Ud 8.6 — The Layfolk of Pāṭali Village

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Text

Heartfelt Sayings 8.6

The Layfolk of Pāṭali Village

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Magadhans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at the village of Pāṭali. The lay followers of Pāṭali Village heard that he had arrived. So they went to see him, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, please consent to come to our guest house." The Buddha consented with silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, the lay followers of Pāṭali Village rose from their seats, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right. Then they went to the guest house, where they spread carpets all over, prepared seats, set up a water jar, and placed an oil lamp. Then they went back to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and told him of their preparations, saying: "Please, sir, come at your convenience."

In the morning, the Buddha robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the guest house together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Having washed his feet, he entered the guest house and sat against the central column facing east. The Saṅgha of mendicants also washed their feet, entered the guest house, and sat against the west wall facing east, with the Buddha right in front of them. The lay followers of Pāṭali Village also washed their feet, entered the guest house, and sat against the east wall facing west, with the Buddha right in front of them. Then the Buddha addressed them:

"Householders, there are these five drawbacks for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics. What five? Firstly, an unethical person loses great wealth on account of negligence. This is the first drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person gets a bad reputation. This is the second drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person enters any kind of assembly unconfident and embarrassed, whether it's an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person feels lost when they die. This is the fourth drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is the fifth drawback. These are the five drawbacks for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics.

There are these five benefits for an ethical person because of their accomplishment in ethics. What five? Firstly, an ethical person gains great wealth on account of diligence. This is the first benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person gets a good reputation. This is the second benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person enters any kind of assembly bold and self-assured, whether it's an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person dies not feeling lost. This is the fourth benefit.

Furthermore, when an ethical person's body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is the fifth benefit. These are the five benefits for an ethical person because of their accomplishment in ethics."

The Buddha spent much of the night educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the lay followers of Pāṭali Village with a Dhamma talk. Then he sent them off, "The night is getting late, householders. Please go at your convenience." And then the lay followers of Pāṭali Village approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. They got up from their seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before leaving. Soon after they left the Buddha entered a private cubicle.

Now at that time the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra were building a citadel at Pāṭali Village to keep the Vajjis out. At that time thousands of deities were taking possession of building sites in Pāṭali Village. Illustrious rulers or royal chief ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by illustrious deities. Middling rulers or royal chief ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by middling deities. Lesser rulers or royal chief ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by lesser deities.

With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, the Buddha saw those deities taking possession of building sites in Pāṭali Village, and the people building houses in accord with the station of the deities. The Buddha rose at the crack of dawn and addressed Ānanda,

"Ānanda, who is building a citadel at Pāṭali Village?" "Sir, the Magadhan chief ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra are building a citadel to keep the Vajjis out." "It's as if they were building the citadel in consultation with the gods of the thirty-three. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw those deities taking possession of building sites. Illustrious rulers or royal chief ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by illustrious deities. Middling rulers or royal chief ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by middling deities. Lesser rulers or royal chief ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by lesser deities. As far as the civilized region extends, as far as the trading zone extends, this will be the chief city: the Pāṭaliputta trade center. But Pāṭaliputta will face three threats: from fire, flood, and dissension."

Then the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra approached the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they stood to one side and said, "Would Worthy Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept today's meal from me?"

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, they went to their own guest house, where they had delicious fresh and cooked foods prepared. Then they had the Buddha informed of the time, saying, “It’s time, worthy Gotama, the meal is ready.”

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to their guest house together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat down on the seat spread out. Then Sunidha and Vassakāra served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with their own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods.

When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Sunidha and Vassakāra took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha expressed his appreciation with these verses:

“In the place he makes his dwelling,

having fed the astute

and the virtuous here,

the restrained spiritual practitioners,

he should dedicate an offering

to the deities there.

Venerated, they venerate him;

honored, they honor him.

After that they have sympathy for him,

like a mother for the child at her breast.

A man beloved of the deities

always sees nice things.”

When the Buddha had expressed his appreciation to Sunidha and Vassakāra with these verses, he rose from his seat and left.

Sunidha and Vassakāra followed behind the Buddha, thinking, “The gate through which the ascetic Gotama exits today shall be named the Gotama Gate. The ford at which he crosses the Ganges River shall be named the Gotama Ford.”

Then the gate through which the Buddha exited was named the Gotama Gate. Then the Buddha came to the Ganges River. Now at that time the Ganges was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Wanting to cross from the near to the far shore, some people were seeking a boat, some a dinghy, while some were tying up a raft. But, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, the Buddha, together with the mendicant Saṅgha, vanished from the near shore and landed on the far shore.

He saw all those humans wanting to cross over.

Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

“Those who cross a deluge or stream
have built a bridge and left the marshes behind.
While some people are still tying a raft,
intelligent people have crossed over.”