Ud 1.8 — Saṅgāmaji Sutta: Saṅgāmaji

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 Sāvatthī at Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. And on that occasion Ven. Saṅgāmaji had arrived in Sāvatthī to see the Blessed One. His former wife heard, "Master Saṅgāmaji, they say, has arrived in Sāvatthī." Taking her small child, she went to Jeta's Grove. On that occasion Ven. Saṅgāmaji was sitting at the root of a tree for the day's abiding. His former wife went to him and, on arrival, said to him, "Look after me, contemplative — (a woman) with a little son." When this was said, Ven. Saṅgāmaji remained silent. A second time... A third time, his former wife said to him, "Look after me, contemplative — (a woman) with a little son." A third time, Ven. Saṅgāmaji remained silent.

Then his former wife, taking the baby and leaving him in front of Ven. Saṅgāmaji, went away, saying, "That's your son, contemplative. Look after him."

Then Ven. Saṅgāmaji neither looked at the child nor spoke to him. His wife, after going not far away, was looking back and saw Ven. Saṅgāmaji neither looking at the child nor speaking to him. On seeing this, the thought occurred to her, "The contemplative doesn't even care about his son." Returning from there and taking the child, she left.

The Blessed One — with his divine eye, purified and surpassing the human — saw Ven. Saṅgāmaji's former wife misbehaving in that way.

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

At her coming, he didn't delight; at her leaving, he didn't grieve. A victor in battle, freed from the tie:[1] He's what I call a brahman.

Note

1.

This line is a double wordplay on Saṅgāmaji's name. Literally, it means a victor in battle — a compound of saṅgāma (battle) and -ji (victor) — but the Buddha also extracts from the first member of the compound the word saṅgā, which means "from the tie." Strictly speaking, saṅgāma and saṅgā are not related to each other. The ability to engage in wordplay using unrelated words like this was considered a sign of intelligence and wit.

See also: Dhp 345-346.