grasp of impermanence itself, Baka the Brahmā believes that ‘this is eternal’ or ‘the absolute!’”

“Furthermore, in a realm one is born into, where there is ageing and most certainly, death, Baka the Brahmā deludedly claims that here, somehow, ‘there’s neither birth, nor ageing, nor death.’”

“But especially, when there is most definitely an escape beyond all of this, Baka the Brahmā states with certainty that ‘there is no escape and safety beyond this!’”

1. Māra’s interjection

“It was at that moment, Bhikkhus, when Māra the Evil One, having cunningly infiltrated his way into the retinue of the Brahmā Gods, by taking possession of the heart of one of those in the retinue, while remaining undetected began addressing me with these words:

“O, Bhikkhu, Bhikkhu! Leave our Lord alone! Stop harassing Our Lord! For He is Brahmā, The Mahā Brahmā Himself! He is truly The Supreme Lord, the Great Vanquisher and Ruler, the Undefeated, Lord of All beings, the Ultimate Creator and Chief of us all; those of us who are, and of all those who are yet to become; Our very Father and the Oldest among us. He, indeed, is the Most Glorious and Supreme.”

“Long before you, Bhikkhu, there have been others in existence! Other recluses and brahmins, who also denounced, looked down upon and scorned the earth element and its solidity; who denounced, looked down upon and scorned the water element and its penetrative fluidity; who denounced, looked down upon and scorned the fire element and its heat quality; who denounced, looked down upon and scorned the air element and its windy, moving quality; similarly, they would denounce, look down upon and scorn other beings; they would denounce, look down upon

and scorn the Devas; they would also denounce, look down upon and scorn even Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, as well as Brahmā himself.

“Now, upon the breakup of their bodies, at death, all these recluses and brahmins were reborn into the miserable lower realms.

“On the other hand, there were also those recluses and brahmins in existence, who worshiped, praised, and venerated the earth element and its solidity; who worshiped, praised, and venerated the water element and its penetrative fluidity; who worshiped, praised, and venerated the fire element and its heat quality; who worshiped, praised, and venerated the air element and its windy, moving quality; similarly, they would worship, praise, and venerate other beings; they would worship, praise, and venerate the Devas; they would also worship, praise, and venerate Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, as well as Brahmā himself.

“Now, upon the breakup of their bodies, at death, all these recluses and brahmins were reborn into the delightful and happy higher realms, in contrast to the others mentioned.

“So, Bhikkhu, heed my advice and listen, for your own good! Do not question or doubt the words spoken to you by our Lord Brahmā and take them as absolute truth!

“Otherwise, you would be missing an incredibly rare opportunity for your welfare, just like that man who pushed out Good Fortune itself, that had fallen into his lap, driving it off and away with a beating stick, instead of benefitting from the many blessings it would have bestowed upon him!

“Do not be like that man who is about to fall off a precipice, but who instead chooses to kick away and refuse to grab hold of the rocks and roots of vines with his hands or feet, that would otherwise have saved him from his fall, and therefore, his certain death!

“So, Bhikkhu, heed my advice and listen, for your own good! Do not question or doubt the words spoken to you by our Lord Brahmā and take them as absolute truth!

“After all, Bhikkhu, don’t you see the glorious assembly here? The vast retinue of Brahmā all gathered here, around our Lord, and his eternal magnificence!

“In this manner, Bhikkhus, Māra the Evil One kept addressing me while cajoling the entire company of Brahmā with his deception, undetected.

“Then, Bhikkhus, once he had spoken his words, I addressed Māra the Evil One by saying:

“I know who you are, Evil One! Do not think to yourself ‘He doesn’t see or know it’s me,’ because I do see and know you, Māra!

“You cannot hide from me, Māra! You are the Evil One, having cunningly infiltrated your way into the retinue of the Brahmā Gods, you have taken possession of the heart of one of their own in the retinue, but while remaining undetected you address me by thinking to yourself:

‘Ah, I can fool this one also, and make him fall for my tricks and be under my power and control!’

“But that is impossible, O Evil One! I can never fall for your tricks, nor ever somehow come under your power and control!”

2. Baka (the Brahmā) tries convincing The Buddha

“Now, Bhikkhus, once I spoke these words to Māra, then Baka addressed me again by saying:

“But, Good Sir, whatever I have said to be permanent, and everlasting is so, because it truly is!

“Because it truly is fixed, in fact imperishable, and forever lasting! After all, this is what is meant by being eternal! This is the real and entire absolute, where one is no longer liable to passing away and thus has gone beyond impermanence itself!

“Therefore, here is where it is an undeniable fact that neither birth, nor ageing, nor death could ever be found or experienced anymore!

“Thus, Bhikkhu, I can tell you with certainty that there definitely is nothing higher, no further escape and safety to be found anywhere, beyond this!’

“Long before you, O Bhikkhu, there have been many others in existence! Other recluses and brahmins, who strived in their ascetic practices of self-mortification for long enough of a time, that would span your whole entire life!

“And they also reached the same conclusion, Bhikkhu, declaring the same truth I have declared to you, as they too saw, and with certainty, that there definitely is nothing higher, no further escape and safety to be found anywhere, beyond this!

“Therefore, O Bhikkhu, I tell you again, and with absolute certainty, that there definitely is nothing higher, no further escape and safety to be found anywhere, beyond this! But to say anything otherwise would simply lead you to pain and frustration, for you are fundamentally mistaken!

a. “So, you must see, Bhikkhu, that insofar as you rely on and are attached to the earth element, depending on the presence of solidity; so long as you hold on to it and identify with your role and relationship to it, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

b. “Similarly, Bhikkhu, insofar as you rely on and are attached to the water element, depending on the presence of its penetrative fluidity; so long as you hold on to it and identify with your role and relationship to it, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

c. “Similarly, Bhikkhu, insofar as you rely on and are attached to the fire element, depending on the presence of its quality of heat; so long as you hold on to it and identify with your role and relationship to it, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

d. “Similarly, Bhikkhu, insofar as you rely on and are attached to the air element, depending on the presence of its windy and moving quality; so long as you hold on to it and identify with your role and relationship to it, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

e. “Similarly, Bhikkhu, insofar as you rely on and are attached to other beings, depending on their presence; so long as you hold on to them and identify with your role and relationship to them, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

f. “Similarly, Bhikkhu, insofar as you rely on and are attached to the Devas, depending on their presence; so long as you hold on to them and identify with your role and relationship to them, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

g. “Similarly, Bhikkhu, insofar as you rely on and are attached to Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, depending on his presence; so long as you hold on to him and identify with your role and relationship to him, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

h. “Similarly, Bhikkhu, insofar as you rely on and are attached to Brahmā, depending on his presence; so long as you hold on to him and identify with your role and relationship to him, then you will never be far from me! For, you will always remain within my domain; subjugated to my dominion, inescapably within my net, as well as dispensable to whatever I wish, according to my

dictates, where you ultimately have no escape; possessing no ultimate refuge and nothing else beyond my absolute rulership over everything, including you!

3. The Blessed One's Challenge to Baka, the Brahmā God

a. “O Brahmā, you do not seem to grasp that I *too* know that, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to the earth element, depending on the presence of solidity; so long as I were to hold on to it or identify with my role and relationship to it, then I would indeed never be far from you! For, I would then always remain within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

b. “Similarly, Baka, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to the water element, depending on the presence of its penetrative fluidity; so long as I were to hold on to it or identify with my role and relationship to it, then I would indeed never be far from you! For, I would then always remain within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

c. “Similarly, Baka, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to the fire element, depending on the presence of its quality of heat; so long as I were to hold on to it or identify with my role and relationship to it, then I would indeed never be far from you! For, I would then always remain within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

d. “Similarly, Baka, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to the air element, depending on the presence of its windy and moving quality; so long as I were to hold on to it or identify with my role and relationship to it, then I would indeed never be far from you! For, I would then always remain within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

e. “Similarly, Baka, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to the other beings; depending on their presence; so long as I were to hold on to them or identify with my role and relationship to them, then I would indeed never be far from you! For I would then always remain within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

f. “Similarly, Baka, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to the Devas, depending on their presence; so long as I were to hold on to them or identify with my role and relationship to them, then I would indeed never be far from you! For, I would then always remain within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

g. “Similarly, Baka, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, depending on his presence; so long as I were to hold on to him or identify with my role and relationship to him, then I would indeed never be far from you! For, I would then always remain

within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

h. “Similarly, Baka, insofar as I were to rely on and be attached to Brahmā, depending on his presence; so long as I were to hold on to him or identify with my role and relationship to him, then I would indeed never be far from you! For, I would then always remain within your domain; subjugated to your dominion, inescapably within your net, as well as dispensable for you to do whatever you wished, according to your dictates.

“Therefore, I know perfectly well the course of your existences, the range of your dominion, the span of control you possess, and how far it is that you can reach and exercise your power, as well as its limitations.”

“And then, Baka Brahmā asked:

“But Sir, how do you perfectly know the course of my existences and the full range and span of control that I possess? And how far do you think is it that I can reach and exercise my power? Furthermore, what do you think are my limitations?”

*The full range and span of control that you possess
Extends only as far as the moon and the sun could reach with their brilliance
As they course through the sky,
Lighting up this galaxy and its various sectors.*

*Also, the various ranges and capacities of most beings,
Those who have passion in their hearts, and those who do not,
You also see the coming and going of most beings through the various realms,
As well as the different states of becoming they take rebirth into.*

“It is in this way, that I know perfectly well the range of your dominion, the span of control you possess, and how far it is that you can reach and exercise your power.

“However, I also know clearly the course of your existences as well as your limitations.

“For instance, there exist other realms where certain beings are reborn into, such as the three types of worlds which you are absolutely clueless about, unaware that they even exist, but which I, on the other hand, am fully aware of, as I can clearly know and see them.

a. “There is the realm of Streaming Radiance (*Ābhassarā*) where, by the way, you had been reborn into and lived for some time, but from where you passed away, eventually, and by falling out from it, you landed into this realm.

“Now, given that you have spent such a long time here in this realm, during that extended stretch of time you have lost all memory of your past, having forgotten everything pertaining to your prior existences.

“This I directly know as a fact and can see clearly.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

b. “Furthermore, Brahmā, there is the realm of Radiant Glory (*Subhakiṇhā*), where you had also been reborn into and lived for some time, but from where you eventually passed away, and by falling out from it, you landed into this realm.

“Now again, given that you have spent such a long time here in this realm, during that extended stretch of time you have lost all memory of your past, having forgotten everything pertaining to your prior existences.

“This I directly know as a fact and can see clearly.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

c. “Also, Brahmā, there is the realm of Abundant Fruit (*Vehapphalā*), where you had also been reborn into and lived for some time, but from where you passed away eventually, and by falling out from it, you landed into this realm.

“Now again, given that you have spent such a long time here in this realm, during that extended stretch of time you have lost all memory of your past, having forgotten everything pertaining to your prior existences.

“This I directly know as a fact and can see clearly.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

1. “Furthermore, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge earth as earth, while directly seeing its properties of solidity, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the earthiness and solidity of earth, I did not claim to be one and the same as earth (*paṭhavim nāpahosiṃ*);

I did not claim to be in or on earth (*paṭhaviyā nāpahosiṃ*);

I did not claim to be from or belonging to earth (*paṭhavito nāpahosiṃ*);

I did not claim earth as mine (*paṭhavim meti nāpahosiṃ*);

I did not assert nor claim earth to be more than what it is (*paṭhavim nābhivadim*).

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

2. “Similarly, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge water as water, while directly seeing its properties of fluidity, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the fluidity of water, I did not claim to be one and the same as water;

I did not claim to be in or on water;

I did not claim to be from or belonging to water;

I did not claim water as mine;
I did not assert nor claim water to be more than what it is.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

3. “Also, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge fire as fire, while directly seeing its properties of heat, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the quality of heat that fire possesses, I did not claim to be one and the same as fire;
I did not claim to be in or on fire;
I did not claim to be from or belonging to fire;
I did not claim fire as mine;
I did not assert nor claim fire to be more than what it is.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

4. “Also, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge air as air, while directly seeing its properties of wind, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the moving quality of air, I did not claim to be one and the same as air;
I did not claim to be in or on air;
I did not claim to be from or belonging to air;
I did not claim air as mine;
I did not assert nor claim air to be more than what it is.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

5. “Similarly, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge beings as beings, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with beings, I did not claim to be one and the same as beings;
I did not claim to be among beings;
I did not claim to be from or belonging to beings;
I did not claim beings as mine;
I did not assert nor claim beings to be more than what they are.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

6. “Similarly, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge Devas as Devas, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with Devas, I did not claim to be one and the same as Devas;
I did not claim to be among Devas;
I did not claim to be from or belonging to Devas;
I did not claim Devas as mine;

I did not assert nor claim Devas to be more than what they are.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

7. “Similarly, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, I did not claim to be one and the same as Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all;

I did not claim to be among Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all;

I did not claim to be from or belonging to Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all;

I did not claim Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, as mine;

I did not assert nor claim Pajāpati, the Predecessor to all, to be more than what he is.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

8. “And similarly, Brahmā, having understood Brahmā through actual Higher Knowledge, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with Brahmā, I did not claim to be one and the same as Brahmā;

I did not claim to be among Brahmā;

I did not claim to be from or belonging to Brahmā;

I did not claim Brahmā as mine;

I did not assert nor claim Brahmā to be more than what he is.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

9. “Furthermore, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge the Ābhassarā Gods, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the Ābhassarā Gods, I did not claim to be one and the same as the Ābhassarā Gods;

I did not claim to be among the Ābhassarā Gods;

I did not claim to be from or belonging to the Ābhassarā Gods;

I did not claim the Ābhassarā Gods as mine;

I did not assert nor claim the Ābhassarā Gods to be more than what they are.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

10. “Similarly, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge the Subhakiṇhā Gods, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the Subhakiṇhā Gods, I did not claim to be one and the same as the Subhakiṇhā Gods;

I did not claim to be among the Subhakiṇhā Gods;

I did not claim to be from or belonging to the Subhakiṇhā Gods;

I did not claim the Subhakiṇhā Gods as mine;

I did not assert nor claim the Subhakiṇhā Gods to be more than what they are.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

11. “Similarly, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge the Vehapphalā Gods, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the Vehapphalā Gods, I did not claim to be one and the same as the Vehapphalā Gods;

I did not claim to be among the Vehapphalā Gods;

I did not claim to be from or belonging to the Vehapphalā Gods;

I did not claim the Vehapphalā Gods as mine;

I did not assert nor claim the Vehapphalā Gods to be more than what they are.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

12. “And, Brahmā, having understood through actual Higher Knowledge the Overlord among the Vehapphalā Gods, *and* having understood through actual Higher Knowledge all that does not partake of nor identifies with the Overlord among the Vehapphalā Gods, I did not claim to be one and the same as the Overlord among the Vehapphalā Gods;

I did not claim to be among the Overlord among the Vehapphalā Gods;

I did not claim to be from or belonging to the Overlord among the Vehapphalā Gods;

I did not claim the Overlord among the Vehapphalā Gods as mine;

I did not assert nor claim the Overlord among the Vehapphalā Gods to be more than what he is.

“So, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

“Therefore, Brahmā, so long as you have not reached the Higher Knowledge whereby you may come to know the All-ness of the All, lacking the knowledge and range of understanding, hence not knowing all that there is to be known, does it not then render all your statements about being ‘the Absolute’ or the ‘Eternal’ as simply empty, hollow, and utterly void?

“So, you see, again, Brahmā, as it relates to having Higher Knowledge, I am not your equal, let alone being inferior to you, for I know far more than you can imagine.

“Consciousness which makes nothing manifest, where nothing lands or rests upon, as it remains infinite and all-lustrous, it is *that*, which does not partake of the ‘earthiness’ of earth, the ‘wateriness’ of water, the ‘fireriness’ of fire, the ‘airiness’ of air, the beingness of beings, the Deva-hood of Devas, the Pajāpati-hood of Pajāpati, the Brahmā-hood of Brahmā, the Streaming Radiance of the Ābhassarā Brahmās, the Radiant Gloriousness of the Subhakiṇhā Brahmās, the Abundant Fruition of the Vehapphalā Brahmās, the Overlord-ship of the Overlord, and the All-ness of the All.”

“It was at that point, Bhikkhus, that Baka Brahmā snapped back by saying:

“Well, let us do a test and see as to your range of knowledge and power compared to mine, Sir!”
as he kept on saying:
‘I will vanish from the recluse Gautama; I will vanish from the recluse Gautama.’

“So, I replied and said:

“Well then, Brahmā, go ahead and try to vanish from me; that is, if you are able to.”

“But Bhikkhus, try as he did, Baka Brahmā could not vanish nor hide from me. Then, I told him,

“Now, Brahmā, it is my turn to vanish!”

“And Baka Brahmā said:

“Very well, sir, try and vanish from my all-seeing vision, if you can!”

“Then, Bhikkhus, I determined psychically:

‘May Baka Brahmā and his retinue of Brahmās not be able to see me, but only remain able to hear the sound of my voice!’

“So, I vanished from their sight completely. However, I spoke these words to them, which they could all clearly hear:

*By directly seeing and knowing that ultimately, there is no refuge
To be sought in any realm of being;
Realizing the horrific danger in further becoming itself,
Which sooner or later comes to its painful end,
I did not seek any form of becoming ever again,
Nor did I grab on to, relish, or look for further assets, to call my own.*

“It was at that point, Bhikkhus, that Baka Brahmā and his retinue of Brahmās were all delighted and deeply moved by the wonder they were witnessing.

“Thus, they exclaimed:

*‘This is truly marvelous! This is incredible, indeed, Good Sir!
‘Never have we seen such power! Such wonder! For truly great are the psychic abilities of the Recluse Gautama! Great is his majesty; of this we are now all certain!’*

‘For, we have never before witnessed, never seen or heard any recluse or brahmin to have such tremendous abilities as Recluse Gautama! The Son of the Sākyans, who left behind his Sākyan Family and Kingdom, and simply went forth!’

‘It is truly a privilege and a wonderful honor to observe, that while living among a generation of people who keep delighting in further becoming, who are infatuated with further and further

becoming, celebrating and rejoicing in further becoming, He on the other hand, has indeed pulled out the desire for rebecoming from its very root!’

4. Silencing Māra, the Evil One

“Then suddenly, Bhikkhus, Māra, the Evil One, again having cunningly infiltrated his way into the retinue of the Brahmā Gods, having taken possession of the heart of one of those in the retinue, while remaining undetected began addressing me with these words:

“O, Good Sir! Seeing that you have come to know this much, while being aware of these facts firsthand, keep this information to yourself and do not go spreading or teaching it to others, whether to your disciples or those who have similarly gone forth!”

“Do not wish for your disciples or those gone forth to know what you now know, Sir!”

“After all, Sir, in the past, long before you, there have been others in existence! Other recluses and brahmins, who also believed themselves to be Arahants, declaring themselves to others as such, as Fully Self-Awakened Buddhas.

“They too, went and taught what they knew to their disciples and those who had gone forth. However, upon the breakup of their bodies, at death, all those recluses and brahmins claiming to be liberated, were reborn into the miserable lower realms.

“On the other hand, there were also those recluses and brahmins in existence, who had lived before your time, who also believed themselves to be Arahants, declaring themselves to others as such, as Fully Self-Awakened Buddhas.

“But they did not teach nor shared what they knew with their disciples and those who had gone forth. Now, upon the breakup of their bodies, at death, all those recluses and brahmins claiming to be liberated, were reborn into the delightful and happy higher realms, in contrast to the others mentioned.

“Therefore, O Bhikkhu, kindly heed my advice and listen, for your own good! Keep this information to yourself and do not go sharing or teaching it to others. So, for your own good, just dwell in your peaceful meditative state, while living your present life, and do not tell others what you have personally discovered and know to be true, Sir!”

“Now, Bhikkhus, when this was said, I addressed Māra, the Evil One directly by saying:

“I see you, Māra! Do not think to yourself: ‘He doesn’t see or know it’s me,’ because I do indeed see and know you, Māra, O Evil One!”

“You cannot hide from me, Māra! You have not a single iota of compassion in your heart, hence your words are not being expressed from a place of genuine concern for others or even out of kindness, but the exact opposite!”

“After all, Evil One, your concern is that, if the Recluse Gautama goes on teaching these truths to others, then truly I will lose my reign of deception and terror on others, too! Because then, others also will slip through your grip, and get freed!

“And another thing, Evil One!

“Those recluses and brahmins you mention, who in the past believed themselves to be Arahants, declaring themselves to others as Fully Self-Awakened Buddhas, were not in fact Arahants, at all! Let alone, Fully Self-Awakened Buddhas! Unlike The One you are now addressing, Māra!

“For, I am indeed, the Tathāgata! The Fully Self-Awakened Buddha!

“Therefore, Evil One, whether He does or does not teach The Dhamma to His disciples and those who have gone forth, The Tathāgata continues to be The Tathāgata, remaining untouched and unchanged in His status!

“Furthermore, Evil One, whether He does or does not teach and guide His disciples and those who have gone forth, The Tathāgata continues to be The Tathāgata, remaining untouched and unchanged in His status!

“And why is this so?

“It is because The Tathāgata, O Evil One, has completely removed the corrupting contaminants, the āsavas from the heart, having utterly left behind those defiling qualities that inevitably keep one trapped in further rebecoming, which in turn brings torment and terrible suffering through rebirth, ageing, and the inevitability of repeated deaths.

“The Tathāgata has pulled them all out with their roots, having eradicated them all, as He cut those contaminants down like a palm tree that’s split in half, turning it into a dead stump.

“Thus, The Tathāgata has obliterated it from growing any more shoots ever again, and therefore, He has completely eliminated the corrupting āsavas, the contaminants of the heart!”

“On hearing these words from The Tathāgata, Māra became silent, and was unable to say another word.

“And so, Bhikkhus, given the interaction that took place with Baka Brahmā, the name of this discussion is to be called: ‘Challenging & Instructing the Brahmā Gods.’”

Sādhū

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