SN 1.37 — The Congregation

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Linked Discourses 1.37

4. The Host of a Hundred Felicities

The Congregation

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, in the Great Wood near Kapilavatthu, together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants, all of whom were perfected ones. And most of the deities from ten solar systems had gathered to see the Buddha and the Saṅgha of mendicants.

Then four deities of the pure abodes, aware of what was happening, thought: “Why don’t we go to the Buddha and each recite a verse in his presence?”

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, they vanished from the Pure Abodes and reappeared in front of the Buddha. They bowed to the Buddha and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity spoke this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“There’s a great congregation in the woods,

where heavenly hosts have assembled.

We’ve come to this righteous congregation

to see the invincible Saṅgha!”

Then another deity spoke this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“The mendicants there are immersed in samādhi,

they’ve straightened their own minds.

Like a charioteer holding the reins,

the astute ones protect their senses.”

Then another deity spoke this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“They snapped the post and snapped the cross-bar,

unstirred, they tore out Indra’s pillar.

They live pure and immaculate,

the young giants tamed by the Clear-eyed One.”

Then another deity spoke this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“Anyone who has gone to the Buddha for refuge

won’t go to a plane of loss.

After giving up this human body,

they swell the heavenly host.”