

SN 1.20

Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta
Group of Discourses Connected to Verses
Devatā Saṃyutta
Connected Discourses On the Devas
Nandana Vagga
The Section on The Garden of Delights

Samiddhi Sutta
“With Venerable Samiddhi”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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This is what I personally heard,

Once, The Blessed One was living near Rājagaha, while staying at the Hot Springs Monastery.

It was during that time, one early morning, that the Venerable Samiddhi went to the hot springs to bathe, at the crack of dawn. Having bathed himself in the hot springs, he came out and began drying himself, standing with his single, lower robe.

Then, once the sun was up, a glorious female Deva appeared, as she lit up the entire hot springs, and began approaching the Venerable Samiddhi. Then, while being suspended in the air, she addressed him in verse:

*“O! Bhikkhu, before having even tasted or feasted, you look for alms.
Once having tasted and feasted, you wouldn’t go looking for alms.
And, if you still want to, go ahead look for alms,
But only once you have enjoyed yourself and eaten first.
So, do not waste your precious time, O! Bhikkhu!”*

And the Venerable Samiddhi replied:

*“Time itself is so unreliable, as it remains a complete unknown,
For I do not know it, nor can predict its length.
Hence it lies unseen for me.
That is why I don’t waste any time,
And choose to look for alms, before I taste, or eat!”*

Then, that Deva came down as she touched the ground with her feet and said to the Venerable Samiddhi:

“Bhikkhu, you have gone forth while still very young! You are in the prime of your life, still possessing your black hair, blessed with youth; nevertheless, you still haven’t tasted all that sensual pleasures have to offer! So, now is the time to enjoy all your humanly pleasures!

“Don’t give up what is already in front of you right here and now, what you can already see and touch for what you cannot see, taste, or touch, and all that which is uncertain, and takes such a long time to achieve!”

And the Venerable Samiddhi replied:

“Friend, I have not given up what is visible right here and now for what is uncertain or takes a long time to achieve! It is in fact, just the opposite, for I have given up that which is uncertain, and wastes away so much time, in order to pursue that which is visible, right here, in this present. For The Blessed One has said that sensual pleasures waste so much of our energy and time, leading to so much suffering and anguish, as they are, in all actuality, dangerous traps that bring one certain defeat.

“However, this Dhamma is directly visible right here, in this very life, being immediately effective, encouraging close inspection, fully accessible, which repeatedly allows all those wise enough to pursue it, to know, see, and fully understand it by themselves, through their own efforts!”

Then, the Deva asked the following question:

“But in what way, Bhikkhu, has The Blessed One described how sensual pleasures waste so much of our energy and time, leading to so much suffering and anguish, as they are, in all actuality, dangerous traps that bring one certain defeat?

“Also, how is this Dhamma you speak of, directly visible right here, in this very life, being immediately effective, encouraging close inspection, fully accessible, which repeatedly allows all those wise enough to pursue it, to know, see, and fully understand it by themselves, through their own efforts?”

At this, the Venerable Samiddhi responded by saying:

“I’m only a junior monk, friend, only recently gone forth, and therefore, just freshly have come to this Dhamma and Discipline. I’m not qualified nor able to explain what you ask, in detail. But The Blessed One, the Arahant, the Fully Self-Awakened Buddha is residing at this moment here, nearby in Rājagaha, at the Hot Springs Monastery.

“You should go and directly ask Him about this matter. And whatever The Blessed One tells you and instructs you in His answer to your questions, you must closely remember it, in detail!”

The Deva then retorted:

“But it’s not easy for us to approach The Blessed One, as he is surrounded by Devas who are so powerful and glorious, whose presence makes it difficult for us to go near the Great Teacher. But, if you go to The Blessed One instead and ask him my questions, we too, can join you, by coming along to listen to the Dhamma He teaches.”

“Alright then, friend!” replied the Venerable Samiddhi, as he went and approached The Blessed One, and after paying his respects, he sat down to one side and reported to the Great Teacher on his dialogue with that Deva, and all that he had witnessed earlier that day.

Then, the Venerable Samiddhi added:

“Now Bhante, if that Deva was serious about wanting to come along with me, as I ask her questions, then she must be close by.”

As he was just done speaking these words, that Deva said to the Venerable Samiddhi:

“I am here, Bhikkhu! Ask the questions, Bhikkhu, ask!”

Then, the Buddha addressed the Deva directly, in verse:

*“Beings who are able to perceive what can be expressed,
Become fixated on and stuck in whatever is expressed.
By not understanding what is expressed,
They all fall prey to Death.*

*“But when one fully understands what is expressed,
They no longer isolate nor distinguish an ‘expresser,’
For there is nothing left for him
To become fixated on or stuck in.”*

Then, The Blessed One asked:

“Spirit, if you understood what was said, go ahead and speak!”

And the Deva replied:

“Bhante, I don’t understand it in full, the detailed meaning of The Blessed One’s brief statement. Please, it would be wonderful if You could explain it further, by teaching me the detailed meaning of this, so I could understand it better.”

*“By continuing to think in terms of:
‘I’m equal to, I am better or special, or worse than,’
Soon, you will find yourself quarrelling with others, getting into arguments.
But remaining unshakable in the face of these three discriminations,
One does not fall into the trap of:
‘I’m equal to, I am better or special, or worse than.’*

Again, The Blessed One asked:

“Spirit, if you understood what was said, go ahead and speak!”

And again, the Deva replied:

“Bhante, I don’t understand it in full, the detailed meaning of The Blessed One’s brief statement. Please, it would be wonderful if You could explain it further, by teaching me the detailed meaning of this, so I could understand it better.”

*“Surmising and conclusions are given up, and conceit is defeated.
Craving for name and form is, here and now, completely cut off.
With all knots that bind finally severed,
One remains empty of any expectations, free from all troubles,
And even though Devas and humans come looking for him,
Whether in this world or the one beyond,
They can never find them, not in the heavens, nor in any other realm.*

Again, The Blessed One asked:

“Spirit, if you understood what was said, go ahead and speak!”

And the Deva said:

“Bhante, I now understand the detailed meaning of The Blessed One’s brief statement to be the following:

*“In all the realms, no evil actions should be committed by anyone,
Whether through speech, thought, or the body.
And by having given up sensual pleasures, one should remain mindful throughout,
Fully aware and understanding of whatever that is happening,
Thus, one should leave behind all that wastes time and causes suffering.”*

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