Vv 34 — Daddalla Sutta: Dazzling Mansion

English translation by Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery (Sutta Friends).

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Text

Devata Bhadda:

Devata, you are dazzling and shining in beauty, surrounded by many goddesses. You surpass all the other Tavatimsa devas in beauty.

I have not seen you before. This is the first time I have seen you. From which heaven did you come? You called me by name.

Devata Subhadda:

Dear sister, in my previous life when I was in the human world, my name was Subhadda. I was your younger sister and was a co-wife with you. After death, I departed the human world and was reborn among the devas in the Nimmanarati Heaven.

Devata Bhadda:

Those who have collected much merit are reborn in Nimmanarati Heaven. So you too have been born in this wonderful heaven, haven’t you? Famous devata, who taught you to collect merit? What kind of offering did you make? What kind of precepts did you follow? We ask you, how did you gain all these wonderful things? Please tell us what meritorious deed this is the result of.

Devata Subhadda:

In my previous life when I was in the human world, I had confidence in the community of monks. They were worthy of offerings, so I offered food to eight monks with my own hands.

Because of this meritorious deed, I have been born as a very beautiful devata and enjoy all the wonderful things that delight my heart.

Sister, that was the meritorious action I did to have such a beautiful body which shines in all directions.

Devata Bhadda:

My mind also had confidence in those monks. But I offered them much more food than you did. Yet, I have been born in a lower heavenly world than you. Having offered very little, how did you receive more happiness than me? Of what meritorious deed is this the result?

Devata Subhadda:

I knew a noble monk named Revata and was inspired by him. One day I invited eight monks along with Revata Bhante, with the intention of making individual offerings. Out of compassion for me, and to help me gain more merit, Revata Bhante told me not to make individual offerings but to make an offering to the Noble Sangha, the whole community of monks. I did exactly as he advised.

My offering was made to the Noble Sangha which has immeasurable virtues. But since you offered food to individual monks, your offering was not as fruitful.

Devata Bhadda:

Oh, only now do I know that offering to the Noble Sangha as a whole bears greater fruit. When I go back to the human world, I will make offerings to the Noble Sangha and I will look after the Noble Sangha well. Letting go of greed, I will collect merit diligently.

God Sakka:

Devata Bhadda, who is this devata that you are speaking with? Her beauty surpasses all other devas in the Tavatimsa Heaven.

Devata Bhadda:

God Sakka, Leader of the Devas, in my previous human life she was my younger sister. We were co-wives of the same husband. She has offered food to the Noble Sangha and collected vast amounts of merit. That is why she shines so brilliantly.

God Sakka:

Oh Devata Bhadda, your younger sister has offered food to the Noble Sangha and as a result she shines so brilliantly.

One day, the Supreme Buddha was staying on the mountain named Vulture's Peak. I asked the Blessed One to whom should one offer food to get the greatest benefits? The Supreme Buddha had an excellent knowledge of actions and their results. The Blessed One answered, "If one wants to gain the most merit and be reborn in heaven, they should make offerings to the Noble Sangha. There are four types of disciples practicing the Path and four other types who have achieved the fruits of the Path. They are virtuous, mindful, and wise."

Devata, I know very well that this Noble Sangha has immeasurable virtues. Their lives are full of good qualities like the great ocean. They are the disciples of the best teacher among humans. These disciples illuminate the world by spreading the Dhamma.

If someone offers food and drink to the community of the Noble Sangha that gift will bear immense results. The Knower of the World, the Buddha, praised giving and encouraged people to give offerings to the Noble Sangha.

Once offerings are made to the Noble Sangha, the givers should recollect that gift and then they will have delighted hearts. They will live rejoicing in their generous nature. As a result, they will be able to be born in a wonderful heaven.