SN 4.19 — SN 4:19 The Farmer | Kassaka 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

The Farmer

Kassaka Sutta (SN 4:19)

Near Sāvatthī. Now at that time the Blessed One was instructing, urging, rousing, & encouraging the monks with a Dhamma talk concerning unbinding. The monks—attentive, interested, lending ear, focusing their entire awareness—were listening to the Dhamma.

Then the thought occurred to Māra, the Evil One: “Gotama the contemplative is instructing, urging, rousing, & encouraging the monks with a Dhamma talk concerning unbinding. The monks—attentive, interested, lending ear, focusing their entire awareness—are listening to the Dhamma. What if I were to go to Gotama the contemplative to obscure his vision?”

Then Māra the Evil One, taking on the form of a farmer with a large plowshare over his shoulder, carrying a long goad stick—his hair disheveled, his clothes made of coarse hemp, his feet splattered with mud—went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, said, "Hey, contemplative. Have you seen my oxen?"

"And what are your oxen, Evil One?"

"Mine alone is the eye, contemplative. Mine are forms, mine is the dimension of consciousness & contact at the eye. Where can you go to escape me? Mine alone is the ear… the nose… the tongue… the body… Mine alone is the intellect, contemplative. Mine are ideas, mine is the dimension of consciousness & contact at the intellect. Where can you go to escape me?"

"Yours alone is the eye, Evil One. Yours are forms, yours is the sphere of consciousness & contact at the eye. Where no eye exists, no forms exist, no dimension of consciousness & contact at the eye exists: There, Evil One, you cannot go. Yours alone is the ear… the nose… the tongue… the body… Yours alone is the intellect, Evil One. Yours are ideas, yours is the dimension of consciousness & contact at the intellect. Where no intellect exists, no ideas exist, no dimension of consciousness & contact at the intellect exists: There, Evil One, you cannot go."

Māra:

"Of what they say,

'This is mine';

and those who say,

'Mine':

If your intellect's here,

contemplative,

you can't escape

from me."

The Buddha:

"What they speak of

isn't mine,

and I'm not one of those

who speak it.

Know this, Evil One:

You won't even see

my tracks.”

Then Māra the Evil One—sad & dejected at realizing, “The Blessed One knows me; the One Well-Gone knows me”—vanished right there.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 49; SN 35:115; SN 35:117; SN 35:202; Dhp 92–93; Ud 1:10; Sn 5:15