

AN 4.23: Loka Sutta

The World

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

“Monks, the world has been fully awakened to by a Tathāgata. A Tathāgata is unbound from the world. Monks, the origin of the world has been fully awakened to by a Tathāgata. A Tathāgata has discarded the origin of the world. Monks, the cessation of the world has been fully awakened to by a Tathāgata. A Tathāgata has realized the cessation of the world. Monks, the path which leads to the cessation of the world has been fully awakened to by a Tathāgata. A Tathāgata has practiced the path which leads to the cessation of the world.

(1) “Monks, in this world with its angels, demons, and demigods, in this generation with its contemplatives and priests, its celestial and human beings, whatever can be seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought out, or investigated with the mind - all that has been fully awakened to by a Tathāgata. Therefore he is called ‘Tathāgata.’¹

(2) “Monks, from the night a Tathāgata attains unsurpassed complete Awakening until the night when he fully enters into the Nibbāna-element without remainder, everything that he states, speaks, and explains is just that and not otherwise. Therefore he is called ‘Tathāgata.’²

(3) “Monks, a Tathāgata speaks in line with how he acts, and acts in line with how he speaks. Thus how he speaks it how he acts, and how he acts is how he speaks. Therefore he is called ‘Tathāgata.’³

(4) “Monks, in this world with its angels, demons, and demigods, in this generation with its contemplatives and priests, its celestial and human beings, the Tathāgata is the lord, unconquerable, the one who sees everything, the powerful one. Therefore he is called ‘Tathāgata.’⁴

“Having directly known the whole world just as it is,
Unbound from the whole world, unattached to the whole world.
The All-Conqueror, the Steadfast One, liberated from all ties,
Who has touched the highest peace - Nibbāna, free from danger and fear.
Free of corruption, he is the Buddha, serene, who has transcended doubt,
Who has reached the elimination of all karma,
Liberated through the complete elimination of acquisition.
This is the Blessed One, the Buddha, the unsurpassable lion.
In this world with its angels he set in motion the divine wheel.
Thus both angels and humans have taken refuge in the Buddha.

1 Here the title “Tathāgata” appears to be explained as meaning “One who has arrived (*āgata*) at the truth (*tathā*)” - the “Truth-Finder.”

2 Here it appears to be explained as “One who goes (*gata*) by speaking things as they are (*tathā*)” - the “Truth-Speaker.”

3 Here it appears to be explained as “One who acts (*gata*) according (*tathā*) to what he says.”

4 Unlike the previous three, here there does not appear to be a linguistic connection between the explanation given and the etymology of the word “Tathāgata.”

They come together and worship him - the great one, the confident one;
The Tamed One, the best of those who tame;
The Peaceful One, the wisest of those who bring peace;
The Liberated One, the highest of those who liberate;
The Transcendent One, the most excellent of those who help others transcend.
Thus they worship him - the great one, the confident one.
In this world with its angels, there is no person equal to him.”