AN 8.54 — AN 8:54 To Dīghajāṇu | Dīghajāṇu Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

To Dīghajāṇu

Dīghajāṇu Sutta (AN 8:54)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Koḷiyans. Now the Koḷiyans have a town named Kakkarapatta. There Dīghajāṇu [LongShin] the Koḷiyan 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, “We are lay people enjoying sensual pleasures: living crowded with spouses and children; using Kāsi fabrics and sandalwood; wearing garlands, scents, and creams; handling gold and silver. May the Blessed One teach the Dhamma for those like us, for our happiness and well-being in this life, for our happiness and well-being in lives to come.”

(The Blessed One said:) "There are these four qualities, TigerPaw, that lead to a lay person's happiness and well-being in this life. Which four? Being consummate in initiative, being consummate in vigilance, admirable friendship, and maintaining one's livelihood in tune.

"And what is meant by being consummate in initiative? There is the case where a lay person, by whatever occupation he makes his living—whether by farming or trading or cattle tending or archery or as a king's man or by any other craft—is clever and untiring at it, endowed with discrimination in its techniques, enough to arrange and carry it out. This is called being consummate in initiative.

"And what is meant by being consummate in vigilance? There is the case where a lay person has righteous wealth—righteously gained, coming from his initiative, his striving, his making an effort, gathered by the strength of his arm, earned by his sweat—he manages to protect it through vigilance (with the thought), 'How shall neither kings nor thieves make off with this property of mine, nor fire burn it, nor water sweep it away, nor hateful heirs make off with it?' This is called being consummate in vigilance.

"And what is meant by admirable friendship? There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, associates with householders or householders' sons, young or old, who are consummate in conviction, consummate in virtue, consummate in generosity, consummate in discernment. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called admirable friendship.

"And what is meant by maintaining one's livelihood in tune? There is the case where a lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, (thinking,) 'Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.' Just as when a weigher or his apprentice, when holding the scales, knows, 'It has tipped down so much or has tipped up so much,' in the same way, the lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, (thinking,) 'Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.' If a lay person has a small income but maintains a grand livelihood, it will be rumored of him, 'This clansman devours his wealth like a fruit-tree eater [Commentary: one who shakes more fruit off a tree than he can possibly eat].' If a lay person has a large income but maintains a miserable livelihood, it will be rumored of him, 'This clansman will die of starvation.' But when a lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, (thinking,) 'Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income,' this is called maintaining one's livelihood in tune.

"These are the four drains on one's store of wealth: being debauched in sex; being debauched in drink; being debauched in gambling; and having evil people as friends,

associates, & companions. Just as if there were a great reservoir with four inlets and four drains, and a man were to close the inlets and open the drains, and the sky were not to pour down proper showers, the depletion of that great reservoir could be expected, not its increase. In the same way, these are the four drains on one's store of wealth: being debauched in sex, being debauched in drink, being debauched in gambling, and having evil people as friends, associates, & companions.

"These are the four inlets to one's store of wealth: not being debauched in sex; not being debauched in drink; not being debauched in gambling; and having admirable people as friends, associates, & companions. Just as if there were a great reservoir with four inlets and four drains, and a man were to open the inlets and close the drains, and the sky were to pour down proper showers, the increase of that great reservoir could be expected, not its depletion. In the same way, these are the four inlets to one's store of wealth: not being debauched in sex, not being debauched in drink, not being debauched in gambling, and having admirable people as friends, associates, & companions.

"These, TigerPaw, are the four qualities that lead to a lay person's happiness and well-being in this life.

"There are these four qualities that lead to a lay person's happiness and well-being in lives to come. Which four? Being consummate in conviction, being consummate in virtue, being consummate in generosity, being consummate in discernment.

"And what does it mean to be consummate in conviction? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata's awakening: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.' This is called being consummate in conviction.

"And what does it mean to be consummate in virtue? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking life, abstains from stealing, abstains from sexual misconduct, abstains from lying, abstains from taking intoxicants that cause heedlessness. This is called being consummate in virtue.

"And what does it mean to be consummate in generosity? There is the case of a disciple of the noble ones, his awareness cleansed of the stain of miserliness, living at home, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms. This is called being consummate in generosity.

"And what does it mean to be consummate in discernment? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones is discerning, endowed with discernment of arising and passing away—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress. This is called being consummate in discernment.

“These, TigerPaw, are the four qualities that lead to a lay person’s happiness and well-being in lives to come.

“Heedful at administering
or working at one’s occupation,
maintaining one’s life in tune,
one protects one’s store of wealth.
A person of conviction,
consummate in virtue,
magnanimous, free of selfishness,
constantly clears the path
to security in the lives to come.
Thus for one who seeks the household life,
these eight qualities—
leading to welfare & happiness
both in this life & in lives to come—
have been declared by the one
who is truly named.1
And this is how, for householders,
generosity & merit increase.”

Note

1. See AN 6:43.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 3:19; SN 10:12; SN 45:2; AN 3:48; AN 4:62; AN 5:34; AN 5:38; AN 5:41; AN 5:175; AN 5:179; AN 6:45; AN 8:95; Iti 17; Iti 76