SN 2.7 — SN 2:7 Pañcālacaṇḍa the Deva's Son | Pañcālacaṇḍa Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Pañcālacaṇḍa the Deva's Son

Pañcālacaṇḍa Sutta (SN 2:7)

The first verse in this discourse focuses on jhāna as a crucial element in the path to release. The Buddha's "awakening to jhāna" apparently refers to two points in his career as a bodhisatta: (1) the point when, realizing the futility of self-torture, he surmised that jhāna might form the path to awakening; and (2) his realization of the extent to which jhāna actually could lead to the knowledge that yielded in full awakening. (For details on both of these points, see MN 35.) In the second verse, the Buddha expands on Pañcālacaṇḍa's understanding of the practice of jhāna by pointing out that it has to be endowed with mindfulness to be genuinely right concentration. This point is related to the fact that the

various lists of activities that constitute the path—such as the five faculties, the seven factors for awakening, and the noble eightfold path—always place right mindfulness before right concentration. It's also related to the statement in MN 44 that the four satipaṭṭhānas—establishings of mindfulness—form the nimitta, or theme, of right concentration.

AN 9:42 contains an explanation of the first verse here, in which Ven. Ānanda identifies the first jhāna as the opening away from the confining place of sensual pleasures, and each successive level of jhāna as the opening away from the confining place of the preceding jhāna. Finally, he says, the cessation of perception & feeling acts as the ultimate opening away from all forms of confinement.

* * *

Near Sāvatthī. As he was standing to one side, Pañcālacaṇḍa the deva's son recited this verse in the Blessed One's presence:

"Truly in a confining place, he found an opening—

the one of extensive wisdom,

the awakened one who awakened to jhāna,1

the chief bull, withdrawn,

the sage."

The Buddha:

"Even in a confining place they find it,

[Pañcālacaṇḍa," said the Blessed One,]

"the Dhamma for the attainment of unbinding.

Those who have gained mindfulness

are rightly well-centered."2

Notes

1. In CDB, this phrase is translated as "who discovered jhāna," but the verb is abuddhi: "awakened to."

2. In CDB, this sentence is translated as a continuation of the preceding one: "those who have acquired mindfulness, those perfectly well concentrated." However, the Pali is constructed of two clauses in the ye... te... form that constitutes a separate sentence.