

SN 11.3

Samyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Sagāthāvagga Samyutta
Group of Discourses Connected to Verses
Sakka Samyutta
Connected Discourses on Sakka
Paṭhama Vagga
The First Section

Dhajagga Sutta
“The Crest-bearing Flag”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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This is what I personally heard.

Once, while The Blessed One was living in Sāvattihī’s Anāthapiṇḍika’s Monastery, at Jeta’s Park, He addressed those Bhikkhus around Him and said:

“Bhikkhus!”

“Yes, Blessed Lord!” the Bhikkhus responded. And The Blessed One continued speaking and said:

Long time ago, Bhikkhus, when the Devas and the asuras were engaged in a battle against each other, Sakka, the King of the Devas, addressed the Gods of Tāvātimsā and instructed them by saying:

‘Dear Ones, whenever any of you Devas in the heat of battle find yourself becoming overwhelmed by fear or trepidation as a result of all the fighting you witness taking place around you, then raise your head while you look up at my crest-bearing flag, fluttering overhead. This, because the moment you do so, suddenly, all your fears and trepidations will leave you immediately!’

‘However, if you are unable to see my crest-bearing flag, then turn to look at the Deva-King Pajāpati’s crest-bearing flag instead. The moment you do so, suddenly, all your fears and trepidations will leave you immediately!’

‘But, My Dears, if for some reason you are unable to see Pajāpati’s crest-bearing flag fluttering overhead, then look for the crest-bearing flag of the Deva-King Varuṇa instead. For, the moment you see it, suddenly, all the fears and trepidations you are experiencing at that time will simply leave you, immediately!’

‘And if, Dear Ones, for some reason, you are still unable to see Varuṇa’s crest-bearing flag fluttering overhead, then look for the Deva-King Īsāna’s crest-bearing flag instead. Because in doing so, you will discover that all the fears and trepidations you were experiencing will disappear, immediately!’

“Now Bhikkhus, I declare this fact to you:

Despite what was said by Sakka, the King of the Gods, whether those Tāvātimsā Devas of the Thirty-Three turn to Sakka’s crest-bearing flag, or to Deva-King Pajāpati’s, or to Varuṇa’s, or to Īsāna’s, they will discover that the fear and trepidation overwhelming their hearts and minds might disappear, or it might not, at all!

“And why do I say this?

“It is because all these Devas and their Kings, including Sakka himself, possess hearts and minds that are not free from lust, from hatred, and from delusion.

“After all, even Sakka sometimes finds himself becoming faint-hearted, terrified, losing his strength and courage, even overtaken by cowardice, and may run away from the scene of battle itself.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, I instruct you to do the following:

“Every time you walk away from the crowds by secluding yourself somewhere in the wilderness, whether by sitting alone at the roots of a tree, or retiring into an empty hut, if you experience fear or become terrified with trepidation for whatever reason, then, all you have to do is to just recollect Me, Your Teacher, by bringing Me to your mind, in this manner:

“‘The Blessed One is an Arahant, Perfectly Awakened, endowed with Sublime Knowledge and Supremely Pure Conduct, The Well-Gone, The Knower of worlds, The Incomparable Tamer of those to be tamed, The Teacher of gods and humans, The Enlightened and Blessed.’

“Because, if and when you do recollect me, then immediately, all your fears and trepidations will simply vanish and disappear!

“However, if for some reason or other, you find yourself unable to recollect me, then, all you have to do is to just recollect The Dhamma, by bringing It to your mind, in this manner:

‘The Dhamma of The Blessed One is well-expounded, It is directly visible, here and now, immediately effective, inviting one to come and investigate for oneself, taking one straight forward, undeterred; to be understood and personally realized by the wise; each for oneself.’

“Because, if and when you do recollect The Dhamma, then immediately, all your fears and trepidations will simply vanish and disappear!

“However, if for some reason or other, you find yourself unable to recollect The Dhamma, then, all you have to do is to just recollect The Sangha, by bringing It to your mind, in this manner:

‘The Disciples of The Blessed One are practicing well the Good Path, which is The Threefold Training of Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā (virtuous living, mental cultivation, and development of wisdom); the Disciples of The Blessed One are practicing The Straight Path of The Threefold Training, which is The Middle Path; the Disciples of The Blessed One are practicing wisely to realize Nibbāna, in a methodical way; the Disciples of The Blessed One are practicing The Dhamma, in harmony; Such are the Four Pairs of Eight Great Beings, comprised of The Eight Noble Disciples of The Blessed One; the ones to be honored and respected, deserving of hospitality, worthy of offerings, to be venerated with reverential salutation with one’s palms pressed together at the heart, for they are indeed the Incomparable Field of merit for the world.’

“Because, if and when you do recollect The Sangha, then immediately, all your fears and trepidations will simply vanish and disappear!

“And why do I say this?

“It is because The Tathāgata, Bhikkhus, is The Fully Self-Awakened Buddha Himself! The One who has liberated His heart and is now absolutely free from lust, from hatred, and from delusion.

“For, Your Teacher, Bhikkhus, is truly without any semblance of fear; He is matchless in His courage and bravery; He is the One who is unshakable indeed, who remains unmoved wherever He stands!”

These were the words spoken by The Blessed One Himself.

Then, The Sugata, The Fortunate One, continued speaking in verse while saying the following:

*“Whether secluding yourself somewhere in the wilderness,
Or by sitting alone at the roots of a tree,
Or retiring into an empty hut, O Bhikkhus,
Then, just recollect Your Teacher, The Self-Awakened Buddha,
And no fears will arise for you or invade your heart!*

*“But, if you are unable to recollect The Buddha,
The Seniormost Elder in the entire existence,
The Matchless Leader of All Men,
Then, just recollect The Dhamma,
The Pure Teaching that is well-taught, for It absolutely Liberates!*

*“And if you are unable to recollect The Dhamma,
The Pure Teaching that is well-taught, for It absolutely Liberates,
Then, just recollect The Sangha,
The Incomparable Field of merit for the entire existence!*

*“In this manner, O Bhikkhus,
By Taking Refuge in The Buddha, in The Dhamma, and in The Sangha,
You will rid yourself of all terrors and fears, along with uncertainty;
And goosebumps and trepidations altogether,
Could never grab you anymore!”*

Sādhu

Sādhu

Sādhu