Ud 6.8 — Gaṇika Sutta: The Courtesan

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 Rājagaha at the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary. And on that occasion two factions in Rājagaha were infatuated with a certain courtesan, their minds enthralled. Arguing, quarreling, & disputing, they attacked one another with fists, attacked one another with clods of dirt, attacked one another with sticks, attacked one another with knives, so that they fell into death or death-like pain.

Then in the early morning, a large number of monks adjusted their under robes and — carrying their bowls & robes — went into Sāvatthī for alms. Having gone for alms in Sāvatthī, after the meal, returning from their alms round, they went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, they said to the Blessed One, "At present, two factions in Rājagaha are infatuated with a certain courtesan, their minds enthralled. Arguing, quarreling, & disputing, they attack one another with fists, attack one another with clods of dirt, attack one another with sticks, attack one another with knives, so that they fall into death or death-like pain."

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

What's been attained, what's to be attained, are both strewn with dust by one who trains in line with the afflicted. Any precept & practice life whose essence is training, and the holy life whose essence is service: This is one extreme. Any who say, "There's no harm in sensual desires": This, the second extreme. Both of these extremes cause the growth of cemeteries, and cemeteries cause views to grow. Not directly knowing these two extremes, some fall short, some run too far.[1] But those who, directly knowing them, didn't exist there, didn't construe by means of them:[2] For them there's no whirling through the cycle to be described.

Note

1.

See Iti 49, and the discussion of this point in The Paradox of Becoming, chapters 2 and 6.

2.

For an example of "not existing there," see the Buddha's instructions to Bāhiya in Ud 1.10. For an example of freeing oneself from construing, see the description of a sage at peace near the conclusion of MN 140.