SN 11.3 — SN 11:3 The Top of the Standard | Dhajagga Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

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Text

The Top of the Standard

Dhajagga Sutta (SN 11:3)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There he addressed the monks: "Monks!"

"Yes, lord!" the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said: "Once, monks, the devas & asuras were arrayed for battle. Then Sakka, lord of the devas, addressed the Devas of the Thirty-three: 'If, dear sirs, when the devas are engaged in battle, there should arise fear, terror, or horripilation, then on that

occasion you should look up at the top of my standard. For when you look up at the top of my standard, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.

"'If you don't look up at the top of my standard, then you should look up at the top of the standard of Pajāpati the deva-king. For when you look up at the top of the standard of Pajāpati the deva-king, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.

"'If you don't look up at the top of the standard of Pajāpati the deva-king, then you should look up at the top of the standard of Varuṇa the deva-king. For when you look up at the top of the standard of Varuṇa the deva-king, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.

"'If you don't look up at the top of the standard of Varuṇa the deva-king, then you should look up at the top of the standard of Īsāna the deva-king. For when you look up at the top of the standard of Īsāna the deva-king, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.

"Monks, in those who look up at the top of the standard of Sakka, lord of the devas; in those who look up at the top of the standard of Pajāpati the deva-king; in those who look up at the top of the standard of Varuṇa, the deva-king; or in those who look up at the top of the standard of Īsāna, the deva-king, any fear, terror, or horripilation they may have might be abandoned, or it might not. Why is that? Because Sakka, lord of the devas, is not free of passion, free of aversion, or free of delusion. He can be frightened, terrorized, cowardly, quick to flee.

"But, monks, I tell you this: If, when you have gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, there should arise fear, terror, or horripilation, then on that occasion you should recollect me thus: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.' For when you recollect me, monks, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.

"If you don't recollect me, then you should recollect the Dhamma thus: 'The Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, leading out, to be experienced by the observant for themselves.' For when you recollect the Dhamma, monks, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.

"If you cannot recollect the Dhamma, then you should recollect the Saṅgha thus: 'The Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples who have practiced well, practiced straightforwardly, practice methodically, practiced masterfully, i. e., the four pairs, the eight-types (of noble ones): That is the Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples—deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, the unexcelled field of merit for the world.' For when you recollect the Saṅgha, monks, any fear, terror, or horripilation you may have will be abandoned.

“Why is that? Because the Tathāgata, worthy & rightly self-awakened, is free of passion, free of aversion, free of delusion. He is fearless, cannot be terrorized, bold, not quick to flee.”

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the One Well-Gone, the Teacher, further said this:

“In wilderness, monks,

at the foot of a tree,

or in an empty dwelling,

recollect the Buddha:

You will have no fear.

If you don’t recall the Buddha—

chief of the world,

the bull of men—

then recollect the Dhamma,

leading out,

well taught.

If you don’t recall the Dhamma—

leading out,

well taught—

then recollect the Saṅgha,

the field of merit

unexcelled.

For those who have thus recalled

the Buddha,

Dhamma,

& Saṅgha, monks,

there will be

no terror,

horripilation,

or fear.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: DN 21; MN 4; AN 10:92; AN 11:12–13; Khp 6; Dhp 188–192; Iti 90