SN 2.26 — SN 2:26 Rohitassa the Deva’s Son | Rohitassa 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

Rohitassa the Deva’s Son

Rohitassa Sutta (SN 2:26)

Dwelling at Sāvatthī. As he was standing to one side, Rohitassa the deva’s son said to the Blessed One: “Is it possible, lord, by traveling, to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn’t take birth, age, die, pass away or reappear?”

“I tell you, friend, that it isn’t possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn’t take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear.”

“It’s amazing, lord, and astounding, how well that has been said by the Lord Blessed One: ‘I tell you, friend, that it isn’t possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn’t take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear.’ Once I was a seer named Rohitassa, a student of Bhoja, a powerful sky-walker. My speed was as fast as that of a strong archer—well trained, a practiced hand, a practiced sharpshooter—shooting a light arrow across the shadow of a palm tree. My stride stretched as far as the east sea is from the west. To me, there came the desire: ‘I will go traveling to the end of the cosmos.’ I— endowed with such speed, such a stride, with a one-hundred year life, a one-hundred year span—spent one hundred years traveling—apart from the time spent on eating, drinking, chewing & tasting, urinating & defecating, and sleeping to fight off weariness—but without reaching the end of the cosmos I died along the way.1 So it’s amazing, lord, and astounding, how well that has been said by the Lord Blessed One: ‘I tell you, friend, that it isn’t possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn’t take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear.’”

[When this was said, the Blessed One responded:] “I tell you, friend, that it isn’t possible by traveling to know or see or reach a far end of the cosmos where one doesn’t take birth, age, die, pass away, or reappear. But at the same time, I tell you that there is no making an end of suffering & stress without reaching the end of the cosmos. Yet it is just within this fathom-long body, with its perception & intellect, that I declare that there is the cosmos, the origination of the cosmos, the cessation of the cosmos, and the path of practice leading to the cessation of the cosmos.”

It’s not to be reached by traveling,

the end of the cosmos—

regardless.

And it’s not without reaching

the end of the cosmos

that there is release

from suffering & stress.

So, truly, an expert

with regard to the cosmos,

intelligent,

a knower of the end of the cosmos,

having fulfilled the holy life,

knowing the cosmos’ end,

concentrated,

doesn’t long for this cosmos

or any other.

Note

1. In AN 4:45, which is otherwise virtually identical with this sutta, this passage reads: "To me, endowed with such speed, such a stride, there came the desire: 'I will go traveling to the end of the cosmos.' I—with a one-hundred year life, a one-hundred year span—spent one hundred years traveling—apart from the time spent on eating, drinking, chewing & tasting, urinating & defecating, and sleeping to fight off weariness—but without reaching the end of the cosmos I died along the way."

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: DN 11; SN 12:44; SN 35:82; SN 35:116; AN 3:91; AN 9:38; AN 10:95