Vv 80 — Gopāla Sutta: Cow Herder’s Mansion

English translation by Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery (Sutta Friends).

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Text

Moggallana Bhante upon seeing a deva, asked him a question.

Moggallana Bhante:

Dear Deva, you are living in a long-lasting mansion and your hands are decorated with various ornaments. You are mighty and shine like the moon in your mansion.

You are extremely beautiful. You are dressed beautifully in divine clothes. You are wearing divine flower-garlands and your hands are decorated with divine ornaments. Most importantly, beautiful ornaments decorate your hair and beard. You are famous and shine like the moon in your mansion.

The sweet music of divine guitars plays throughout the complex. Well-trained devatas delight in dancing and singing.

Powerful Deva, you have become a leader among devas. The pure radiance of your body and limbs is stainless and shines in all directions.

Tell me Deva, what kind of meritorious action did you do when you were in the human world to have gained this beauty that shines in all directions, and to have earned all these wonderful things?

That deva, delighted at being questioned by Arahant Moggallana, gladly explained what he had done that resulted in such great happiness.

Deva:

In my previous life, I lived in the human world. My job was to gather other people's cows into one place and guard them. One day, a monk approached me on his almsround. At the same time, the cows ran towards a field of beans.

Bhante, suddenly I had to do two things and both had to be done at once. I was wise and realized what I had to do. I dropped my wrapped parcel of rice cake on the ground saying, "Bhante, I offer this to you."

Then I chased after the cows before they damaged the bean field. While I was running, a deadly poisonous snake bit my foot. I was in great pain as I lay there on the ground.

Out of compassion for me, that monk unwrapped the parcel of rice cake and ate it. I died of the snake bite at that moment and was reborn as a deva.

That was the only meritorious action I did. Bhante, it was you who was very compassionate to me. That is why today I experience the happy results of my action. I know the importance of gratitude, and so, I worship you.

There is no other sage more compassionate than you in this world with its gods and Mara. You are extremely compassionate. I know the importance of gratitude, and so, I worship you.

There is no other sage more compassionate than you in this world or any other worlds. You are extremely compassionate. I know the importance of gratitude, and so, I worship you.