SN 6.2 — Respect

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Text

Linked Discourses 6.2

1. The Appeal

Respect

So I have heard. At one time, when he was first awakened, the Buddha was staying in Uruvelā at the root of the goatherd's banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, "One without respect and reverence lives in suffering. What ascetic or brahmin should I honor and respect and rely on?"

Then it occurred to him:

"I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of ethics, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin in this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who is more accomplished than myself in ethics, who I should honor and respect and rely on.

I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of immersion, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin … who is more accomplished than myself in immersion …

I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of wisdom, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin … who is more accomplished than myself in wisdom …

I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of freedom, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin … who is more accomplished than myself in freedom …

I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of the knowledge and vision of freedom, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin in this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who is more accomplished than myself in the knowledge and vision of freedom, who I should honor and respect and rely on. Why don't I honor and respect and rely on the same Dhamma to which I was awakened?"

Then the divinity Sahampati knew the Buddha's train of thought. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of the Buddha. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and said:

"That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! All the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who lived in the past honored and respected and relied on this same teaching. All the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who will live in the future will honor and respect and rely on this same teaching. May the Blessed One, who is the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha at present, also honor and respect and rely on this same teaching."

That is what the divinity Sahampati said. Then he went on to say:

"All Buddhas in the past,

the Buddhas of the future,

and the Buddha at present—

destroyer of the sorrows of many—

respecting the true teaching

they did live, they do live,

and they also will live.

This is the nature of the Buddhas.

Therefore someone who desires self-knowledge,

and aspires to greatness themselves,

should respect the true teaching,

remembering the instructions of the Buddhas."