AN 8.64 — At Gayā Head

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Text

Numbered Discourses 8.64

7. Earthquakes

At Gayā Head

At one time the Buddha was staying near Gayā on Gayā Head. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still not awake but intent on awakening—I perceived light but did not see forms.

Then it occurred to me, ‘What if I were to both perceive light and see forms? Then my knowledge and vision would become even more purified.’

So after some time, living diligent, keen, and resolute, I perceived light and saw forms. But I didn’t associate with those deities, converse, or engage in discussion.

Then it occurred to me, ‘What if I were to perceive light and see forms; and associate with those deities, converse, and engage in discussion? Then my knowledge and vision would become even more purified.’

So after some time … I perceived light and saw forms. And I associated with those deities, conversed, and engaged in discussion. But I didn’t know which orders of gods those deities came from.

Then it occurred to me, ‘What if I were to perceive light and see forms; and associate with those deities, converse, and engage in discussion; and find out which orders of gods those deities come from? Then my knowledge and vision would become even more purified.’

So after some time … I perceived light and saw forms. And I associated with those deities … And I found out which orders of gods those deities came from. But I didn’t know what deeds caused those deities to be reborn there after passing away from here.

So after some time … I found out what deeds caused those deities to be reborn there after passing away from here. But I didn’t know what deeds caused those deities to have such food and such an experience of pleasure and pain.

So after some time … I found out what deeds caused those deities to have such food and such an experience of pleasure and pain. But I didn’t know that these deities have a lifespan of such a length.

So after some time … I found out that these deities have a lifespan of such a length. But I didn’t know whether or not I had previously lived together with those deities.

Then it occurred to me, ‘What if I were to perceive light and see forms; and associate with those deities, converse, and engage in discussion; and find out which orders of gods those deities come from; and what deeds caused those deities to be reborn there after passing away from here; and what deeds caused those deities to have such food and such an experience of pleasure and pain; and that these deities have a lifespan of such a length; and whether or not I have previously lived together with those deities? Then my knowledge and vision would become even more purified.’

So after some time … I found out whether or not I have previously lived together with those deities.

As long as my knowledge and vision about the deities was not fully purified in these eight rounds, I didn’t announce my supreme perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans.

But when my knowledge and vision about the deities was fully purified in these eight rounds, I announced my supreme perfect awakening in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans. Knowledge and vision arose in me: ‘My freedom is unshakable; this is my last rebirth; now there’ll be no more future lives.’”