SN 47.12 — At Nāḷandā

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 47.12

2. At Nāḷandā

At Nāḷandā

At one time the Buddha was staying near Nāḷandā in Pāvārika's Mango Grove. Then Sāriputta went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

"Sir, I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there's no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening."

"That's a grand and bold statement, Sāriputta. You've roared a definitive, categorical lion's roar, saying: 'I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there's no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.'

What about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who lived in the past? Have you encompassed their minds to know that those Buddhas had such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?"

"No, sir."

"And what about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who will live in the future? Have you encompassed their minds to know that those Buddhas will have such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?"

"No, sir."

"And what about me, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha at present? Have you encompassed my mind to know that I have such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?"

"No, sir."

"In that case, Sāriputta, given that you don't encompass the minds of Buddhas past, future, or present, what then are you doing, making such a grand and bold statement, roaring such a definitive, categorical lion's roar?"

"Sir, though I don't encompass the minds of Buddhas past, future, and present, still I understand this by inference from the teaching. Suppose there was a king's frontier citadel

with fortified embankments, ramparts, and arches, and a single gate. And it has a gatekeeper who is astute, competent, and intelligent. He keeps strangers out and lets known people in. As he walks around the patrol path, he doesn't see a hole or cleft in the wall, not even one big enough for a cat to slip out. He thinks, 'Whatever sizable creatures enter or leave the citadel, all of them do so via this gate.'

In the same way, I understand this by inference from the teaching: 'Those who are perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas—whether past, future, or present—give up the five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Their mind is firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. They correctly develop the seven awakening factors. And they awaken to the supreme perfect awakening.'"

"Good, good, Sāriputta! So Sāriputta, you should frequently speak this exposition of the teaching to the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. Though there will be some futile people who have doubt or uncertainty regarding the Realized One, when they hear this exposition of the teaching they'll give up that doubt or uncertainty."