SN 11.12 — Sakka’s Names

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 11.12

Chapter Two

Sakka’s Names

Near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove. There the Buddha said to the mendicants:

“Mendicants, 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 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 gifts ably. That’s why he’s called Sakka, the Able.

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.”