

SN 6.1
Saṃyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta
Group of Discourses Connected to Verses
Brahma Saṃyutta
Connected Discourses Pertaining to The Brahma Gods
Paṭhama Vagga
The First Section

Brahmāyācana Sutta
“The Brahma God’s Request”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

Copyright © Bhikkhu Candana 2024

This is what I personally heard.

Once, after His Awakening, The Blessed One was living in Uruvelā, by the river Nerañjarā, at the foot of the Goatherder’s Banyan Tree.

Then, while The Blessed One was in seclusion, the following thought occurred to Him:

‘This Dhamma I finally discovered is extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate Its depth and scope, for It is indeed excellent; It is sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. It is so subtle that It can only be realized by the select wise!’

‘But this generation of beings is quite fond of becoming attached to things, loving this and grabbing onto that, quickly nailing themselves to this or that which they come to enjoy.’

‘Therefore, considering how those beings live and practice with such a fixated and possessive attitude, it will be especially difficult for them to see the subtlety and utter beauty of This Dhamma, to penetrate through this sublime Pattern of Conditionality, this Dependent Arising of phenomena manifesting while being conditioned by other causal factors.’

‘As a result, it would be truly difficult for them to comprehend the stilling of all habitually driven internal preparations, the relinquishment of all assets, the very ending of craving and the thirst for more, the fading away of passions, the experiencing of cessation, of Nibbāna Supreme!’

‘So, if I were to explain to beings This wonderful Dhamma, they would simply be unable to understand It. In fact, they might very well misunderstand or misconstrue what I would be instructing them, and this itself will be quite discouraging and unnecessarily troublesome for me!’

Then, The Blessed One uttered the following unrehearsed verses; inspired words which He spoke spontaneously and not as the result of some divine revelation:

*“For so long I toiled and struggled with much difficulty
To reach this pinnacle of genuine understanding that is so subtle,
But now, on having realized It,
Might as well just give up on teaching or trying to explain It to others,
For it is simply useless to share what I have discovered
With beings who are so lost in their passions and rage;
They are simply unable to easily grasp or understand
This Dhamma that truly awakens.*

*“After all, This Dhamma goes the other way,
Flowing in the opposite direction to what beings are used to seeing in the world;
It is deep, but clear, yet intricately elegant, and so very subtle to behold.
It is no wonder that those who are lost in their passions,
Holding them near and dear to their hearts,
Can never come to witness nor taste The Dhamma that frees,
So long as they keep themselves
Deeply buried beneath the massive mountain of ignorance.”*

And by uttering these words, The Blessed One’s heart began to look away from the prospect of teaching The Dhamma to others, while considering that it would just be better not to teach It at all and to remain quiet instead.

However, right at that moment, on becoming aware in his heart of The Blessed One’s thoughts, the Brahma God Sahampati was quickly jolted with the realization:

‘Oh, how terrible it would be! What a disastrous loss for the entire existence!’

‘For, existence itself will surely be lost, doomed in its future prospect for certain, if indeed The Tathāgata, The Perfectly Self-Awakened Buddha’s heart is firm in looking away from the prospect of teaching The Dhamma to others, by deciding not to teach It to beings at all and to remain quiet instead.’

Then, just as quickly as a strong man would stretch out his arm or flex it and pull it back towards his body, Brahma Sahampati instantaneously vanished from the Brahma world and reappeared in our world, right in front of The Blessed One.

And with utmost respect, Brahma Sahampati arranged his upper robe over one shoulder and by kneeling, with his right knee onto the ground, with both hands raised in anjali towards The Blessed One, he spoke these words:

“Teach The Dhamma, Bhante! Please, let The Blessed One instruct and share The Dhamma! Please Lord, let The Holy One teach The Sublime Dhamma!”

For, there are beings in existence who have only a little bit of dust in their eyes. They are losing their valuable time and opportunity in being reborn into conducive states, yet without hearing and listening to The Dhamma, they will surely perish!

“They are the ones who need to hear The Blessed One’s words! They are in desperate need to hear The Holy One’s Teaching, because once they do, they will surely understand The Dhamma and comprehend Its depth of meaning!”

Thus spoke the Brahma Sahampati, as he continued by uttering these words, in verse:

*“Blessed Lord, recently, there arose among the Magadhans an impure dhamma;
A teaching that is tainted and dirty, for it sullies the hearts of beings.
“Now, let these people hear and listen to The Genuine Dhamma that is utterly pure,
Which The Impeccable One has discovered!
“And fling open the gate to The Deathless, O Blessed Lord!”*

*“Just as someone who reaches the highest point on a mountain top,
Is able to see everyone in all directions beneath him,
In just the same manner, Oh Peerless and All-Seeing Wise One,
You, who have indeed become The Dhamma Itself,
You have reached the very highest point achievable by any being,
And now you look down upon all these beings, everywhere,
As you witness them drowning in their despair, pain, and misery;
Being unaware and unable to shake themselves off from sorrow,
And endless torment; overcome by the ceaseless cycles of rebirth and getting old.*

*“Rise, therefore, Oh Conqueror! Rise, O Matchless Vanquisher!
You who have made it on Your Own, and owe nothing to absolutely no one,
You are indeed the Peerless Leader of the Caravan;
The One to guide countless beings to true safety;
Please! May The Blessed One go ahead and teach The Dhamma!
For there are, and will be, many who would indeed comprehend and thus break free!”*

It was at that moment, that The Blessed One, while considering this heartfelt request from the Brahma God Sahampati, scanned the entire cosmos with His mind, as He looked deep into

the very hearts of beings with the Purity of His Buddha Heart, compassionately gazing upon all beings throughout existence.

And by carefully examining and scrutinizing as He scanned the hearts and minds of beings thus, with His Buddha Heart, The Blessed One saw that there were indeed beings who were ready; beings who had but a little bit of dust and dirt still left in their eyes, as well as many other beings with piles of thick dust and dirt in their eyes, who were not ready at all.

Similarly, He saw that there were beings with keenly sharp and inquiring faculties, as well as those with dull and weak faculties. He also saw that there were those with upright and good characters, eager and very much ready to be taught, as well as those crude and evil-hearted beings, who possessed rough characters, and were therefore too crude and not ready at all to be taught.

Similarly, The Blessed One saw clearly and identified those who were not taking this current life of theirs and its supportive conditions for granted, and instead were eagerly doing their best to consider the consequences of their actions, and how these would be affecting their future rebirths, and as a result they engaged by living their lives in a responsible manner.

In contrast, however, He also saw those numerous other beings, who lived carelessly, using and abusing their life and its favorable conditions, with no concern for how their current intentional actions would impact them in future rebirths, once they relinquish this body, at death.

Just like in the case of a lotus pond with blue waterlilies, or those with pink or white waterlilies and fragrant lotuses, where some of those lotuses and lilies sprout from the mud, but do not rise at all, and instead stay near the bottom, living in or close to the thick mud, while nourishing themselves underwater;

Or those other lotuses and waterlilies that once having sprouted in those pools, they grow higher but stop short from reaching the surface of the water; whereas some others push their way through and go high enough to emerge from the water's surface, yet stay there, and do not rise any further, still smudged and surrounded by the water;

While there are also those lotuses and fragrant waterlilies that once having sprouted, they shoot upward, growing non-stop as they pierce through the water's surface and do not relent until they have broken free. And thus, they emerge out of the pool while standing freely, high above it, with their dry petals left untainted and untouched by the water underneath;

In just the same manner, The Blessed One saw clearly and identified those who were not taking this current life of theirs and its supportive conditions for granted, and instead were eagerly doing their best to consider the consequences of their actions, and how these would be affecting their future rebirths. As a result, they engaged by living their lives in a responsible manner.

In contrast, however, He also saw numerous other beings who lived carelessly, using and abusing their life and its favorable conditions, with no concern for how their current intentional actions would impact them in future rebirths, once they relinquish this body, at death.

Having now scrutinized and clearly seen the vast potential that lay in waiting, The Blessed One replied to the request made by the Brahma God Sahampati, who was still there, bowing at The Blessed One's feet, as He spoke these words in verse:

*“And so It is!
For, at last, flung open is now the very gate to The Deathless!
It was due to the prospect of being unnecessarily troublesome to Me,
Due to This wonderful Dhamma being misunderstood by this generation of beings,
That I initially considered not teaching, O Brahma,
This subtle and beautiful Dhamma that truly awakens!”*

Then, realizing with utter delight that his request for The Blessed One to go ahead and teach The Dhamma was accepted by The Great Teacher, the Brahma God Sahampati respectfully paid homage again, as he bowed and then circumambulated The Tathāgata, by keeping Him to his right, and then just as he had manifested, he disappeared right then and there.

Sādhu

Sādhu

Sādhu