AN 5.34 — AN 5:34 To General Sīha (On Giving) | Sīha Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

To General Sīha (On Giving)

Sīha Sutta (AN 5:34)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Vesālī at the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest. Then General Sīha 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 giving visible in the here & now?"

"It is possible, Sīha. One who is generous, 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 giving visible in the here & now.

“And further, good people, people of integrity, admire one who is generous, a master of giving. And the fact that good people, people of integrity, admire one who is generous, a master of giving: This, too, is a fruit of giving visible in the here & now.

“And further, the fine reputation of one who is generous, a master of giving, is spread far & wide. And the fact that the fine reputation of one who is generous, a master of giving, is spread far & wide: This, too, is a fruit of giving visible in the here & now.

“And further, when one who is generous, 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 is generous, 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 giving visible in the here & now.

“And further, at the break-up of the body, after death, one who is generous, a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world. And the fact that at the break-up of the body, after death, one who is generous, a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world: This is a fruit of giving in the next life.”

When this was said, General Sīha said to the Blessed One: “As for the four fruits of giving 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 generous, a master of giving, dear & charming to people at large. I am generous, a master of giving; good people, people of integrity, admire me. I am generous, a master of giving, and my fine reputation is spread far & wide: ‘Sīha is generous, a doer, a supporter of the Saṅgha.’ I am generous, 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 is generous, a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world,’ that I do not know. That is where I go by conviction in the Blessed One.”

“So it is, Sīha. So it is. At the break-up of the body, after death, one who is generous, a master of giving, reappears in a good destination, a 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 unmiserly man.

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
[the garden of the devas].
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.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 3:19–20; AN 3:58; AN 6:37; AN 7:49; AN 8:54; Iti 26