AN 8.22 — AN 8:22 About Ugga | Ugga Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

About Ugga

Ugga Sutta (AN 8:22)

On one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Vajjians near Hatthigāma. There he addressed the monks: “Monks, remember Ugga the householder of Hatthigāma as having eight amazing & astounding qualities.” That is what the Blessed One said. Having said it, the One Well-gone rose from his seat & entered his dwelling.

Then early in the morning, a certain monk—having adjusted his under robe and carrying his robes & bowl—went to the home of Ugga the householder of Hatthigāma and, on arrival, sat down on a seat laid out. Then Ugga the householder went to the monk and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the monk said

to him, "Householder, the Blessed One has declared that you are endowed with eight amazing & astounding qualities. With which eight amazing & astounding qualities has the Blessed One declared that you are endowed?"

"Venerable sir, I don't know with which eight amazing & astounding qualities the Blessed One has declared that I am endowed, but there are eight amazing & astounding qualities to be found in me. Listen to them & pay careful attention. I will speak."

"As you say, householder," the monk responded to Ugga the householder of Hatthigāma.

Ugga said, "Venerable sir, I was carousing in the Nāga forest when I saw the Blessed One in the distance for the first time. As soon as I saw the Blessed One, my heart felt confidence, and my liquor-intoxication left me. This is the first amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"With a confident heart, I attended to the Blessed One. He gave me a graduated talk, i.e., a talk on giving, a talk on virtue, a talk on heaven; he proclaimed the drawbacks of, degradation in, & defilement in sensuality, and the rewards of renunciation. Then—when the Blessed One knew that I was of ready mind, malleable mind, unhindered mind, exultant mind, confident mind—he proclaimed to me the distinctive teaching of the Awakened Ones: stress, origination, cessation, path. Just as a white cloth with stains removed would rightly take dye, in the same way there arose to me, in that very seat, the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation. Then—having seen the Dhamma, having reached the Dhamma, known the Dhamma, gained a footing in the Dhamma, having crossed over & beyond doubt, having had no more questioning, having gained fearlessness & become independent of others with regard to the Teacher's message, right there I went to the Buddha, the Dhamma, & the Saṅgha for refuge and undertook the training rules with celibacy as the fifth.1 This, venerable sir, is the second amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"I had four young wives. So I went to my wives and, on arrival, said to them, 'Sisters, I have undertaken the five training rules with celibacy as the fifth. Whoever wants to may partake of this wealth & make merit [here], or you may go to the homes of your relatives, or, if you want (another) man, to whom shall I give you?' When this was said, the eldest wife said to me, 'Young master, give me to the man named so-&-so.' Having sent for that man, having taken that wife with my left hand, having taken the ceremonial vase with my right hand, I gave her to that man. But even as I gave up my young wife as a gift, I don't recall any alteration in my mind. This, venerable sir, is the third amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"There is wealth to be found in my family, but it is given unstintingly to virtuous people of admirable character. This, venerable sir, is the fourth amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"Whatever monk I attend to, I attend to him attentively, not inattentively. If that venerable one teaches me the Dhamma, I listen attentively, not inattentively. If he doesn't teach me

the Dhamma, I teach him the Dhamma. This, venerable sir, is the fifth amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"When I have invited the Saṅgha (for a meal), it's not amazing for devas to come & inform me, 'That monk, householder, is released both ways. That monk is released through discernment. That monk is a bodily witness. That monk is attained to view. That monk is released through conviction. That monk is a Dhamma-follower. That monk is a conviction-follower.2 That monk is virtuous, of admirable character. That monk is unvirtuous, of evil character.' Yet while I am serving the Saṅgha, I don't recall giving rise to the thought, 'I will give this one a little' or 'I will give this one a lot.' Instead, I give with an impartial mind. This, venerable sir, is the sixth amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"It's not amazing for devas to come & inform me, 'Householder, the Blessed One's Dhamma is well-taught.' When that is said, I say to those devas, 'Whether or not you devas say that, the Blessed One's Dhamma is well-taught.' Still, I don't recall any exaltation of mind because devas come to me or because I converse with devas. This, venerable sir, is the seventh amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"And, venerable sir, if I die before the Blessed One, it won't be amazing if the Blessed One declares of me, 'There is no fetter, bound by which Ugga the householder of Hatthigāma will come back to this world.' This, venerable sir, is the eighth amazing & astounding quality to be found in me.

"These, venerable sir, are the eight amazing & astounding qualities to be found in me. But I don't know with which eight amazing & astounding qualities the Blessed One has declared I am endowed."

Then the monk, having received almsfood at the home of Ugga the householder of Hatthigāma, got up from his seat & left. Then, after his meal, returning from his alms round, he went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One the entirety of his conversation with Ugga the householder of Hatthigāma.

"Excellent, monk! Excellent! Just as Ugga has rightly declared them, these are the eight amazing & astounding qualities with which I had declared he is endowed. Remember Ugga the householder of Hatthigāma as having these eight amazing & astounding qualities."

Notes

1. In other words, the five precepts but with the precept for celibacy replacing the precept against sexual misconduct.

2. See MN 70 for definitions of these types of monks. See also AN 9:43–45.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 41:7; SN 41:10; AN 7:50; AN 8:23