AN 3.127 — Hatthaka Sutta (Hatthaka the Young Deva)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

126. Hatthaka Sutta (Hatthaka the Young Deva) At one time, The Blessed One was living in Sāvatthī, at the monastery offered by Anāthapiṇḍika, in Jeta's Grove.

Then, when the night was far spent, Hatthaka the young Deva approached The Blessed One, as he illuminated the whole of Jeta's Grove, while thinking to himself:

'Unlike before, when in approaching My Teacher, I used to get on my knees, now I will have to stand by touching the ground with my feet, while venerating My Beloved Teacher, The Blessed One!'

But, in doing so, he suddenly found himself sinking into the ground beneath him, much like hot oil or ghee would start to sink when poured on sand.

In the same manner, Hatthaka the young Deva, while trying to stand before The Blessed One, found himself sinking and could not stand upright, having lost his balance.

Then, The Blessed One instructed Hatthaka:

"Create a denser and more solid version of your body, Hatthaka!"

"Yes, Lord!" said Hatthaka, as he did just as instructed by The Blessed One, and created a grosser bodily form of himself, with which he was able to stand and pay homage to The Blessed One, and then went and stood to one side.

Then, The Blessed One said to him:

"Hatthaka, do you still recall those teachings that you learned in your life, while a human being?"

"Blessed Lord, I do indeed, still recall those teachings that I learned in my life while a human being, as well as those teachings from even earlier times, which I could not recall at all, while I was still in human form, but now they are all coming back to me!

“In fact, Blessed Lord, just as The Blessed One now lives while being surrounded by Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, male and female lay disciples, kings, kings’ ministers, and all those from different sects, along with their disciples, who come to listen and learn The Dhamma;

“In the same manner, Blessed Lord, I am often crowded by other Devas, who come to me from near and far, all eager to listen to The Dhamma from this Hatthaka, now the young Deva!

“This because, O Blessed Lord, I died while not being satisfied and thirsty for more, in regards to these three things. What three?

“Blessed Lord, I passed away while not being satisfied, because I was thirsty for more, to come and see The Blessed One.

“Blessed Lord, I passed away while not being satisfied, because I was thirsty for more, to come and listen to the True Dhamma.

“Blessed One, I passed away while not being satisfied, because I was thirsty for more, as I wanted to come to serve and cater to the needs of The Noble Saṅgha.

“Thus, Blessed One, I died while not being satisfied and thirsty for more, in regards to these three things.

‘I could never get enough of these three: Seeing The Blessed One, Listening to the True Dhamma, and Attending to The Noble Saṅgha and its needs.

While training in Higher Virtue, I was still attached to The Dhamma. As a result of which, Blessed Lord, In passing away and dying, I, Hatthaka reappeared in Aviha’s Pure Abode For, I had not yet given up even these beloved three.’”