SN 42.9 — Kula Sutta: Families

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

On one occasion the Blessed One, while wandering on tour among the Kosalans together with a large community of monks, arrived at Nalanda. There he stayed at Nalanda in Pavarika's Mango Grove.

Now at that time Nalanda was in the midst of famine, a time of scarcity, the crops white with blight and turned to straw. And at that time Nigantha Nataputta was staying in Nalanda together with a large following of niganthas. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman, a disciple of the niganthas, went to Nigantha Nataputta and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Nigantha Nataputta said to him, "Come, now, headman. Refute the words of Gotama the contemplative, and this admirable report about you will spread afar: 'The words of Gotama the contemplative — so mighty, so powerful — were refuted by Asibandhakaputta the headman!'"

"But how, venerable sir, will I refute the words of Gotama the contemplative — so mighty, so powerful?"

"Come now, headman. Go to Gotama the contemplative and on arrival say this: 'Venerable sir, doesn't the Blessed One in many ways praise kindness, protection, & sympathy for families?' If Gotama the contemplative, thus asked, answers, 'Yes, headman, the

Tathagata in many ways praises kindness, protection, & sympathy for families,' then you should say, 'Then why, venerable sir, is the Blessed One, together with a large community of monks, wandering on tour around Nalanda in the midst of famine, a time of scarcity, when the crops are white with blight and turned to straw? The Blessed One is practicing for the ruin of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the demise of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the downfall of families.' When Gotama the contemplative is asked this two-pronged question by you, he won't be able to swallow it down or spit it up."

Responding, "As you say, venerable sir," Asibandhakaputta the headman got up from his seat, bowed down to Nigantha Nataputta, circumambulated him, and then went to the Blessed One. On arrival, he bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, doesn't the Blessed One in many ways praise kindness, protection, & sympathy for families?"

"Yes, headman, the Tathagata in many ways praises kindness, protection, & sympathy for families."

"Then why, venerable sir, is the Blessed One, together with a large community of monks, wandering on tour around Nalanda in the midst of famine, a time of scarcity, when the crops are white with blight and turned to straw? The Blessed One is practicing for the ruin of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the demise of families. The Blessed One is practicing for the downfall of families."

"Headman, recollecting back over 91 aeons, I do not know any family to have been brought to downfall through the giving of cooked alms. On the contrary: Whatever families are rich — with much wealth, many possessions, a great deal of money, a great many accoutrements of wealth, a great many commodities — all have become so from giving, from truth, from restraint.

"Headman, there are eight causes, eight reasons for the downfall of families. Families go to their downfall because of kings, or families go to their downfall because of thieves, or families go to their downfall because of fire, or families go to their downfall because of floods, or their stored-up treasure disappears, or their mismanaged undertakings go wrong, or in the family a wastrel is born who squanders, scatters, & shatters its wealth, and inconstancy itself is the eighth. These are the eight causes, the eight reasons for the downfall of families. Now, when these eight causes, these eight reasons are to be found, if anyone should say of me, 'The Blessed One is practicing for the ruin of families, the Blessed One is practicing for the demise of families, the Blessed One is practicing for the downfall of families' — without abandoning that statement, without abandoning that intent, without relinquishing that view — then as if he were to be carried off, he would thus be placed in hell."

When this was said, Asibandhakaputta the headman said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, lord! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the

Blessed One — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life."

See also: SN 42.8