SN 11.13 — With Mahāli

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Text

Linked Discourses 11.13

Chapter Two

With Mahāli

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

Then Mahāli the Licchavi went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, have you seen Sakka, lord of gods?"

"I have, Mahāli."

"But surely, sir, you must have seen someone who looked like Sakka. For Sakka is hard to see."

"Mahāli, I understand Sakka. And I understand the things that he undertook and committed to, which enabled him to achieve the status of Sakka.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he was a student named Magha. That's why he's called Maghavā, the Bounteous.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave gifts ably. That's why he's called Sakka, the Able.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he was first to give gifts. That's why he's called Purindada, the Firstgiver.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave the gift of a guest house. That's why he's called Vāsava, the Houser.

Sakka thinks of a thousand needs in an hour. That's why he's called Sahassakkha, the Thousand-Eyed.

Sakka's wife is the titan maiden named Sujā. That's why he's called Sujampati, Sujā's Husband.

Sakka rules as sovereign lord over the gods of the thirty-three. That's why he's called Devānaminda, the Lord of Gods.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he undertook seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these that he achieved the status of Sakka. What seven?

As long as I live, may I support my parents. As long as I live, may I honor the elders in the family. As long as I live, may I speak gently. As long as I live, may I not backbite. As long as I live, may I live at home with heart rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give and to share. As long as I live, may I speak the truth. As long as I live, may I be free of anger, or should anger arise, may I quickly get rid of it.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he undertook seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these that he achieved the status of Sakka.

A child who respects their parents,

and honors the elders in the family,

whose speech is gentle and courteous,

and has given up backbiting;

who's committed to getting rid of stinginess,

is truthful, and has mastered anger:

the gods of the thirty-three declare

them to be a true person."