SN 8.8 — Over a Thousand

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 8.8

1. With Vaṅgīsa

Over a Thousand

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants.

Now at that time the Buddha was educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk about extinguishment. And those mendicants were paying attention, applying the mind, concentrating wholeheartedly, and actively listening.

Then Venerable Vaṅgīsa thought, "The Buddha is educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk about extinguishment. And those mendicants are paying attention, applying the mind, concentrating wholeheartedly, and actively listening. Why don't I extoll him in his presence with fitting verses?"

Then Venerable Vaṅgīsa rose from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and said, "I feel inspired to speak, Blessed One! I feel inspired to speak, Holy One!"

"Then speak as you feel inspired," said the Buddha.

Then Vaṅgīsa extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting verses:

"Over a thousand mendicants

revere the Holy One

as he teaches the immaculate Dhamma,

extinguishment, fearing nothing from any quarter.

They listen to the immaculate Dhamma

taught by the fully awakened Buddha;

the Buddha shines

at the fore of the mendicant Saṅgha.

Blessed One, your name is 'Giant',

seventh of the seers.

You are like a great cloud

that rains on your disciples.

I left my day's meditation

out of desire to see the Teacher.

Great hero, your disciple Vaṅgīsa

bows at your feet."

"Vaṅgīsa, had you previously composed these verses, or did they spring to mind in the moment?"

"They sprang to mind in the moment, sir."

"Well then, Vaṅgīsa, speak some more spontaneously inspired verses."

"Yes, sir," replied Vaṅgīsa. Then he extolled the Buddha with some more spontaneously inspired verses, not previously composed:

"Having overcome Māra's wrong path,

you wander with hard-heartedness dissolved.

See him, the liberator from bonds,

dissecting the unattached section by section.

You have explained in many ways

the path to cross the flood.

The Seers of Truth stand unfaltering

in the freedom from death explained by you.

As the bringer of light who has pierced the truth,

you've seen what lies beyond all planes.

When you saw and realized this for yourself,

you taught it first to the group of five.

When the Dhamma has been so well taught,

how could those who know it be negligent?

That's why, being diligent, we should always train

respectfully in the Buddha's teaching."