Ud 2.8 — Suppavāsā Sutta: Suppavāsā

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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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 Kuṇḍiya in the Kuṇḍiṭṭhāna forest. And on that occasion Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter had been seven years pregnant and seven days in difficult labor. She — touched by fierce, sharp pains — endured them with three thoughts: "How rightly self-awakened is the Blessed One who, abandoning this sort of suffering, teaches the Dhamma! How well-practiced is the community of the Blessed One's disciples who practice, abandoning this sort of suffering! How truly blissful is unbinding, where this sort of pain is not found!"

Then Suppavāsā said to her husband, "Come, young master. Go to the Blessed One and, on arrival, showing reverence with your head to his feet in my name, ask whether he is free from illness & affliction, is carefree, strong, & living in comfort, saying: 'Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, lord, shows reverence with her head to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.' And say this: 'Suppavāsā has been seven years pregnant and seven days in difficult labor. She — touched by fierce, sharp pains — endures them with three thoughts: "How rightly self-awakened is the Blessed One who, abandoning this sort of suffering, teaches the Dhamma! How well-practiced is the community of the Blessed One's disciples who practice, abandoning this sort of suffering! How truly blissful is unbinding, where this sort

of pain is not found!""

Responding, "Excellent!" to Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, the Koliyan-son went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, "Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, lord, shows reverence with her head to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort. And she says this: 'Suppavāsā has been seven years pregnant and seven days in difficult labor. She — touched by fierce, sharp pains — endures them with three thoughts: "How rightly self-awakened is the Blessed One who, abandoning this sort of suffering, teaches the Dhamma! How well-practiced is the community of the Blessed One's disciples who practice, abandoning this sort of suffering! How truly blissful is unbinding, where this sort of pain is not found!""

[The Blessed One said:] "May Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter be well & free from disease. And may she deliver a son free from disease." And at the same time as the Blessed One's statement, Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter — well & free from disease — delivered a son free from disease.

Saying, "Very well, lord," the Koliyan-son, delighting in & approving of the Blessed One's words, got up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One and — circling him to the right — returned to his home. He saw that Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter — well & free from disease — had delivered a son free from disease. On seeing this, the thought occurred to him, "How amazing! How astounding! — the Tathāgata's great power, great might, in that, at the same time as the Blessed One's statement, Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter — well & free from disease — would deliver a son free from disease!" Gratified, he was joyful, rapturous, & happy.

Then Suppavāsā said to her husband, "Come, young master. Go to the Blessed One and, on arrival, showing reverence with your head to his feet in my name, saying: 'Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, lord, shows reverence with her head to your feet.' And say this: 'Suppavāsā, who was seven years pregnant and seven days in difficult labor, has now — well & free from disease — delivered a son free from disease. She invites the community of monks, with the Buddha at its head, for seven days of meals. May the Blessed One acquiesce to Suppavāsā's seven meals, together with the community of monks.'"

Responding, "Excellent!" to Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, the Koliyan-son went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, "Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, lord, shows reverence with her head to your feet. And she says this: 'Suppavāsā, who was seven years pregnant and seven days in difficult labor, has now — well & free from disease — delivered a son free from disease. She invites the community of monks, with the Buddha at its head, for seven days of meals. May the Blessed One acquiesce to Suppavāsā's seven meals, together with the community of monks.'"

Now at that time a certain lay follower had invited the community of monks, with the Buddha at its head, for the next day's meal. That lay follower was a supporter of Ven. Mahā

Moggallāna. So the Blessed One addressed Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, "Come, Moggallāna. Go to the lay follower and, on arrival, say to him, 'Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, who was seven years pregnant and seven days in difficult labor, has now — well & free from disease — delivered a son free from disease. She has invited the community of monks, with the Buddha at its head, for seven days of meals. Let Suppavāsā do seven meals. Afterward, you will do yours.' He's your supporter."

Responding, "As you say, lord," to the Blessed One, Ven. Moggallāna went to the lay follower and, on arrival, said to him, "Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter, who was seven years pregnant and seven days in difficult labor, has now — well & free from disease — delivered a son free from disease. She has invited the community of monks, with the Buddha at its head, for seven days of meals. Let Suppavāsā do seven meals; afterward, you will do yours."

"Venerable sir, if Ven. Moggallāna will be my guarantor for three things — (my) wealth, life, & faith — then let Suppavāsā do seven meals; afterward, I will do mine."

"For two things, friend, will I be your guarantor: your wealth & life. Only you are the guarantor of your faith."

"Venerable sir, if Ven. Moggallāna will be my guarantor for two things — (my) wealth & life — then let Suppavāsā do seven meals; afterward, I will do mine."

Then Ven. Moggallāna, having conciliated the lay follower, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, said, "The lay follower, lord, has been conciliated. Let Suppavāsā do seven meals; afterward, he will do his."

So for seven days Suppavāsā the Koliyan-daughter with her own hand served & satisfied the community of monks, with the Buddha at its head, with exquisite staple & non-staple food. And she had the child show reverence to the Blessed One and the community of monks. Then Ven. Sāriputta said to the child, "I trust, child, that things are bearable for you. I trust that things are comfortable for you. I trust that there's no pain."

"From where, Ven. Sāriputta, would things be bearable for me? From where would they be comfortable for me living seven years in a belly of blood?"[1]

Then Suppavāsā — (thinking,) "My son is conversing with the Dhamma General!" — was gratified, joyful, rapturous, & happy.

The Blessed One, knowing that Suppavāsā was gratified, joyful, rapturous, & happy, said to her, "Suppavāsā, would you like to have another son like this?"

"O Blessed One, lord, I would like to have seven more sons like this!"

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

The disagreeable in the guise of the agreeable, the unlovable in the guise of the lovable, pain in the guise of bliss, overcome one who is heedless.

Note

1.

Reading lohita-kucchiyā with the Thai edition. The Commentary favors the reading, lohita-kumbhiyā, in a pot of blood. The Commentary states that Suppavāsā's son later became the famous arahant, Sīvalin, whom the Buddha declared to be foremost among his disciples in receiving gifts.