SN 6.5 — A Certain Divinity

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Text

Linked Discourses 6.5

1. The Appeal

A Certain Divinity

At Sāvatthī.

Now at that time a certain divinity had the following harmful misconception: “No ascetic or brahmin can come here!”

Then the Buddha knew that divinity’s train of thought. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from Jeta’s Grove and reappeared in that realm of divinity. Then the Buddha sat cross-legged in the air above that divinity, having entered upon the fire element.

Then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna thought, “Where is the Buddha staying at present?” With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, he saw the Buddha seated cross-legged in the air above that divinity, having entered upon the fire element. Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from Jeta’s Grove and reappeared in that realm of divinity. Then Mahāmoggallāna—positioning himself in the east, below the Buddha—sat cross-legged in the air above that divinity, having entered upon the fire element.

Then Venerable Mahākassapa … positioned himself in the south …

Venerable Mahākappina … positioned himself in the west …

Venerable Anuruddha … positioned himself in the north, below the Buddha, sitting cross-legged in the air above that divinity, having entered upon the fire element.

Then Mahāmoggallāna addressed that divinity in verse:

“Reverend, do you still have the same view

that you had in the past?

Or do you see the radiance

surpassing the realm of divinity?”

“Good fellow, I don’t have that view

that I had in the past.

I see the radiance

surpassing the realm of divinity.

So how could I say today

that I am permanent and eternal?”

Having inspired a sense of awe in the Divinity, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, the Buddha vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in Jeta’s Grove.

Then that divinity addressed a member of his retinue, “Please, good fellow, go up to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna and say to him: ‘Moggallāna my good fellow, are there any other disciples of the Buddha who have power and might comparable to the worthies Moggallāna, Kassapa, Kappina, and Anuruddha?’”

“Yes, good fellow,” replied that retinue member. He went to Moggallāna and asked as instructed.

Then Mahāmoggallāna addressed that member of the retinue of Divinity in verse:

“There are many disciples of the Buddha

who have the three knowledges,

and have attained psychic power, expert in encompassing minds,

they’re perfected ones with defilements ended.”

Then that member of the retinue of Divinity, having approved and agreed with what Mahāmoggallāna said, went to that divinity and said to him, “Good fellow, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said this:

‘There are many disciples of the Buddha

who have the three knowledges,

and have attained psychic power, expert in encompassing minds,

they’re perfected ones with defilements ended.’”

That is what that member of the retinue of Divinity said. Satisfied, that divinity approved what the member of his retinue said.