SN 4.25 — SN 4:25 Māra’s Daughters | Māradhītu 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

Māra’s Daughters

Māradhītu Sutta (SN 4:25)

Then Māra’s daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went to Māra the Evil One and, on arrival, addressed him in verse:

“Why are you depressed, Daddy?

For which man do you grieve?

We—having bound him

like a wilderness elephant

with a snare of passion—

will bring him to you.

Under your power he'll be."

Māra:

"An arahant, well-gone in the world,

isn't easily brought in by passion.

He's gone beyond Māra's sway:

That's why I'm so violently sad."

Then Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, said to him, "We serve you at your feet, contemplative."

But the Blessed One paid them no attention, as he was released in the unexcelled ending of acquisitions.

Then Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went off to one side and considered, "Various are the appetites of men. Why don't we each assume the form of a hundred girls?"

So Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—having each assumed the form of a hundred girls, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, said to him, "We serve you at your feet, contemplative."

Again, the Blessed One paid them no attention, as he was released in the unexcelled ending of acquisitions.

So Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went off to one side and considered, "Many & varied are the appetites of men. Why don't we each assume the form of a hundred women who have never given birth?"

So Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—having each assumed the form of a hundred women who had never given birth, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, said to him, "We serve you at your feet, contemplative." Again, the Blessed One paid them no attention, as he was released in the unexcelled ending of acquisitions.

Then Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went off to one side and considered, "Many & varied are the appetites of men. Why don't we each assume the form of a hundred women who have borne one child … a hundred women who have borne two children … a hundred middle-aged women … a hundred older women?" So Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—having each assumed the form of a hundred older women, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, said to him, "We serve you at your

feet, contemplative." Again, the Blessed One paid them no attention, as he was released in the unexcelled ending of acquisitions.

Then Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went off to one side and said, "Wow, it's true what our father said:

'An arahant, well-gone in the world,

isn't easily brought in by passion.

He's gone beyond Māra's sway:

That's why I'm so violently sad.'

"Any contemplative or brahman who hadn't gone beyond passion, if we were to approach him with this approach: His heart would split or he would cough up hot blood or he would go mad, out of his mind. Just as a green reed cut down would dry out, wither, & fade, in the same way, he would dry out, wither, & fade."

Then Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, stood to one side. As she was standing there, Māra's daughter Craving addressed the Blessed One with verses:

"Practicing jhāna in the forest—

are you overcome with grief?

Have you lost,

or do you desire, wealth?

Have you done something

blameworthy in the village?

Is it because

you become intimate people,

but intimacy doesn't prosper for you

with anyone at all?"

The Buddha:

"Having attained the goal—

peace of the heart—

having defeated the army

of forms endearing & alluring,

practicing jhāna alone,

I awakened to bliss.

That’s why I don’t become intimate

with people,

why intimacy doesn’t prosper with me

when made by anyone at all.”1

Then Māra’s daughter Discontent addressed the Blessed One in verse:

“How does a monk here often dwell,

who has crossed the five floods

and also the sixth?2

How, while cultivating jhāna,

does he keep perceptions of sensuality far away?”

The Buddha:

“Calmed in body,

well released in mind,

without fabrications,

mindful, homeless,

having known the Dhamma,

practicing jhāna without directed thought,

he’s not provoked,

doesn’t flow, isn’t slothful:

Like this

a monk here often dwells,

who has crossed the five floods

and also the sixth.

Cultivating jhāna like this,

he keeps perceptions of sensuality

far away.”

Then Māra's daughter Passion addressed the Blessed One in verse:

"Cutting off craving,
practicing with a group:
Yes, many & faithful
they'll fare.
O, how this homeless one,
having snatched them
from the King of Death,
will lead a great crowd away."

The Buddha:

"The Tathāgatas, great heroes,
do lead
with the true Dhamma.
For those who know,
leading by Dhamma,
what's the jealousy?"

Then Māra's daughters—Craving, Discontent, & Passion—went to Māra the Evil One. He saw them coming from afar and, on seeing them, addressed them with verses:

"Fools!
Cleave a mountain
with a lily-stalk.
Dig up a crag
with your fingernails.
Chew on iron
with your teeth.
Raising a rock
above your head,
go over a cliff,
into a pit.

Like striking your chest

on a stump—

you weary yourselves with Gotama.”

Blazing they came—

Craving, Discontent, & Passion—

but the Teacher blew them off,

like the wind, a fallen tuft of cotton.

Notes

1. This phrase—sakkhī na sampajjati kenaci te/me—appears to admit two meanings. 1) One’s attempts at intimacy with others don’t succeed. 2) Others’ attempts at intimacy with one don’t succeed. Māra’s daughter—following their father in SN 4:24, mean it in the first sense. The Buddha here means it in the second.

2. The six floods are the defilements associated with each of the six senses.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 5:75; Ud 3:2; Sn 4:9; Thag 7:1