SN 6.14 — About Aruṇavatī

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Source: https://suttacentral.net/sn6.14/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
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Text

Linked Discourses 6.14

Chapter Two

About Aruṇavatī

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī. There he addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Once upon a time, mendicants, there was a king named Aruṇavā. He had a capital named Aruṇavatī. Sikhī the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha lived supported by Aruṇavatī. Sikhī had a fine pair of chief disciples named Abhibhū and Sambhava.

Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicant Abhibhū, ‘Come, brahmin, let’s go to one of the realms of divinity until it’s time for our meal.’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, they vanished from Aruṇavatī and appeared in that realm of divinity.

Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicant Abhibhū, ‘Brahmin, teach the Dhamma as you feel inspired for that divinity, his assembly, and the members of his retinue.’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Then he educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk.

But the Divinity, his assembly, and his retinue complained, grumbled, and objected, ‘Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! How on earth can a disciple teach Dhamma in the presence of the Teacher?’

Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicant Abhibhū, ‘Brahmin, the Divinity, his assembly, and his retinue are complaining that a disciple teaches Dhamma in the presence of the Teacher. Well then, brahmin, stir them up even more!’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Then he taught Dhamma with his body visible; with his body invisible; with the lower half visible and the upper half invisible; and with the upper half visible and the lower half invisible.

And the Divinity, his assembly, and his retinue, their minds full of wonder and amazement, thought, ‘Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! The ascetic has such psychic power and

might!’

Then Abhibhū said to the Buddha Sikhī, ‘Sir, I recall having said this in the middle of the Saṅgha: “Standing in the realm of divinity, I can make my voice heard throughout the thousandfold galaxy.”’

‘Now is the time, brahmin! Now is the time, brahmin! Standing in the realm of divinity, make your voice heard throughout the thousandfold galaxy.’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Standing in the realm of divinity, he spoke this verse:

‘Rouse yourselves! Try harder!

Devote yourselves to the teachings of the Buddha!

Crush the army of Death,

as an elephant a hut of reeds.

Whoever shall meditate diligently

in this teaching and training,

giving up transmigration through rebirths,

will make an end of suffering.’

Having inspired that divinity, his assembly, and his retinue with a sense of awe, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, Sikhī and Abhibhū vanished from that realm of divinity and appeared in Aruṇavatī.

Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicants, ‘Mendicants, did you hear the mendicant Abhibhū speaking a verse while standing in a realm of divinity?’

‘We did, sir.’

‘But what exactly did you hear?’

‘This is what we heard, sir:

“Rouse yourselves! Try harder!

Devote yourselves to the teachings of the Buddha!

Crush the army of Death,

as an elephant a hut of reeds.

Whoever shall meditate diligently

in this teaching and training,

giving up transmigration through rebirths,

will make an end of suffering.”

That’s what we heard, sir.’

‘Good, good, mendicants! It’s good that you heard the mendicant Abhibhū speaking this verse while standing in a realm of divinity.’”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.