AN 10.21 — The Lion’s Roar

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Text

Numbered Discourses 10.21

3. The Great Chapter

The Lion’s Roar

“Mendicants, toward evening the lion, king of beasts, emerges from his den, yawns, surveys the four quarters, and roars his lion’s roar three times. Then he sets out on the hunt. Why is that? ‘May I not injure any little creatures on unclear ground.’

‘Lion’ is a term for the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. When the Realized One teaches Dhamma to an assembly, this is his lion’s roar.

The Realized One possesses ten powers of a Realized One. With these he claims the bull’s place, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel. What ten? Firstly, the Realized One truly understands the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. Relying on this he claims the bull’s place, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.

Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the result of deeds undertaken in the past, future, and present in terms of grounds and causes. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands where all paths of practice lead. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the world with its many and diverse elements. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the diverse convictions of sentient beings. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the faculties of other sentient beings and other individuals after encompassing them with his mind. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands corruption, cleansing, and emergence regarding the absorptions, liberations, immersions, and attainments. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, the Realized One recollects many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. He remembers: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' Thus he recollects his many past lives, with features and details. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, the Realized One sees sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. He understands how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, he sees sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. He understands how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

Furthermore, the Realized One has realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and lives having realized it with his own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

These are the ten powers of a Realized One that the Realized One possesses. With these he claims the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel."