

Digha Nikaya 20

Mahasamaya Sutta

The Great Meeting

For free distribution only, as a gift of Dhamma.

On this **Mahasamaya** day (**The Full Moon of Nayon**), in Myanmar, the Buddha had arrived in his country of origin and was residing outside the town of *Kapilavattu*. In the evening **Devas** and **Brahmas**, arrived at different times at the assembly of the ten thousand universes closest to our universe, and the Buddha then gave the discourse of the Great Occasion (*Mahasamaya*). In this *sutta* he mentioned the names of the **Brahmas** and **Devas** as and when they arrived and taught the Dhamma in six *suttas*. All the beings present were of one of six different mental dispositions and the six *suttas* were suited to these. The Buddha created an identical image (*Nimmitta*) of himself and taught posing and answering questions

In Myanmar, this day is celebrated especially by the recitation of the *Mahasamaya sutta*, apart from the customary religious observances performed on *Uposatha* days. At this time the examinations for the *bhikkhus* are held in which their proficiency in the Pali language and the scriptures is tested. In olden times kings used to perform the ground breaking ceremony on this day, as it marks the beginning of the rains and therefore the beginning of the ploughing and planting season.

This discourse is the closest thing in the Pali Canon to a "who's who" of the deva worlds, and should provide useful material for anyone interested in the cosmology of early Buddhism.

The Commentary reports the belief that the devas enjoy hearing this discourse chanted in Pali. Until recently it was part of many monks'

standard memorized repertoire, to be chanted at weddings and the dedication of new buildings. Even today, as many of the traditions of memorization in Asia seem to be falling by the wayside, there are a few monks and laypeople who chant this discourse regularly.

Mahasamaya Sutta

Thus have I heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in the Great Wood, together with a large Sangha of approximately five hundred bhikkhus, all of them arahants. And most of the devatas from ten world-systems had gathered in order to see the Blessed One and the Bhikkhu Sangha. Then the thought occurred to four devatas of the ranks from the Pure Abodes: "The Blessed One is dwelling among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in the Great Wood, together with a large Sangha of about five hundred bhikkhus, all of them arahants. And most of the devatas from ten world-systems have gathered in order to see the Blessed One and the Bhikkhu Sangha. Let us also approach the Blessed One and, on arrival, let us each speak a verse in his presence."

Then, just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm, those devatas disappeared from among the devas of the Pure Abodes and reappeared before the Blessed One. Having paid homage to the Blessed One, they stood to one side. As they were standing there, one devata recited this verse in the Blessed One's presence:

*"A great meeting in the woods:
The deva hosts have assembled.
We have come to this Dhamma meeting
To see the invincible Sangha."*

Then another devata recited this verse in the Blessed One's presence:

*"The bhikkhus there are concentrated,
Have straightened their own minds.
Like a charioteer holding the reins,
The wise ones guard their faculties."*

Then another devata recited this verse in the Blessed One's presence:

*"Having cut through barrenness, cut the cross-bar,
Having uprooted Indra's pillar, unstirred,
They wander about pure, unstained,
Young nagas well tamed by the One with Vision."*

Then another devata recited this verse in the Blessed One's presence:

*"Those who have gone to the Buddha for refuge
Will not go to the plane of woe.
On discarding the human body,
They will fill the hosts of the devas."*

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks, most of the devatas from ten world-systems have gathered in order to see the Tathagata and the Bhikkhu Sangha. Those who, in the past, were Pure Ones, Rightly Self-awakened, at most had their devata-gathering like mine at the present. Those who, in the future, will be Pure Ones, Rightly Self-awakened, will at most have their devata-gathering like mine at the present. I will detail for you the names of the deva hosts. I will describe to you the names of the deva hosts. I will teach you the names of the deva hosts. Listen and pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," the monks replied. The Blessed One said:

I recite a verse of tribute.
Those who live where spirits dwell,
who live in mountain caves,
resolute, concentrated,
many, like hidden lions,
who have overcome horripilation,
white-hearted, pure,
serene, and undisturbed:
Knowing that more than 500 of them
had come to the forest of Kapilavatthu,
the Teacher then said to them,
disciples delighting in his instruction,
"The deva hosts have approached.
Detect them, monks!"
Listening to the Awakened One's instruction,
they made a diligent effort.

Knowledge appeared to them,
vision of non-human beings.
Some saw 100, some 1,000, some 70,000,
some had vision of 100,000 **non-human beings**.
Some gained vision of innumerable devas
filling every direction.
Realizing all this,
the One-with-Vision felt moved to speak.
The Teacher then said to them,
disciples delighting in his instruction,
"The deva hosts have approached.
Detect them, monks,
as I describe their glories, one by one.

7,000 yakkhas inhabiting the land of Kapilavatthu,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

6,000 yakhas from the Himalayas,
of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

From Mount Sata 3,000 yakkhas
of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

These **16,000 yakkhas of varied hue**
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

500 yakkhas from Vessamitta, of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

Kumbhira from Rajagaha,
who dwells on Mount Vepulla,
accompanied by more than **100,000 yakkhas** --
Kumbhira from Rajagaha:
He, too, has come to the forest meeting.

And **Dhatarattha**, who rules
as king of the Eastern Direction,
as lord of the **gandhabbas**:
A glorious, great king is he,
and many are his sons
named **Indra**, of great strength.
Powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, they have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

And **Virulhaka**, who rules
as king of the Southern Direction,
as lord of the **kumbandas**:
A glorious, great king is he,
and many are his sons
named **Indra**, of great strength.
Powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, they have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

And **Virupakkha**, who rules
as king of the Western Direction,
as lord of the **nagas**:
A glorious, great king is he,
and many are his sons
named **Indra**, of great strength.

Powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, they have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

And **Kuvera**, who rules
as king of the Northern Direction,
as lord of the **yakkhas**:
A glorious, great king is he,
and many are his sons
named Indra, of great strength.
Powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, they have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

Dhatarattha from the Eastern Direction,
Virulhaka from the South,
Virupakkha from the West,
Kuvera from the Northern Direction:
These four Great Kings
encompassing the four directions,
resplendent, stand in the Kapilavatthu forest.

Their deceitful vassals have also come
-- deceptive, treacherous --
Maya, Kutendu, vetendu,
Vitu with Vituta,
Candana, the Chief of Sensual Pleasure,
Kinnughandu, Nighandu,
Panada, the Mimic,
Matali, the deva's charioteer,
Cittasena the **gandhabba**,
King Nala, the Bull of the People,
Pañcasikha has come
with Timbaru and his daughter, **Suriyavacchasa**.
These and other kings, gandhabbas with their kings,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

Then there have also come
nagas from **Lake Nabhasa**,
Vesali, and **Tacchaka**.
Kambalas, Assataras,
Payagas, and their kin.
And from the River Yamuna
comes the **prestigious naga, Dhatarattha**.
The great naga Eravanna:
He, too, has come
to the forest meeting."

They who swoop down swiftly on naga kings,
divine, twice-born, winged, their eyesight pure:
(**Garudas**) came from the sky to the midst of the forest.
Citra and Supanna are their names.
But the Buddha made the naga kings safe,
made them secure from Supanna.
Addressing one another with affectionate words,
the nagas and Supannas made the Buddha their refuge.

"Defeated by Indra of the thunderbolt hand,
Asuras dwelling in the ocean,
Vasava's brothers -- powerful, prestigious --
Greatly terrifying **Kalakañjas**,
the Danaveghasa asuras
Vepacitti and Sucitti,
Paharada, with Namuci,
and Bali's hundred sons, all named Veroca,
arrayed with powerful armies
have approached their honored Rahu
[and said]: 'Now is the occasion, sir,
of the monk's forest meeting.'

Devas of water, earth, fire, and wind have come here.
Varunas, Varunas,
Soma together with Yasa,
the prestigious devas of the hosts
of goodwill and compassion have come.
These ten ten-fold hosts, all of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,

glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

Vendu (Visnu) and **Sahali,**
Asama and the Yama twins,
the **devas dependent on the moon**
surrounding the moon have come.
The **devas dependent on the sun**
surrounding the sun have come.
Devas surrounding the zodiac stars
and the sprites of the clouds have come.
Sakka, chief of the Vasus, the ancient donor, has come.
These ten ten-fold hosts, all of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

Then come the **Sahabhu devas,**
blazing like crests of fire-flame.
The **Arittakas, Rojas,**
cornflower blue.
Varunas and Sahadhammas,
Accutas and Anejakas,
Suleyyas and Ruciras,
and Vasavanesis have come.
These ten ten-fold hosts, all of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

Samanas and **Great Samanas,**
Manusas and Super Manusas,
the devas corrupted by fun have come,
as well as devas corrupted by mind.
Then come green-gold devas and those wearing red.
Paragas and Great Paragas,
prestigious devas have come.

These ten ten-fold hosts, all of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

White devas, ruddy-green devas, dawn-devas
have come with the Veghanas
headed by devas totally in white.

The Vicakkhanas have come.

Sadamatta, Haragajas,
and the prestigious multi-coloredes,

Pajunna, the thunderer,
who brings rain to all lands:

These ten ten-fold hosts, all of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

The **Khemiyas, Tusitas, and Yamas,**
the prestigious Katthakas,
Lambitakas, and Lama chiefs,
the Jotinamas and Asavas,
the Nimmanaratis have come,
as have the Paranimmitas.

These ten ten-fold hosts, all of varied hue,
powerful, effulgent,
glamorous, prestigious,
rejoicing, have approached
the monks' forest meeting.

These **60 deva groups,** all of varied hue,
have come arranged in order,
together with others in like manner

[thinking:]

'We'll see him who has transcended birth,
who has no bounds,
who has crossed over the flood,

the Mighty One, beyond evil,
like the moon released from a cloud.'

Subrahma and Paramatta Brahma,
together with sons of the Powerful One,
Sanankumara and **Tissa**:
They too have come to the forest meeting.
Great Brahma, who stands over
1,000 Brahma worlds,
who arose there spontaneously, effulgent:
Prestigious is he, with a terrifying body.
And ten brahma sovereigns,
each the lord of his own realm --
and in their midst has come
Harita Brahma surrounded by his retinue."

When all these devas
with **Indras** and **Brahmas** had come,
Mara came as well.
Now look at the Dark One's foolishness!
[He said:] "Come seize them! Bind them!
Tie them down with passion!
Surround them on every side!
Don't let anyone at all escape!"
Thus the great war-lord urged on his dark army,
slapping the ground with his hand,
making a horrendous din, as when
a storm cloud bursts with thunder,
lightening, and torrents of rain.
But then he withdrew-enraged,
with none under his sway.
Realizing all this,
the One-with-Vision felt moved to speak.
The Teacher then said to them,
disciples delighting in his instruction,
"Mara's army has approached.
Detect them, monks!"
Listening to the Awakened One's instruction,
they made a diligent effort.
The army retreated

from those without passion,
without raising even a hair on their bodies.
Having all won the battle
-- prestigious, past fear --
they rejoice with all beings:
Disciples outstanding among the human race.

<http://www.edhamma.com> for sound clip

31 Sutta (Paritta)

Thahton Sayadaw

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Mahasamaya Sutta



Ananta Metta

Maung Paw