Ud 8.6 — Pāṭaligāma Sutta: At Pāṭaligā Village

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Source revision: sha256:7c411108530c04aafcca0ac43267ed12227cbb2653320e8ae0bb686e566bb783

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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, while the Blessed One was wandering among the Magadhans with a large community of monks, he arrived at Pāṭali Village. The lay followers of Pāṭali Village heard, "The Blessed One, they say, while wandering among the Magadhans with a large community of monks, has reached Pāṭali Village." So they went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were was sitting there, they said to him, "Lord, may the Blessed One acquiesce to (the use of) the rest-house hall."

The Blessed One acquiesced with silence. Sensing his acquiescence, the lay followers of Pāṭali Village got up from their seats, bowed down to him, circled him to the right, and then went to the rest-house hall. On arrival, they spread it all over with felt rugs, arranged seats, set out a water vessel, and raised an oil lamp. Then they went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, stood to one side. As they were standing there they said to him, "Lord, the rest-house hall has been covered all over with felt rugs, seats have been arranged, a water vessel has been set out, and an oil lamp raised. May the Blessed One do what you think it is now time to do."

So the Blessed One, adjusting his under robe and — carrying his bowl & robes[1] — went together with a community of monks to the rest-house hall. On arrival he washed his feet, entered the hall, and sat with his back to the central post, facing east. The community of monks washed their feet, entered the hall, and sat with their backs to the western wall, facing east, ranged around the Blessed One.

The lay followers of Pāṭali Village washed their feet, entered the hall, and sat with their backs to the eastern wall, facing west, ranged around the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One addressed the lay followers of Pāṭali Village, "Householders, there are these five drawbacks coming from an unvirtuous person's failure in virtue. Which five?

"There is the case where an unvirtuous person, by reason of heedlessness, undergoes the loss/confiscation of great wealth. This is the first drawback coming from an unvirtuous person's failure in virtue.

"Furthermore, the bad reputation of the unvirtuous person, failing in virtue, gets spread about. This is the second drawback coming from an unvirtuous person's failure in virtue.

"Furthermore, whatever assembly the unvirtuous person, failing in virtue, approaches — whether of noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives — he/she does so without confidence & abashed. This is the third drawback coming from an unvirtuous person's failure in virtue.

"Furthermore, the unvirtuous person, failing in virtue, dies confused. This is the fourth drawback coming from an unvirtuous person's failure in virtue.

"Furthermore, the unvirtuous person, failing in virtue — on the break-up of the body, after death — reappears in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, a hell. This is the fifth drawback coming from an unvirtuous person's failure in virtue.

"These, householders, are the five drawbacks coming from an unvirtuous person's failure in virtue.

"Householders, there are these five rewards coming from a virtuous person's consummation in virtue. Which five?

"There is the case where a virtuous person, by reason of heedfulness, acquires a great mass of wealth. This is the first reward coming from a virtuous person's consummation in virtue.

"Furthermore, the fine reputation of the virtuous person, consummate in virtue, gets spread about. This is the second reward coming from a virtuous person's consummation in virtue.

"Furthermore, whatever assembly the virtuous person, consummate in virtue, approaches — whether of noble warriors, brahmans, householders, or contemplatives — he/she does so with confidence & unabashed. This is the third reward coming from a virtuous person's consummation in virtue.

"Furthermore, the virtuous person, consummate in virtue, dies unconfused. This is the fourth reward coming from a virtuous person's consummation in virtue.

"Furthermore, the virtuous person, consummate in virtue — on the break-up of the body, after death — reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world. This is the fifth reward coming from a virtuous person's consummation in virtue.

"These, householders, are the five rewards coming from a virtuous person's consummation in virtue."

Then the Blessed One — having instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged the lay followers of Pāṭali Village for a large part of the night with Dhamma-talk — dismissed them, saying, "The night is far gone, householders. Do what you think it is now time to do."

So the lay followers of Pāṭali Village, delighting in & approving of the Blessed One's words, got up from their seats, bowed down to him, and left, circling him to the right. Then the Blessed One, not long after they had left, entered an empty building.

Now, on that occasion, Sunīdha & Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha, were building a city at Pāṭali Village to preempt the Vajjians. And on that occasion many devas by the thousands were occupying sites in Pāṭali Village. In the area where devas of great influence occupied sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of great influence were inclined to build their homes. In the area where devas of middling influence occupied sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of middling influence were inclined to build their homes. In the area where devas of low influence occupied sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of low influence were inclined to build their homes.

The Blessed One, with the divine eye — purified and surpassing the human — saw many devas by the thousands occupying sites in Pāṭali Village. In the area where devas of great influence occupied sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of great influence were inclined to build their homes. In the area where devas of middling influence occupied sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of middling influence were inclined to build their homes. In the area where devas of low influence occupied sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of low influence were inclined to build their homes.

Then, getting up in the last watch of the night, the Blessed One addressed Ven. Ānanda, "Ānanda, who is building a city at Pāṭali Village?"

"Sunīdha & Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha, lord, are building a city at Pāṭali Village to preempt the Vajjians."

"Ānanda, it's as if they had consulted the devas of the Thirty-three: That's how Sunīdha & Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha, are building a city at Pāṭali Village to preempt the Vajjians.

"Just now, Ānanda — with the divine eye — purified and surpassing the human — I saw many devas by the thousands occupying sites in Pāṭali Village. In the area where devas of great influence occupy sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of great influence are inclined to build their homes. In the area where devas of middling influence occupy sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of middling influence are inclined to build their homes. In the area where devas of low influence occupy sites, there the minds of the king's royal ministers of low influence are inclined to build their homes.

"Ānanda, as far as the sphere of the Ariyans extends, as far as merchants' roads extend, this will be the supreme city: Pāṭaliputta,[2] where the seedpods of the Pāṭali plant break open. There will be three dangers for Pāṭaliputta: from fire, from water, and from the breaking of alliances."

Then Sunīdha & Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, they stood to one side. As they were standing there, they said to him, "May Master Gotama acquiesce to our meal today, together with the community of monks." The Blessed One acquiesced with silence.

Then Sunīdha & Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha, understanding the Blessed One's acquiescence, went to their rest-house. On arrival, after having exquisite staple & non-staple food prepared in their rest-house, they announced the time to the Blessed One: "It's time, Master Gotama. The meal is ready."

Then the Blessed One, early in the morning, adjusted his under robe and — carrying his bowl & robes — went together with the community of monks to the rest-house of Sunīdha & Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha. On arrival, he sat down on the seat laid out. Sunīdha & Vassakāra, with their own hands, served & satisfied the community of monks, with the Buddha at its head, with exquisite staple & non-staple food. Then, when the Blessed One had finished his meal and withdrawn his hand from the bowl, Sunīdha & Vassakāra, taking a low seat, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, the Blessed One gave his approval with these verses:

In whatever place a wise person makes his dwelling, — there providing food for the virtuous, the restrained, leaders of the holy life — he should dedicate that offering to the devas there. They, receiving honor, will honor him; being respected, will show him respect. As a result, they will feel sympathy for him, like that of a mother for her child, her son. A person with whom the devas sympathize always meets with auspicious things.

Then the Blessed One, having given his approval to Sunīdha & Vassakāra with these verses, got up from his seat and left. And on that occasion, Sunīdha & Vassakāra followed right after the Blessed One, (thinking,) "By whichever gate Gotama the contemplative

departs today, that will be called the Gotama Gate. And by whichever ford he crosses over the Ganges River, that will be called the Gotama Ford."

So the gate by which the Blessed One departed was called the Gotama Gate. Then he went to the Ganges River. Now on that occasion the Ganges River was full up to the banks, so that a crow could drink from it. Some people were searching for boats, some were searching for floats, some were binding rafts in hopes of going from this shore to the other. So the Blessed One — just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm — disappeared from the near bank of the Ganges River and reappeared on the far bank together with the community of monks. He saw that some people were searching for boats, some were searching for floats, some were binding rafts in hopes of going from this shore to the other.

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

Those who cross the foaming flood, having made a bridge, avoiding the swamps — while people are binding rafts — have already crossed : the wise.

Note

1.

The translation here follows the Burmese and Sri Lankan editions of the text. The PTS and Thai editions state that the Buddha went to the rest-house hall in the morning — which, given the events that follow, doesn't seem right, for he would have spent the entire day teaching the lay followers of Pāṭali Village. The Burmese and Sri Lankan editions of the account of these events given in DN 16 state explicitly that the Buddha went to the rest-house hall in the late afternoon, which seems more reasonable. The PTS edition of that passage doesn't state the time of day, while the Thai edition states that he went in the morning.

2.

Pāṭaliputta later became the capital of King Asoka's empire. The "breaking open of the seed-pods (pūṭa-bhedana)" is a wordplay on the last part of the city's name.

Archeological evidence from what may have been part of Asoka's palace in Pāṭaliputta shows burnt wooden posts buried in mud — perhaps a sign that the palace burned and then was buried in a flood.

See also: MN 108; AN 4.183.