Iti 89 — About Devadatta

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Text

So It Was Said 89

The Book of the Threes

Chapter Four

About Devadatta

This was said by the Buddha, the Perfected One: that is what I heard.

“Mendicants, overcome and overwhelmed by three things that oppose the true teaching, Devadatta is going to a place of loss, to hell, there to remain for an eon, irredeemable. What three? Corrupt wishes … Bad friendship … When there is still more to be done, stopping half-way after achieving some trifling distinction. Overcome and overwhelmed by these three things that oppose the true teaching, Devadatta is going to a place of loss, to hell, there to remain for an eon, irredeemable.”

The Buddha spoke this matter. On this it is said:

“Let none of wicked desire

ever be reborn into this world.

And by this too you should know

the place where those of corrupt wishes go.

He once was considered astute,

deemed to be evolved,

his glory stood forth like a flame,

the renowned Devadatta.

Seduced by heedlessness,

he attacked the Realized One.

He has fallen to Avīci hell,

four-doored and terrifying.

When someone betrays the innocent,

who have done no wrong,
their bad deeds impact the one
with corrupt heart, lacking regard for others.
One might think to pollute
the ocean with a pot of poison,
but it wouldn’t work,
for the sea is terribly large.
So too when someone attacks
with words the Realized One—
rightly comported, of peaceful mind—
the words don’t take.
The astute would befriend one like this,
and follow them around.
A mendicant who walks the path
attains the ending of suffering.”
This too is a matter that was spoken by the Blessed One: that is what I heard.