

## Aputtaka Sutta 2

(Dutiyâputtaka Sutta)

### The Second Discourse on the Childless

[Wealth is no assurance of happiness]

(Sāmyutta Nikāya 3.20/1:91-93)

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2006

#### 1 Two Aputtaka Suttas

Both the **Aputtaka Sutta 1** (S 3.19) and the **Aputtaka Sutta 2** (S 3.20) have an almost identical introduction (differing only in the seth householder's wealth) [§2] but the main stories thereafter differ. The two suttas share at least two important and positive points, namely:

- (1) wealth has a practical value, but is useless if simply stored away;
- (2) the propensity and capacity to enjoy our wealth is the result of past good karma.

In both suttas, the Buddha's admonitions centre around a seth householder<sup>1</sup> who dies heirless and intestate. As such, his wealth is forfeit to the crown. While the seth householder in Aputtaka Sutta 1 has 80,000,000 pieces of gold, the seth householder in Aputtaka Sutta 2 has 100,000,000 pieces of gold [§2].

In the Aputtaka Sutta 1, the Buddha's admonition concerns two kinds of persons in relation to the use of wealth. The false person is not only unable to enjoy his wealth but also benefits no one, except perhaps the rajah who seizes all seth householder's wealth since he dies heirless. In the case of the true individual, he wisely enjoys his wealth and also benefits his family, friends and true spiritual practitioners. The Aputtaka Sutta 2's main story centres around how the seth householder gives alms to a pratyeka-buddha, named Tagara, sikhī, and its karmic results.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2 The proper way to give

**2.1 THE SIX LIMBS OF GIVING.** To benefit from giving, it must be made in the full and proper way, such as in the manner prescribed as "the gift endowed with six limbs (or factors)" (*cha-ḷ-āṅga, samannā-gatam dakkhiṇam*) in the **(Sumana) Dāna Sutta** (A 6.37):

Here, bhikshus, the giver has three limbs, the recipients have three limbs.

What are **the limbs of the giver** (*dāyakassa tīṇ'āṅgāni*)?

Here, bhikshus,

- (1) before giving (preparing to give), the giver is happy;
- (2) while giving her mind is joyful with faith;
- (3) having given, her mind is joyful.<sup>3</sup>

These are the limbs of the giver.

What are **the limbs of the recipients** (*paṭiggahakānaṃ tīṇ'āṅgāni*)?

Here, bhikshus,

- (4) the recipients have removed lust, or are practising to remove lust; or

<sup>1</sup> "Seth" (Skt *śreṣṭhī*, P *seṭṭhī*) is the modern Indian cognate, and an anglicized term found in OED. PED defines *seṭṭhī* as "foreman of a guild, treasurer, banker, 'City man,' wealthy merchant, V 1:15 f, 271 f, 2:110 f, 157, S 1:89 ... etc." Seths were wealthy entrepreneurs and money lenders of northern India. They were originally guild masters, but in due course became private bankers, often playing decisive roles in public affairs. While a *gaha,pati* ("householder") was simply a landed person, the *seṭṭhī, gahapati* ("seth householder") was one who combined agriculture with accumulated capital, which was invested in business: U Chakravarti 1987:73-83, esp 77. Anātha, piṇḍika was the best known of Buddhist seths. See Madan Mohan Singh 1967:249-251. Cf status of the seth in modern urban Buddhism: see Piya Tan, *History of Buddhism* (2 Spread of Buddhism), 2005 §37

<sup>2</sup> See **Karma** = SD 18.1(5.3.2).

<sup>3</sup> *Idha bhikkhave pubb'eva dānā sumano hoti, dadam cittaṃ pasādeti, datvā attamano hoti.* See also **Aṅkura Pv** (Pv 11.9.49/27), PvA 132 f.

- (5) they have removed hate, or are practising to remove hate; or  
 (6) they have removed delusion, or are practising to remove hate.

These are the limbs of the recipients.

Thus, bhikshus, the gift endowed with six limbs.

(A 6.37/3:336 f) = SD 22.1

**2.2 A TRUE INDIVIDUAL'S GIVING.** The *Cūḷa Puṇṇama Sutta* (M 110) gives the Buddha's definition of a true individual (*sappurisa*), that is, a true practitioner of the Dharma, one who holds right view, keeps to the precepts, is a spiritual friend, and a true giver. The true individual's qualities of giving are as follows:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) he gives with care   | ( <i>sakkaccaṃ dānaṃ deti</i> );                |
| (2) he gives with his own hands                                      | ( <i>sahatthā dānaṃ deti</i> );                 |
| (3) he gives with the right mind (regarding the occasion)            | ( <i>cittī, katvā dānaṃ deti</i> );             |
| (4) he gives without contempt (not as if throwing away)              | ( <i>anapaviddham<sup>4</sup> dānaṃ deti</i> ); |
| (5) he gives with regard for the future (believing in karmic fruit). | ( <i>āgamana, diṭṭhiko dānaṃ deti</i> ).        |
- (M 110.23/3:24) = SD 45.4

(1) "He gives with care" means that he shows proper personal and social decorum, that is, mindfulness and restraint of bodily actions and speech, keeping them appropriate to the occasion, which is that of mental stillness, communal joy and spiritual reflection.

(2) "He gives with his own hands" refers to personal participation in the offering, not done through proxy. In the *Aputtaka Sutta* 2, the seth householder casually directs his wife to make the offering. His emotional distance from the giving is aggravated by the fact that he later regrets that the offering is choice food [§3]. As such, properly speaking, almsgiving to monastics is not "charity" (that is, done out of pity or as part of a social work), but part of our spiritual training on the path to spiritual liberation.

(3) "He gives with the right mind (regarding the occasion)," that is, reflecting on the moral virtue of the recipient (as an individual or as a group), the rarity of such a Dharma-spirited occasion.

(4) "He gives without contempt (not as if throwing away)"<sup>5</sup> refers to both his purpose in giving and the attending thoughts during the giving. Elsewhere, various motivations for giving (mostly negative) are mentioned, and these should be avoided.<sup>6</sup>

(5) "He gives with regard for the future (believing in karmic fruit)"<sup>7</sup> is based basically on the right view that a wholesome conscious action (even a thought) has the potential of karmic fruit. A number of discourses admonish the giver that the best motivation for wholesome giving is, while giving, to aspire, "This is an adornment for (beautifying) the mind, a support for the mind" (*cittālaṅkāraṃ citta, parikkhār'-attham*). In other words, spiritual giving is part of our cultivation of moral virtue as a support for mental cultivation. With abundant moral virtue, it is easier for us to cultivate the mind. Conversely, if we find difficulty in meditating then we should examine our moral conduct and rectify any unwholesome habits, or resolve our negative thoughts, or seek a good teacher or spiritual friends.

<sup>4</sup> CPD: "(not thrown away), not discarded, without disregard" (PvA 135).

<sup>5</sup> "As if throwing something away," *apaviddham*, also "rejected, abandoned (often of a dead body)," D 3:256,2 ≠ M 2:22,20 (MA 4:81,10: *apaviddham ti chaḍḍetu, kāmo hutvā vammike uragam pakkhipanto viya deti*, "he gives with the desire of throwing away, as if casting a snake onto an anthill"); S 3:143; Sn 200; Dh 292; Tha 315; J 3:426,20\*, 6:499,6\*.

<sup>6</sup> The wrong motives for giving incl impulsively (without thinking), giving out of fear (superstitious giving), giving for greater gain or recognition (political giving): basically any giving rooted in greed, hate or delusion; "weak" motives for giving incl giving out of pity, giving merely out of piety, traditional giving, biased giving, and giving with a desire for heavenly rebirth. See eg (**Maha-p,phala**) **Dāna S** (A 7.49/4:59-62) = SD 2.3; **Dāna S 1-2** (A 8.31-32/4:236) & **Dāna Vatthu S** (A 8.33/4:236 f) = SD 6.6.

<sup>7</sup> Ie, with a view of its karmic wholesome results. Cf *ayañ ca etad-agga, sannikkhepo nāma catūhi kāraṇehi labbhati: atth'uppattito āgamanato ciṇṇa, vasito guṇātirekato ti*, "and as regards this laying down of the foremost state, one gains it in four ways, namely, on account of the arising of the occasion (*attha*), on account of regard for the future (*āgamana*), on account of the virtue of habit (*ciṇṇa*), and on account of one's exceptional virtue (AA 1:125,6); on *āgamanato*, see AA 1:128,23, 132,17, 133,15, 134,5.

**2.3 NOT WHAT WE GIVE, BUT HOW WE GIVE.** In the **Velāma Sutta** (A 9.20), the Buddha consoles the impoverished Anātha,piṇḍika who is unable to give choice offerings to the order as he has done before, by saying that even a coarse (*lukha*) alms offering, where these five conditions obtain, would bring great fruit, that is, to say:<sup>8</sup>

wherever that almsgiving bears fruit, his mind will turn to the enjoyment of good food, or to the enjoyment of fine cloth, or to the enjoyment of splendid carriages, or to the enjoyment of the five cords of sense-pleasures in their sweetness.

One's sons or women [wives and daughters] or servants or messengers or workers will have the desire to listen to one, and give ear, and focus their minds to understand.<sup>9</sup>

(A 9.20/4:392 = SD 16.6)

**2.4 THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF TRUE GIVING.** The **Sappurisa Dāna Sutta** (A 5.148) defines the five conditions for a true individual's giving as follows:

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|---|---|
| (1) he gives with faith                         | ( <i>saddhāya dānam deti</i> ),                       |
| (2) he gives with respectful care               | ( <i>sakkaccaṃ dānam deti</i> ),                      |
| (3) he gives at the right time                  | ( <i>kālena dānam deti</i> ),                         |
| (4) he gives with a hospitable mind             | ( <i>anuggahita, citta dānam deti</i> ),              |
| (5) he gives harming neither himself nor others | ( <i>attānañ ca parañ ca anupahacca dānam deti</i> ). |

(A 5.148/3:172) = SD 22.15

Condition (3), giving “at the right time” (*kālena*) is giving when virtuous practitioners are present, or during appropriate occasions (such as dedicating merits to the deceased). It can also refer to the fulfilling of our invitation (*pavāraṇā*) to offer allowable things to monastics when the occasion arises.<sup>10</sup>

Here, (4) giving “with a hospitable mind” (*anuddhita, citta*) has the sense of giving “with the right mind” (*citti, katvā*) and “without contempt” (*anapaviddham*).

Giving (5) “harming neither himself nor others” clearly refers to giving with the proper motive,<sup>11</sup> and for the sake of beautifying and supporting the mind in mindfulness and meditation.

**2.5 MUNDANE BENEFITS OF GIVING.** According to the **Pāyāsi Sutta** (D 23), a post-Buddha discourse,<sup>12</sup> all kinds of giving bear good fruits, but the more wholesome the giving, the better the fruit. For example, the impious and argumentative **Prince Pāyāsi** gives without due care, not with his own hands, without the right mind, and with contempt, and as a result is reborn in an empty celestial mansion (*vimāna*) in the lowest heaven, that of the Four Guardian Kings. The wise young **Uttara Māṇava**, on the other hand, who is instructed by Pāyāsi to execute his offerings, does so in this manner:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| (1) he gives with due care                              | ( <i>sakkaccaṃ dānam detha</i> ),    |
| (2) he gives with his own hands                         | ( <i>sahatthā dānam detha</i> ),     |
| (3) he gives with the right mind (of due respect)       | ( <i>citti, kataṃ dānam detha</i> ), |
| (4) he gives without contempt (not as if throwing away) | ( <i>anapaviddham dānam detha</i> ). |

(D 23.32-34/2:355 f) = SD 39.4

<sup>8</sup> On the five contrary (negative) conditions for giving, see **Velāma S** (A 9.20.2/4:392) = SD 16.6.

<sup>9</sup> This para: *Ye pi'ssa te honti puttā ti vā dārā ti vā dāsā ti vā pessā ti vā kammakarā ti vā, te pi na sussusanti na sotam odahati na añña, cittam upaṭṭhapenti.*

<sup>10</sup> On *pavāraṇā* (the invitation to give; not to be confused with “the invitation to be counselled” on the last day of the rains), see Nis Pāc 6 = V 3:212 (BMC 186-189); Nis Pāc 7 = V 3:214 (BMC 189-192); Nis Pāc 8 = V 3:216 (BMC 193-195); Pāc 47 = V 4:102 f (BMC 393-397). Note: “BMC” = *The Buddhist Monastic Code* tr & com by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Valley Centre, CA (USA): Metta Forest Monastery, 2nd ed, 1996. See also Bhikkhu Ariyesako, *The Bhikkhus' Rules: A guide for laypeople*, Kallista, VIC (Australia): Sanghāloka Forest Hermitage, 1998. Important note: Money is not allowable for monastics: see

<sup>11</sup> Ie, avoiding the various negative or weak motives mentioned under **Cūḷa Puṇṇama S** (M 110) [2.2(4)n].

<sup>12</sup> The events of **Pāyāsi S** (D 23) occurs just after the Great Parinirvana and after the First Council (VvA 297).

Uttara, however, as a result of such wholesome karma, is reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three. In Dharma terms, even being reborn in the heavens as a result of giving is, of course, very mundane. Significantly, only four factors of true giving are listed, with the omission of the fifth condition, that of giving “with regard for the future (believing in karmic fruit)” (*āgamana, ditthiko dānam deti*). [2.2(5)n]

**2.6 THE HIGHEST GIVING.** In **the Aṅkura Peta, vatthu** (Pv 2.9), the kshatriya Aṅkura gives with care, with his own hand, and with the right mind, and does so regularly for a long time.<sup>13</sup> In Buddhist mythology, *the most famous giving* is that of **Shakra to Mahā Kassapa**, as recounted in **the (Sakka) Kassapa Sutta** (U 3.7). It is said that Shakra, the king of the gods, by disguising himself as a poor weaver, along with his wife, tricks Māha Kassapa into receiving alms from him, so that his is “the highest gift” (*parama dāna*).<sup>14</sup>

The Sutta’s commentary defines “the highest giving” here as one that is endowed with the threefold fulfillment of *the field* (an arhat is the recipient), *the gift* (almsgiving proper gotten and given), and *the mind* (that of right view). The Commentary also mentions the fivefold conditions of the true individual’s giving (*sappurisa, dāna*) as mentioned in **the Sappurisa, dāna Sutta** (A 5.148) above. (UA 200)

### 3 Related pratyeka-buddha stories

**3.1 PRATYEKA-BUDDHA.** A number of sutta and commentarial stories are connected with the unnamed seth householder of the two Aputtaka Suttas (S 3.19-20) who dies without issue. These stories, as we shall see, appear in at least three versions with overlaps, and are probably different retellings of an older source. At the centre of these stories is the seth householder’s karmic links with a pratyeka Buddha named **Tagara, sikhī** (but who again in a few cases remains unnamed). [3]

A **pratyeka-buddha** (*pacceka, buddha*, literally “private or solitary Buddha”) is one who has attained full self-awakening all by himself (like Gotama Buddha), but does not establish a dispensation (*sāsana*). They are said to arise only at times when there is no such dispensation. Such a time would usually be when the human lifespan is too short (when it is difficult to understand the teaching) or too long (when it is difficult to accept the teaching, such as that of impermanence).<sup>15</sup>

A whole discourse, **the Isi, gili Sutta** (M 116), is about pratyeka-buddhas, where 500 of them are mentioned. **The Mahā, parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) states that a pratyeka-buddha is one of those worthy of a stupa after death.<sup>16</sup> **The Nidhi, kaṇḍa Sutta** (Kh 8) mentions *sāvaka, bodhi, pacceka, bodhi* and *buddha, bhūmi* (stanza 15). None of these texts however even hint at the pratyeka-buddha’s place in the Teaching.

**The Apadāna** tells us that “the well-spoken words of the pratyeka-buddha are found in the world with its devas; having heard them and not acting in them, the fools suffering pain again and again.”<sup>17</sup> The experiences and awakening-verses uttered by the pratyeka-buddhas are narrated in the ancient **Khagga, -visāṇa Sutta** (Sn 1.3),<sup>18</sup> which is the most important of the texts containing teachings of the pratyeka-buddhas. Although the Sutta itself does not say it, its commentary in the Cūḷa Niddesa (Nc 54 ff) and the

<sup>13</sup> Pv 2.9.55/27; PvA 135.

<sup>14</sup> U 3.7/30 f = SD 30.13; UA 200 = UA:M 492.

<sup>15</sup> No Buddhas would arise during the early world-period when the human life-span is more than 100,000 years. For, under such circumstances, humans would not perceive that living beings are subject to birth, decay and death. Neither would Buddhas appear at a time when the human life-span shorter than a hundred years. For, then evil is rife amongst humans, and the time is too short for them to learn. When Gotama Buddha appeared on earth, the human life-span was about a hundred years. See BA 54, 283; J 1:48 f. See also Ria Kloppenbergh 1983, Norman 1983, etc, in biblio. See also DPPN: *Pacceka Buddha*.

<sup>16</sup> The four worthy of a posthumous stupa are the Buddha, a pratyeka-buddha, a Buddha’s disciple, and a world-monarch (*cakka, vatti*), D 16.5.12/2:142; A 4.245/2:245.

<sup>17</sup> *Pacceka, buddhānaṃ subhāsītāni caranti lokamhi sadevakamhi, sutvā tathā ye na karonti bālā caranti dukkhesu punappanaṃ te* (Ap 13).

<sup>18</sup> Sn 1.3/35-75/6-12.

Apadāna (Ap 2.9-49/8-13), attribute it to a pratyeka-buddha.<sup>19</sup> Anyway, since these verses are included in one of the oldest Pali texts, it shows that it was “the decision to assimilate them into Buddhism at a very early stage of Buddhism” (Norman 1983:102).

**The Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 142) says that offering alms to the pratyeka-buddhas is superior to offerings to arhats, and also that offerings to fully-self-awakened Buddhas are superior to offerings to pratyeka-buddhas. This suggests that pratyeka-buddhas are superior to arhats but inferior to Tathāgatas in their attainments.<sup>20</sup> The Jātakas state that the pratyeka-buddha’s wisdom is less than that of the Bodhi-sattva (J 4:341).

**The Puggala,paññatti**, a canonical work of the Abhidhamma, defines the pratyeka-buddha as one who understands the four noble truths by his own efforts, but obtains neither “omniscience” (*na sabbañ-ñutam*) nor mastery of the fruits (*phalesu na vasībhāvam*).<sup>21</sup> This “shows that at the beginning of the Abhidhamma period the Buddhists (like the early Jains) still regarded both sammāsambuddhas and pacceka-buddhas as being ‘self-enlightened’ (*sāmañ*), and it was in their attributes and powers that the difference lay, not in the way of being enlightened.” (Norman 1983:102)

It is in the **Sutta Nipāta Commentary** that we first find the notion that *a pratyeka-buddha cannot awaken another*. If we read this statement in the light of the Puggala,paññatti statement (Pug 1.28), then, it can say that the pratyeka-Buddha may liberate others, but not in the manner or magnitude of the fully self-awakened Buddha does.<sup>22</sup> **The Jātakas**, for example, mention various pratyeka-buddhas, such as Darī,mukha, J 378, and Sonaka, J 529, who appear as teachers of Buddhist doctrine in pre-Buddhist times. Buddhaghosa, too, tells of the elder Nālaka, who is taught by pratyeka-buddhas and achieved *pacceka,bodhi*.<sup>23</sup> The Sutta Nipāta Commentary describes the pratyeka-buddha and his aspiration (*patthanā*) (SnA 51). The Dhammapada Commentary mentions pratyeka-buddhas going among men for alms and spending the rainy season in dwellings provided by men.<sup>24</sup>

Modern scholars, such as **Fujita Kotatsu** (1957) and **KR Norman** (1983) have demonstrated that the concept of the pratyeka-buddha is common to both early Buddhism and Jainism, both of which probably adapted it from a common ancient tradition. In early Buddhism, initially, there are only two categories of saints, that is, the full self-awakened Buddha (*sammā,sambuddha*) and the arhat (*arahata*). These two categories leave a huge gap, as it were, regarding the possibility of spiritual liberation during times when there were no Buddhas. The concept of the pratyeka-buddha conveniently and effectively fills this “soteriological gap” (Gombrich 1979:78 f), an idea further developed by Norman (1983:100 f).

**3.2 THE PRATYEKA-BUDDHA TAGARA,SIKHI.** The pratyeka-buddha most frequently mentioned in the Pali texts is **Tagara,sikhī**, the third among the five hundred sons of rajah Paduma,vatī, all of whom became pratyeka-buddhas.<sup>25</sup> Many of these names are mentioned in **the Isi,gili Sutta** (M 116), which is, in fact, exclusively about the pratyeka-buddhas of Isi,gili Hill.<sup>26</sup>

The Samyutta Nikaya and Commentaries contain a story of **a seth householder** who often meets Tagara,sikhī on his almsrounds. One day, the seth householder asks his wife to offer Tagara,sikhī a meal and then departs. His wife prepares some excellent food and gives it to Tagara,sikhī. The seth householder, on his return, meets Tagara,sikhī, and noticing the food’s quality, regrets his wife’s generosity, thinking to himself that it would have been better given to his slaves, labourers and servants, so that they

<sup>19</sup> The Mahāvastu (Mvst 1:357-357) attributes its 12-verse Khadga,visāṇa Sūtra to 500 pratyeka-buddhas, showing that this attribution predates the schism between the Sthaviravādins and the Mahāsaṅghikas.

<sup>20</sup> M 142.5/3:254 = SD 1.9.3.

<sup>21</sup> Pug 1.28/14, 6.1/70.

<sup>22</sup> “The Buddhas awaken themselves and bring awakening to others; the pratyeka-buddhas awaken themselves, but do not bring awakening to others” (*Buddhā sayañ ca bujjhanti pare ca bodhenti, pacceka,buddhā sayam bujjhanti na pare bodhenti*) (SnA 51).

<sup>23</sup> *Nālaka,thera,sadiso...pacceka,buddhānam santike ovādam labhitvā paṭividdha,pacceka,bodhi,ñāṇo ca* (AA 2:192,7-9).

<sup>24</sup> Eg, DhA 2:112 f, 3:91, 368, 4:200.

<sup>25</sup> M 116.3/3:69; ApA 258, cf 127.

<sup>26</sup> M 116/3:68-71.

would give better service. As a result, he was born a wealthy seth householder in Sāvattthi, but is never able to enjoy his wealth, and dies without issue, all his possessions forfeited by the royal treasury.<sup>27</sup>

The Saṃyutta story of the seth householder is found almost verbatim in the Dhammapada Commentary, where he is called **Aputtaka Setṭhī** (DhA 24.11), but with more details. The Dhammapada story says that rajah Pasenadi, “after conveying the wealth from his house to the royal house for seven days” (*sattahi divasehi tassa gehato dhanam rāja, kulam abhiharāpetvā*), visits the Buddha [cf §6]. It also says that when the servants bring him choice food in a golden dish, or brings him beautiful clothes or carriages or parasols, the seth would chase them away with clods of earth, sticks and stones!

A further detail given by the Dhammapada story is that the food offered to the pratyeka-buddha is choice food prepared by his wife. It also says that the seth’s nephew keeps claiming that the wealth is *his* father’s. So fearing that he will inherit it in due course, the seth takes him to a forest and strangles him there. For this, he is reborn childless. However, on account of his causing the pratyeka-buddha to be provided with food, he is reborn seven times in heaven, and in seven earthly lives, he is a seth in Sāvattthī. But in all those lives he dies childless. At the end of the story, the Buddha declares:<sup>28</sup>

<i>Hananti bhogā dummedham no ca pāra, gavesino bhoga, tanhāya dummedho hanti aññ’eva attanan ti</i>	Wealth destroys those of weak wisdom, but not those in quest of the beyond [nirvana]. The foolish, craving for wealth, ruins himself just as he ruins others. Dh 355
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**3.3 THE SETH HOUSEHOLDER’S KARMA.** The childless seth’s story is also found in the introduction to the **Mayhaka Jātaka** (J 390), where he is named **Āgantuka Setṭhi**. Similarly, here it is stated that the rajah takes seven days and nights to remove the seth’s wealth to the palace. In his past life, the seth was faithless and miserly. However, one day, he meets a pratyeka-buddha and has his wife offer him some almsfood. Later, on discovering that the offering is a choice one, he regrets it thinking that it would serve him better if his slave and workers had eaten it. The story’s moral is that these three intentions are fulfilled when the giving yields great fruit, that is:<sup>29</sup>

<i>Pubb’eva dānā sumanā bhavāma, dadam pi ve attamanā bhavāma, datvāpi ve nānutappāma pacchā, tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na miyyare.</i>	Happy minded am I before the giving, while giving, too, my mind delights, after the giving, indeed, I have no regrets: therefore, too, our young die not. (J 447/4:53)
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<i>Pubb’eva dānā sumano, dadam cittam pasādaye; datvā attamano hoti, esā yaññassa sampadā.</i>	Happy minded indeed before the giving, while giving, the mind is faithful, after giving, the mind delights— this is the sacrifice’s fulfillment. (A 6.37/3:336 = Pv 2.9.49/27) (J 390/3:299 f)
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**The Kuṭṭhi Sutta** of the Udāna tells the story of **Suppabuddha** the leper, who, in his previous life, was a seth of Rājagaha. One day, on his way to a park, he meets a pratyeka-buddha Tagara, sikhi on an almsround in the city, and he insults him, as a result of which he is born as a leper in this birth.<sup>30</sup> The story of Suppabuddha the leper and the pratyeka-buddha is also found in the Dhammapada Commentary, where two important past karmic conditions of Suppa, buddha are mentioned. Firstly, it is said that he spits at the pratyeka-buddha, as a result of which he is tormented for a long time in hell, and because his karmic fruit is not yet exhausted, he is reborn as a leper. (DhA 5.7/2:36)

Secondly, Suppabuddha, sitting in the outer circle of the congregation, listens to the Buddha’s teachings, and becomes a streamwinner. Shakra wishing to test him, pretends to offer him great wealth if he

<sup>27</sup> S 3.20/1:92 f; SA 1:161; also J 390/3:299 f; MAṬ 1:428.

<sup>28</sup> DhA 24.11/4:76-80 = *Buddhist Legends* 3:240 f.

<sup>29</sup> *Dānañ hi nāma tisso cetanā paripuññaṃ kātuṃ sakkontass’eva maha-p, phalam hoti.*

<sup>30</sup> U 5.3/50; UA 291.

would denounce the Three Jewels. Suppabuddha rebukes Shakra and declares that, despite his poverty and sufferings, he has won happiness and great wealth, that is, the seven treasures (*satta dhana*) of *faith, moral virtue, moral shame, moral fear, great learning, charity and wisdom*.<sup>31</sup> Then, Shakra leaves and Suppabuddha goes a little way. Then a heifer, who really is a yakshini, gores him to death. This is the ripening of his karma, when in a past life Suppabuddha and three others (now reborn as Pukkusāti the youth of family,<sup>32</sup> Bāhiya Dārucīriya the wanderer,<sup>33</sup> and Tamba, dāṭhika the public executioner),<sup>34</sup> as four young men, had killed a courtesan and stolen her jewels. In her death wish, the courtesan vowed vengeance, and so was reborn as a cow for a hundred existences and killed the four youths each time.

It has been suggested by CAF Rhys Davids (*Buddhist India*, 1903:31) that the “Tagara” in Tagara, -sikhī was probably the name of a place, perhaps the modern Ter in central India.

#### 4 The significance of stories

The four main versions of the story of the unfortunate seth householder are as follows:

- Aputtaka Suttas 1                      S 3.19/1:89-91,
- Aputtaka Suttas 2                      S 3.20/1:91-93,
- Aputtaka Seṭṭhī Vatthu                DhA 24.11/4:76-80,
- Kuṭṭhi Sutta                              U 3.5/50; UA 291.

As mentioned earlier [2.1], these three versions are probably different retellings of an older source. At the centre of these stories is the seth householder’s karmic links with a pratyeka Buddha named **Tagara, sikhī** (but who again in a few cases remains unnamed).

The closest we have to naming our protagonist, the seth householder, is in **the Aputtaka Seṭṭhī Vatthu**. *Aputtaka* simply means “childless” and is more likely to be an epithet of the seth rather his name. Of course, in a story, the two—epithet and name—often overlap. The bottom line is that he is not only *childless* to the audience, but also *nameless*. That he is not named is very significant, those who fail to do good are not remembered, or not remembered for any good since they have not done any.

Of the stories mentioned above, three are closely connected with a pratyeka-buddha. Since pratyeka-buddhas do not appear when there is fully self-awakened Buddha or when his teachings are still practised, such a scenario significantly reflects the fact that the rules of true giving still applies whether the Buddha and the arhats are around or not. True giving is not a matter of belief or tradition, or even religion, but of natural goodness and a means for strengthening our efforts in spiritual liberation at any time, especially at the present moment. The aspiration to spiritual liberation is certainly possible and efficacious here and now, while we can still remember and practise the Buddha Dharma.

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<sup>31</sup> D 3:163, 267; A 4:5.

<sup>32</sup> Comy on M 140.

<sup>33</sup> DhA 8.2/2:209-216.

<sup>34</sup> DhA 8.1/2:202-208.

## The Second Discourse on the Childless

(S 3.20/1:91-93)

1a Originating in Sāvattḥī.

### A seth dies intestate

1b Then rajah Pasenadi of Kosala in the middle of the day approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One, he saluted him and the sat down at one side.

Seated thus at one side, the Blessed One said this to rajah Pasenadi of Kosala:

“Now, maharajah, where have you come from in the middle of the day?”

2 “Bhante, a seth householder has died here in Sāvattḥī. He has no son; so after conveying his property into the royal palace<sup>35</sup>—100,000,000 pieces of gold,<sup>36</sup> bhante, not to speak of silver!

And yet, bhante, the seth householder’s meals were like this: he ate red rice along with sour gruel!

His clothes were like this: he wore a three-piece hempen [91] garment!

His vehicle was like this: he went about in a little old cart rigged with a leaf awning!”

### The seth’s past karma

3 “So it is, maharajah! So it is, maharajah!

Once upon a time, maharajah, the seth householder provided almsfood to a pratyeka-buddha named Tagara,sikhī.

Having said, ‘Give alms to the ascetic!’<sup>37</sup> he rose and departed.

But after giving, he later had regrets, thinking:

‘It would have been better that the almsfood were eaten by the slaves, or labourers!’

Furthermore, he had his brother’s only son deprived of life on account of his fortune.

4 Now, maharajah, the seth householder provided almsfood for the pratyeka-buddha Tagara,sikhī.

As a result of that karma, he arose seven times in a happy state, the heavens.

On account of that karma, he gained the status of seth in this very Sāvattḥī.

5 Now, maharajah, after the seth householder later had regrets, thinking:

‘It would have been better that the almsfood were eaten by the slaves, or labourers!’

As a result of that karma, his heart was not inclined to enjoy the excellent food, the excellent clothing, the excellent vehicles, nor was his heart inclined to enjoy the five cords of sense-pleasures.

6 Now, maharajah, the seth householder had his brother’s only son deprived of life on account of his fortune.

As a result of that karma, he was tormented in the hells for many years, many hundreds of years, many thousands of years, many hundred of thousands of years.

As the residual result of that very same karma, he has here supplied the royal treasury with the seventh heirless fortune.<sup>38</sup>

And, maharajah, the old merit of that seth householder is totally exhausted, and he had not accumulated any new merit.

But today, maharajah, the seth householder is tortured in the Great Roruva Hell.”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> In other words, he dies childless and intestate; hence, his property goes to the crown.

<sup>36</sup> *Satam...sata,sahassāni hiraññass’eva.*

<sup>37</sup> Other versions of the story record that he instructs his wife to make the offering (Intro 2.2).

<sup>38</sup> *Tass’eva kammaṣṣa vipākāvasesena idam [Se idha] sattamam aputtakam sāpateyyam rāja,kosam paveseti.*

Here “seventh” (*sattamam*) must refer to his latest life, but does not fit very well with the context here. Cf **Mayhaka J (J 390)** version, where it is said that the removal takes 7 days and 7 nights (*sattahi ratti,divasehi*) (J 390/3:299), and the DhA version where seven days (*sattahi divasehi*) (DhA 24.11/4:77).

<sup>39</sup> *Mahā,roruva niraya*, the name of a hell-state. The Suttas (M 3:185; S 1:149; A 5:173; Sn p126) mentions various hells. The Comys give various lists of hells (*niraya*, qv DPPN), and explain that they are not separate hells,



7 “So, bhante, the seth householder is reborn in the Great Roruva Hell?” [93]

8 “Yes, maharajah, the seth householder is reborn in the Great Roruva Hell.”

[The Blessed One said this. Having said this, the Sugata [well-gone], the Teacher, further said this:]<sup>40</sup>

- |   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| <p>9 <i>Dhaññaṃ dhanam rajatam jātarūpaṃ<br/>pariggahaṃ vāpi yad atthi kiñci<br/>dāsā kamma, karā pessā,<br/>ye c’assa anujīvino<br/>sabbam n’ādāya gantabbam<br/>sabbam nikkhippagāminam</i></p> | <p>Grain, wealth, silver, gold,<br/>or whatever possessions there are,<br/>slaves, labourers, messengers,<br/>and those who are dependents—<br/>without taking anything, we must go;<br/>everything must be left behind.</p> | <p>416</p> |
| <p>10 <i>Yañ ca karoti kāyena,<br/>vācāya uda cetasā<br/>tañ hi tassa sakaṃ hoti<br/>tañ ca ādāya gacchati<br/>tañ c’assa anugaṃ hoti<br/>chāyā’va anapāyinī</i></p>                              | <p>But what has been done by the body,<br/>or by speech, or by the mind,<br/>this is truly our own:<br/>this is what we bring along,<br/>this is what follows us,<br/>like a never-departing shadow.</p>                     | <p>417</p> |
| <p>11 <i>Tasmā kareyya kalyāṇam<br/>nicayam samparāyikam<br/>puññaṇi paralokasmim<br/>patiṭṭhā honti pāṇinan ‘ti.</i></p>   | <p>Therefore, one should do good,<br/>stored up for the hereafter,<br/>merit for the next world,<br/>a support for living beings.</p>  | <p>418</p> |

— evaṃ —

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but specified periods of suffering in Avīci (DA 3:802; MA 3:316, 4:236; SA 1:111, 2:400; AA 5:61; DhA 3:181, 210, 225, 4:79). See also Divy 67.

<sup>40</sup> *Idam avoca Bhagavā. Idam vatvāna Sugato athāparam etad avoca Satthā.* Only in Be.

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