Ud 3.7 — Ud 3:7 Mahā Kassapa | Kassapa Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Ud 3:7 Mahā Kassapa (Kassapa Sutta)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha at the Bamboo Forest, the Squirrels’ Sanctuary. And on that occasion Ven. Mahā Kassapa was staying at the Pipphali Cave, sitting for seven days in a single session, having attained a certain level of concentration. Then, with the passing of seven days, he emerged from that concentration. To him, emerging from that concentration, the thought occurred: “What if I were to go into Rājagaha for alms?”

Now on that occasion 500 devatās were in a state of eagerness for the chance to give alms to Ven. Mahā Kassapa. But Ven. Mahā Kassapa, turning down those 500 devatās, early in the morning adjusted his under robe and–carrying his bowl & robes–went into Rājagaha for alms.

Now on that occasion Sakka, the deva-king, wanted to give alms to Ven. Mahā Kassapa. So, assuming the appearance of a weaver, he was working a loom, while Sujātā, an asura-maiden, filled the shuttle. Then, as Ven. Mahā Kassapa was going on an almsround that bypassed no donors1 in Rājagaha, he arrived at Sakka's home. Sakka saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, came out of house to meet him. Taking the bowl from his hand, entered the house, took cooked rice from the pot, filled the bowl, and gave it back to Ven. Mahā Kassapa. And that gift of alms included many kinds of curry, many kinds of sauces.

The thought occurred to Ven. Mahā Kassapa, "Now, who is this being with such power & might as this?" Then the thought occurred to him, "This is Sakka, the deva-king, isn't it?" On realizing this, he said to Sakka, "Is this your doing, Kosiya?2 Don't ever do anything like this again."

"We, too, need merit, Ven. Kassapa. We, too, have use for merit."

Then, bowing down to Ven. Mahā Kassapa and circling him to the right, Sakka rose up into the air and, while up in the sky, exclaimed three times:

"O the alms, the foremost alms, well-established in Kassapa!"

"O the alms, the foremost alms, well-established in Kassapa!"

"O the alms, the foremost alms, well-established in Kassapa!"

The Blessed One–with his divine hearing-property, surpassing that of the human–heard Sakka the deva-king, while up in the sky, exclaiming three times:

"O the alms, the foremost alms, well-established in Kassapa!"

"O the alms, the foremost alms, well-established in Kassapa!"

"O the alms, the foremost alms, well-established in Kassapa!"

On realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

The monk going for alms,

supporting himself and no other:

The devas adore one who is Such,

calmed & ever mindful.

Notes

1. Going on an almsround that bypasses no donors is one of the thirteen optional ascetic (dhutaṅga) practices. See Thag 16:7.

2. Kosiya–“Owl”–is Sakka’s clan name.