

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Vesālī in the grove outside the city to the west.

2. Now on that occasion Sunakkhatta, son of the Licchavis, had recently left this Dhamma and Discipline. He was making this statement before the Vesālī assembly: "The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a Dhamma [merely] hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of inquiry as it occurs to him, and when he teaches the Dhamma to anyone, it leads him when he practices it to the complete destruction of suffering."

3. Then, when it was morning, the venerable Sāriputta dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Vesālī for alms. Then he heard Sunakkhatta, son of the Licchavis, making this statement before the Vesālī assembly. When he had wandered for alms in Vesālī and had returned from his almsround, after his meal he went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and told the Blessed One what Sunakkhatta was saying.

4. [The Blessed One said:] "Sāriputta, the misguided man Sunakkhatta is angry and his words are spoken out of anger. Thinking to discredit the Tathāgata, he actually praises him; for it is praise of the Tathāgata to say of him: 'When he teaches the Dhamma to anyone, it leads him when he practices it to the complete destruction of suffering.'

5. "Sāriputta, this misguided man Sunakkhatta will never infer of me according to Dhamma: That Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed.'

6. "And he will never infer of me according to Dhamma: 'That Blessed One enjoys the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; he appears and vanishes; he goes unhindered through a wall, through an enclosure, through a mountain, as though through space; he dives in and out of the earth as though it were water; he walks on water without sinking as though it were earth; seated cross-legged, he travels in space like a bird; with his hand he touches and strokes the moon and sun so powerful and mighty; he wields bodily mastery even as far as the Brahma-world.'

7. "And he will never infer of me according to Dhamma: 'With the divine ear element, which is purified and surpasses the human, that Blessed One hears both kinds of sounds, the heavenly and the human, those that are far as well as near.'

8. "And he will never infer of me according to Dhamma: 'That Blessed One encompasses with his own mind the minds of other beings, other persons. He understands a mind affected by lust as affected by lust and a mind unaffected by lust as unaffected by lust; he understands a mind affected by hate as affected by hate and a mind unaffected by hate as unaffected by hate; he understands a mind affected by delusion as affected by delusion and a mind unaffected by delusion as unaffected by delusion; he understands a contracted mind as contracted and a distracted mind as distracted; he understands an exalted mind as exalted and an unexalted mind as unexalted; he understands a surpassed mind as surpassed and an unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed; he understands a concentrated mind as concentrated and an unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated; he understands a liberated mind as liberated and an unliberated mind as unliberated.'

(TEN POWERS OF A TATHĀGATA)

9. "Sāriputta, the Tathāgata has these ten Tathāgata's powers, possessing which he claims the herd-leader's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets rolling the Wheel of Brahmā. What are the ten?

10. (1) "Here, the Tathāgata understands as it actually is the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible. And that is a Tathāgata's power that the Tathāgata has, by virtue of which he claims the herd-leader's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets rolling the Wheel of Brahmā.

11. (2) "Again, the Tathāgata understands as it actually is the results of actions undertaken, past, future, and present, by way of possibilities and causes. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

12. (3) "Again, the Tathāgata understands as it actually is the ways leading to all destinations. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

13. (4) "Again, the Tathāgata understands as it actually is the world with its many and different elements. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

14. (5) "Again, the Tathāgata understands as it actually is how beings have different inclinations. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

15. (6) "Again, the Tathāgata understands as it actually is the disposition of the faculties of other beings, other persons. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

16. (7) "Again, the Tathāgata understands as it actually is the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence in regard to the jhānas, liberations, concentrations, and attainments. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

17. (8) "Again, the Tathāgata recollects his manifold past lives that is, one birth, two births... (as Sutta 4, §27)...Thus with their aspects and particulars he recollects his manifold past lives. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

18. (9) "Again, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, the Tathāgata sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate ..(as Sutta 4, §29)...and he understands how beings pass on according to their actions. That too is a Tathāgata's power...

19. (10) "Again, by realizing for himself with direct knowledge, the Tathāgata here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints. That too is a Tathāgata's power that the Tathāgata has, by virtue of which he claims the herd-leader's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets roiling the Wheel of Brahmā.

20. "The Tathāgata has these ten Tathāgata's powers, possessing which he claims the herd-leader's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets rolling the Wheel of

Brahmā.

21. "Sāriputta, when I know and see thus, should anyone say 'The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a Dhamma [merely] hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of inquiry as it occurs to him' — unless he abandons that assertion and that state of mind and relinquishes that view, then as [surely as if he had been] carried off and put there he will wind up in hell. Just as a bhikkhu possessed of virtue, concentration, and wisdom would here and now enjoy final knowledge, so it will happen in this case, I say, that unless he abandons that assertion and that state of mind and relinquishes that view, then as [surely as if he had been] carried off and put there he will wind up in hell.

(FOUR KINDS OF INTREPIDITY)

22. "Sāriputta, the Tathāgata has these four kinds of intrepidity, possessing which he claims the herd-leader's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets rolling the Wheel of Brahmā. What are the four?

23. "Here, I see no ground on which any recluse or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone else at all in the world could, in accordance with the Dhamma, accuse me thus: 'While you claim to be fully enlightened, you are not fully enlightened about these things.' And seeing no ground for that, I abide in safety, fearlessness, and intrepidity.

24. "I see no ground on which any recluse...or anyone at all could accuse me thus: 'While you claim to be one who has destroyed the taints, you have not destroyed these taints.' And seeing no ground for that, I abide in safety, fearlessness, and intrepidity.

25. "I see no ground on which any recluse...or anyone at all could accuse me thus: 'Those things called obstructions by you are not able to obstruct one who engages in them.' And seeing no ground on that, I abide in safety, fearlessness, and intrepidity.

26. "I see no ground on which any recluse...or anyone at all could accuse me thus: 'When you

teach the Dhamma to someone, it does not lead him when he practices it to the complete destruction of suffering.' And seeing no ground for that, I abide in safety, fearlessness, and intrepidity.

27. "A Tathāgata has these four kinds of intrepidity, possessing which he claims the herd-leader's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets rolling the Wheel of Brahmā.

28. "Sāriputta, when I know and see thus, should anyone say of me...he will wind up in hell.

(THE EIGHT ASSEMBLIES)

29. "Sāriputta, there are these eight assemblies. What are the eight? An assembly of nobles, an assembly of brahmins, an assembly of householders, an assembly of recluses, an assembly of gods of the heaven of the Four Great Kings, an assembly of gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three, an assembly of Māra's retinue, an assembly of Brahmās. Possessing these four kinds of intrepidity, the Tathāgata approaches and enters these eight assemblies.

30. "I recall having approached many hundred assemblies of nobles...many hundred assemblies of brahmins...many hundred assemblies of householders...many hundred assemblies of recluses...many hundred assemblies of gods of the heaven of the Four Great Kings...many hundred assemblies of gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three...many hundred assemblies of Māra's retinue...many hundred assemblies of Brahmās. And formerly I had sat with them there and talked with them and held conversations with them, yet I see no ground for thinking that fear or timidity might come upon me there. And seeing no ground for I that, I abide in safety, fearlessness, and intrepidity.

31. "Sāriputta, when I know and see thus, should anyone say of me...he will wind up in hell.

(FOUR KINDS OF GENERATION)

32. "Sāriputta, there are these four kinds of generation. What are the four? Egg-born generation, womb-born generation, moisture-born generation, and spontaneous generation.

33. "What is egg-born generation? There are these beings born by breaking out of the shell of an egg; this is called egg-born generation. What is womb-born generation? There are these beings born by breaking out from the caul; this it called womb-born generation. What is moisture-born generation? There are these beings born in a rotten fish, in a rotten corpse, in rotten porridge, in a cesspit, or in a sewer; this is called moisture-born generation. What is spontaneous generation? There are gods and denizens of hell and certain human beings and some beings in the lower worlds; this is called spontaneous generation. These are the four kinds of generation.

34. "Sāriputta, when I know and see thus, should anyone say of me...he will wind up in hell.

#### (THE FIVE DESTINATIONS AND NIBBĀNA)

35. "Sāriputta, there are these five destinations. What are the five? Hell, the animal realm, the realm of ghosts, human beings, and gods.

36. (1) "I understand hell, and the path and way leading to hell. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.

(2) "I understand the animal realm, and the path and way leading to the animal realm. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in the animal realm.

(3) "I understand the realm of ghosts, and the path and way leading to the realm of ghosts. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in the realm of ghosts.

(4) 'I understand human beings, and the path and way leading to the human world. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear among human beings.

(5) "I understand the gods, and the path and way leading to the world of the gods. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.

(6) "I understand Nibbāna, and the path and way leading to Nibbāna. And I also understand how one who has entered this path will, by realizing for himself with direct knowledge, here and now enter upon and abide in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.

37. (1) "By encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell.' And then later on, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell, and is experiencing exclusively painful racking, piercing feelings. Suppose there were a charcoal pit deeper than a man's height full of glowing coals without flame or smoke; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same charcoal pit. Then, a man with good sight on seeing him would say: "This person behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path, that he will come to this same charcoal pit"; and then later on he sees that he has fallen into that charcoal pit and is experiencing exclusively painful, racking, piercing feelings. So too, by encompassing mind with mind...piercing feelings.

38. (2) "By encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after I death, he will reappear in the animal realm.' And then later on, I with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in the animal realm and is experiencing painful, racking, piercing feelings. Suppose there were a cesspit deeper than a man's height full of filth; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same cesspit. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves...that he will come to this same cesspit'; and then later on he sees that he has fallen into that cesspit and is experiencing painful, racking, piercing feelings. So too, by encompassing mind with mind...piercing feelings.

39. (3) "By encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in the realm of ghosts.' And then later on...I see that...he has reappeared in the realm of ghosts and is experiencing much painful feeling. Suppose there were a tree growing on uneven ground with scanty foliage casting a dappled shadow; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same tree. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves...that he will come to this same tree'; and then later on he sees that he is sitting or lying in the shade of that tree experiencing painful feeling. So too, by encompassing mind with mind...much painful feeling.

40. (4) "By encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear among human beings.' And then later on...I see that...he has reappeared among human beings and is experiencing much pleasant feeling. Suppose there were a tree growing on even ground with thick foliage casting a deep shade; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only and directed to that same tree. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves...that he will come to this same tree'; and then later on he sees that he is sitting or lying in the shade of that tree experiencing much pleasant feeling. So too, by encompassing mind with mind...much pleasant feeling.

41. (5) "By encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he will reappear in a happy destination, in the heavenly world.' And then later on...I see that...he has reappeared in a happy destination, in the heavenly world, and is experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings. Suppose there were a mansion, and it had an upper chamber plastered within and without, shut off secured by bars, with shuttered windows, and in it there was a couch spread with rugs, blankets, and sheets, with a deerskin coverlet, with a canopy as well as crimson pillows for both [head and feet]; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path one way only and directed to that same mansion. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves...that he will come to this same mansion'; and then later on on he sees that he is sitting or lying in that upper chamber in that mansion experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings. So too, by encompassing mind with mind...exclusively pleasant feeling.

42. (6) "By encompassing mind with mind I understand a certain person thus: 'This person so behaves, so conducts himself, has taken such a path that by realizing for himself with direct



knowledge, he here and now will enter upon and abide in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.' And then later on I see that by realizing for himself with direct knowledge, he here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints, and is experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings. Suppose there were a pond with clean, agreeable, cool water, transparent, with smooth banks, delightful, and nearby a dense wood; and then a man scorched and exhausted by hot weather, weary, parched, and thirsty, came by a path going in one way only towards that same pond. Then a man with good sight on seeing him would say: 'This person so behaves...that he will come to this same pond'; and then later on he sees that he has plunged into the pond, bathed, drunk, and relieved all his distress, fatigue, and fever and has come out again and is sitting or lying in the wood experiencing exclusively pleasant feelings. So too, by encompassing mind with mind...exclusively pleasant feelings. These are the five destinations.

43. "Sāriputta, when I know and see thus, should anyone say of me: 'The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a Dhamma [merely] hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of inquiry as it occurs to him'—unless he abandons that assertion and that state of mind and relinquishes that view, then as [surely as if he had been] carried off and put there he will wind up in hell. Just as a bhikkhu possessed of virtue, concentration, and wisdom would here and now enjoy final knowledge, so it will happen in this case, I say, that unless he abandons that assertion and that state of mind and relinquishes that view, then as [surely as if he had been] carried off and put there he will wind up in hell.

#### (THE BODHISATTA'S AUSTERITIES)

44. "Sāriputta, I recall having lived a holy life possessing four factors. I have been an ascetic—a supreme ascetic; I have been coarse—supremely coarse; I have been scrupulous—supremely scrupulous; I have been secluded—supremely secluded.

45. "Such was my asceticism, Sāriputta, that I went naked, rejecting conventions, licking my hands, not coming when asked, not stopping when asked; I did not accept food brought or food specially made or an invitation to a meal; I received nothing from a pot, from a bowl, across a threshold, across a stick, across a pestle, from two eating together, from a pregnant woman, from a woman giving suck, from a woman in the midst of men, from where food was advertised to be distributed, from where a dog was waiting, from where flies were buzzing; I accepted no fish or meat, I drank no liquor, wine, or fermented brew. I kept to one house, to one morsel; I kept to two houses, to two morsels;... I kept to seven houses, to seven morsels. I lived on one

saucerful a day, on two saucerfuls a day...on seven saucerfuls a day; I took food once a day, once every two days...once every seven days; thus even up to once every fortnight, I dwelt pursuing the practice of taking food at stated intervals. I was an eater of greens or millet or wild rice or hide-parings or moss or ricebran or rice-scum or sesamum flour or grass or cowdung. I lived on forest roots and fruits; I fed on fallen fruits. I clothed myself in hemp, in hemp-mixed cloth, in shrouds, in refuse rags, in tree bark, in antelope hide, in strips of antelope hide, in kusa-grass fabric, in bark fabric, in wood-shavings fabric, in head-hair wool, in animal wool, in owls' wings. I was one who pulled out hair and beard, pursuing the practice of pulling out hair and beard I was one who stood continuously, rejecting seats. I was one who squatted continuously, devoted to maintaining the squatting position. I was one who used a mattress of spikes; I made a mattress of spikes my bed. I dwelt pursuing the practice bathing in water three times daily including the evening. Thus in such a variety of ways I dwelt pursuing the practice of tormenting and mortifying the body. Such was my asceticism.

46. "Such was my coarseness, Sāriputta, that just as the bole a tindukā tree, accumulating over the years, cakes and flakes off, so too, dust and dirt, accumulating over the years, caked off my body and flaked off. It never occurred to me: 'Oh, let me rub this dust and dirt off with my hand, or let another rub this dust and dirt off with his hand'—it never occurred to me thus. Such was my coarseness.

47. "Such was my scrupulousness, Sāriputta, that I was always mindful in stepping forwards and stepping backwards. I was full of pity even in regard to a drop of water thus: 'Let me not hurt the tiny creatures in the crevices of the ground.' Such was my scrupulousness.

48. "Such was my seclusion, Sāriputta, that I would plunge into some forest and dwell there. And when I saw a cowherd or a shepherd or someone gathering grass or sticks, or a woodsman, I would flee from grove to grove, from thicket to thicket, from hollow to hollow, from hillock to hillock. Why was that? So that they should not see me or I see them. Just as a forest-bred deer, on seeing human beings, flees from grove to grove, from thicket to thicket, from hollow to hollow, from hillock to hillock, so too, when I saw a cowherd or a shepherd...Such was my seclusion.

49. "I would go on all fours to the cow-pens when the cattle had gone out and the cowherd had left them, and I would feed on the dung of the young suckling calves. As long as my own excrement and urine lasted, I fed on my own excrement and urine. Such was my great practice of feeding on filth.

50. "I would plunge into some awe-inspiring grove and dwell there—a grove so awe-inspiring that it would make most of a man's hairs stand up if he were not freed from lust. When those cold wintry nights came during the 'eight-days period of snowfall,' I would dwell by night in the open and by day in the grove. In the last month of the hot season I would dwell by day in the open and by night in the grove. And there came to me spontaneously this stanza never heard before:

'Chilled by night and scorched by day,  
Alone in awe-inspiring groves,  
Naked, no fire to sit beside,  
The sage yet pursues his quest.'

51. "I would make my bed in a charnel ground with the bones of the dead for a pillow. And cowherd boys came up and spat on me, urinated on me, threw dirt at me, and poked sticks into my ears. Yet I do not recall that I ever aroused an evil mind [of hate] against them. Such was my abiding in equanimity.

52. "Sāriputta, there are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification comes about through food.' They say: 'Let us live on kola-fruits,' and they eat kola-fruits, they eat kola-fruit powder, they drink kola-fruit water, and they make many kinds of kola-fruit concoctions. Now I recall having eaten a single kola-fruit a day. Sāriputta, you may think that the kola-fruit was bigger at that time, yet you should not regard it so: the kola-fruit was then at most the same size as now. Through feeding on a single kola-fruit a day, my body reached a state of extreme emaciation. Because of eating so little my limbs became like the jointed segments of vine stems or bamboo stems. Because of eating so little my backside became like a camel's hoof. Because of eating so little the projections on my spine stood forth like corded beads. Because of eating so little my ribs jutted out as gaunt as the crazy rafters of an old roofless bam. Because of eating so little the gleam of my eyes sank far down in their sockets, looking like a gleam of water that has sunk far down in a deep well. Because of eating so little my scalp shrivelled and withered as a green bitter gourd shrivels and withers in the wind and sun. Because of eating so little my belly skin adhered to my backbone; thus if I wanted to touch my belly skin I encountered my backbone, and if I wanted to touch my backbone I encountered my belly skin. Because of eating so little, if I wanted to defecate or urinate, I fell over on my face right there. Because of eating so little, if I tried to ease my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell from my body as I rubbed.

53-55. "Sāriputta, there are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification comes about through food.' They say: 'Let us live on beans,'...'Let us live on

sesamum, '...'Let us live on rice,' and they eat rice, they eat rice powder, they drink rice water, and they make many kinds of rice concoctions. Now I recall having eaten a single rice grain a day. Sāriputta, you may think that the rice grain was bigger at that time, yet you should not regard it so: the rice grain was then at most the same size as now. Through feeding on a single rice grain a day, my body reached a state of extreme emaciation. Because of eating so little...the hair, rotted at its roots, fell from my body as I rubbed.

56. "Yet, Sāriputta, by such conduct, by such practice, by such performance of austerities, I did not attain any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of noble ones. Why was that? Because I did not attain that noble wisdom which when attained is noble and emancipating and leads the one who practices in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering.

57. "Sāriputta, there are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification comes about through the round of rebirths.' But it is not easy to find a realm in the round that I have not already passed through in this long journey except for the gods of the Pure Abodes; and had I passed through the round as a god in the Pure Abodes, I would never have returned to this world.

58. "There are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification comes about through [some particular kind of] rebirth.' But it is not easy to find a kind of rebirth that I have not been reborn in already in this long journey, except for the gods of the Pure Abodes...

59. "There are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification comes about through [some particular] abode.' But it is not easy to find a kind of abode that I have not already dwelt in...except for the gods of the Pure Abodes...

60. "There are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification comes about through sacrifice.' But it is not easy to find a kind of sacrifice that has not already been offered up by me in this long journey, when I was either a head-anointed noble king or a well-to-do brahmin.

61. "There are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'Purification

comes through fire-worship.' But it is not easy to find a kind of fire that has not already been worshipped by me in this long journey, when I was either a head-anointed noble king or a well-to-do brahmin.

62. "Sāriputta, there are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'At long as this good man is still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life, so long is he perfect in his lucid wisdom. But when this good man is old, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, and come to the last stage, being eighty, ninety, or a hundred years old, then the lucidity of his wisdom is lost.' But it should not be regarded so. I am now old, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, and come to the last stage: my years have turned eighty. Now suppose that I had four disciples with a hundred years' lifespan, perfect in mindfulness, retentiveness, memory, and lucidity of wisdom. Just as a skilled archer, trained, practiced, and tested, could easily shoot a light arrow across the shadow of a palm tree, suppose that they were even to that extent perfect in mindfulness, retentiveness, memory, and lucidity of wisdom. Suppose that they continuously asked me about the four foundations of Mindfulness and that I answered them when asked and that they remembered each answer of mine and never asked a subsidiary question or paused except to eat, drink, consume food, taste, urinate, defecate, and rest in order to remove sleepiness and tiredness. Still the Tathāgata's exposition of the Dhamma, his explanations of factors of the Dhamma, and his replies to questions would not yet come to an end, but meanwhile those four disciples of mine with their hundred years' lifespan would have died at the end of those hundred years. Sāriputta, even if you have to carry me about on a bed, still there will be no change in the lucidity of the Tathāgata's wisdom.

63. "Rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'A being not subject to delusion has appeared in the world for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans,' it is of me indeed that rightly speaking this should be said."

64. "Now on that occasion the venerable Nāgasamāla was standing behind the Blessed One fanning him. Then he said to the Blessed One: "It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvellous! As I listened to this discourse on the Dhamma, the hairs of my body stood up. Venerable sir, what is the name of this discourse on the Dhamma?"

"As to that, Nāgasamāla, you may remember this discourse on the Dhamma as 'The Hair-Raising Discourse.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Nāgasamāla was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

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Majjhima Nikāya 12

Part One – The Root Fifty Discourses (Mūlapaṭṭhāsapāṭi)

The Division of the Lion's Roar (Sīhanādavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi