AN 5.34 — Siha Sutta: To General Siha (On Generosity)

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Vesali, in the Great Forest, at the Gabled Pavilion. Then General Siha went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Is it possible, lord, to point out a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now?"

"It is possible, Siha. One who gives, who is a master of giving, is dear & charming to people at large. And the fact that who is generous, a master of giving, is dear & charming to people at large: this is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

"Furthermore, good people, people of integrity, admire one who gives, who is a master of giving. And the fact that good people, people of integrity, admire one who gives, who is a master of giving: this, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

"Furthermore, the fine reputation of one who gives, who is a master of giving, is spread far & wide. And the fact that the fine reputation of one who gives, who is a master of giving, is spread far & wide: this, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

"Furthermore, when one who gives, who is a master of giving, approaches any assembly of people — noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives — he/she does so confidently & without embarrassment. And the fact that when one who gives, who is a master of giving, approaches any assembly of people — noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives — he/she does so confidently & without embarrassment: this, too, is a fruit of generosity visible in the here & now.

"Furthermore, at the break-up of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world. And the fact that at the break-up of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world: this is a fruit of generosity in the next life."

When this was said, General Siha said to the Blessed One: "As for the four fruits of generosity visible in the here & now that have been pointed out by the Blessed One, it's not the case that I go by conviction in the Blessed One with regard to them. I know them, too. I am one who gives, a master of giving, dear & charming to people at large. I am one who gives, a master of giving; good people, people of integrity, admire me. I am one who gives, a master of giving, and my fine reputation is spread far & wide: 'Siha is generous, a doer, a supporter of the Sangha.' I am one who gives, a master of giving, and when I approach any assembly of people — noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives — I do so confidently & without embarrassment.

"But when the Blessed One says to me, 'At the break-up of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world,' that I do not know. That is where I go by conviction in the Blessed One."

"So it is, Siha. So it is. At the break-up of the body, after death, one who gives, who is a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, the heavenly world."

One who gives is dear. People at large admire him. He gains honor. His status grows. He enters an assembly unembarrassed. He is confident — the man unmiserly. Therefore the wise give gifts. Seeking bliss, they would subdue the stain of miserliness. Established in the three-fold heavenly world, they enjoy themselves long in fellowship with the devas. Having made the opportunity for themselves, having done what is skillful, then when they fall from here they fare on, self-radiant, in Nandana.[1] There they delight, enjoy, are joyful, replete with the five sensuality strands. Having followed the words of the sage who is Such, they enjoy themselves in heaven — disciples of the One Well-gone.

Notes

1.

The garden of the devas.

See also: AN 5.148.