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## (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta

The (Fives) Discourse on Sīha (on the visible fruits of giving) | A 5.34  
or **Sīha Senāpati Sutta 1** The First Discourse on General Sīha<sup>1</sup>

Theme: The fruit of giving visible in this life

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2014

### 1 Sutta highlights

**1.1** The (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta belongs to a set of closely related suttas of teachings on giving (*dāna*) given to the Licchavī general Sīha, whose conversion to Buddhism is related in **the (Licchavī) Sīha Sutta** (A 8.12).<sup>2</sup> Although the suttas are closely related, they each contain significant variations of their own. As such, it would be beneficial to study these three Suttas as a set. A good way to do this is to study them in this sequence.

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|--|----------------|-----------|
| (1) Examine <b>Table 1.4</b> (below),      |                |           |
| (2) <b>(Pañcaka) Saddha Sutta</b>          | A 5.38/3:42 f  | SD 45.9,  |
| (3) <b>(Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta</b> | A 5.34/3:38-40 | SD 45.2,  |
| (4) <b>(Sattaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta</b> | A 7.54/4:79-82 | SD 22.16. |

Alternatively, begin with the sutta or title that you are drawn to, and go from them to finish studying all the three of them.

**1.2** A longer version of **the (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 5.34) is found in **the (Sattaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 7.54). The latter Sutta is an expanded parallel of **the (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 5.34),<sup>3</sup> enlarged by partly incorporating **the (Pañcaka) Saddha Sutta** (A 5.38)<sup>4</sup> [SD 45.9]. Both the Pañcaka and the Sattaka versions of the Sīha Sutta here are probably based on the same urtext (original source), which records the teaching the Buddha gives to Sīha soon after his conversion, when he asks the Buddha whether it is possible to see the fruits of giving visible (*sandiṭṭhika*), that is arising in this life itself.<sup>5</sup> [1.6.1]

**1.3** The Buddha replies in **the (Sattaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 7.54) by saying that it is the “faithful, a master giver, who delights in giving” (*saddho dāna,pati anuppadāna,rato*) (A 7.54,3) who would enjoy these 7 immediate benefits (enjoyed in this life itself). **The (Sattaka Dāna,phala) Sutta** (A 7.54)<sup>6</sup> records the 7 visible fruits of giving climaxing with Sīha’s lion-roar. It is an expanded parallel of **the (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 5.34),<sup>7</sup> enlarged by partly incorporating **the (Pañcaka) Saddha Sutta** (A 5.38).<sup>8</sup> Both these Suttas (A 5.34 and A 5.38) are found in this volume (SD 45).

**1.4** **THE 5 VISIBLE FRUITS OF GIVING** are listed in **the (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 5.34) as follows [§2]:

- (1) the giver is dear and agreeable to the multitude;
- (2) the truly good individuals associate with the giver;
- (3) his good reputation spreads;
- (4) he approaches any assembly with confidence; and
- (5) after death, he is reborn in heaven.

Here is a table to collate the factors from the key Suttas related to this teaching:

<sup>1</sup> Cf **Sīha Senāpati S 2** (A 7.54), SD 45.3.

<sup>2</sup> A 8.12/4:179-188 @ SD 71.5.

<sup>3</sup> A 5.34/3:38-40 @ SD 45.2.

<sup>4</sup> A 5.38/3:42 f @ SD 45.9.

<sup>5</sup> For a deeper level of *sandiṭṭhika*, see **Dhammānussati**, SD 15.9(2.2).

<sup>6</sup> A 7.54/4:79-82 @ SD 22.16.

<sup>7</sup> A 5.34/3:38-40 @ SD 45.2.

<sup>8</sup> A 5.38/3:42 f @ SD 45.9.

<u>A 7.54</u> (SD 22.16)	<u>A 5.38 [§2]<sup>9</sup></u> (SD 45.9)	<u>A 5.34 [§2]</u> (SD 45.2)
(1) the arhats would <u>show compassion</u> to him first [§2]	(1)	[ ] <sup>10</sup>
(2) the arhats would <u>visit him first</u> [§3]	(2) }	--
(3) the arhats would <u>accept alms from him first</u> [§4]	(3) }	(2) <sup>11</sup>
(4) the arhats would <u>teach him first</u> [§5]	(4) }	--
(5) <u>a good report</u> about him would spread about [§6]	--	(3)
(6) he would <u>approach any assembly</u> with confidence [§7]	--	(4)
(7) after death, he will be reborn in <u>a happy destination</u> [§8]	(5)	(5)

**TABLE 1.4 Collation of factors in the Suttas on giving and faith.**<sup>12</sup>

At the end of A 7.54 and of A 5.34 Sīha exults by giving his lion-roar (declaration of faith) that he himself has all these qualities except for the last, that is, he does not know what his rebirth would be [§9]. The Buddha, however, assures him that he would be reborn in a happy destination [§3 (5)].

### 1.5 CORRELATIONS

**1.5.1** Notice that (in Table 1.4) (1)-(4) are personal benefits, or the spiritual friendship<sup>13</sup> with a saint or a wholesome teacher. Factors (5) and (6) are social benefits, and (7) is a spiritual benefit. **The (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 5.34) only shares the last three benefits—the social and the spiritual—and has its own first 2 benefits, namely, that (1) the giver is dear to others, and (2) “truly good [peaceful] individual” associate with him [§2]. Factor (2) apparently incorporates (in summary) all the 4 personal benefits laid out in full in **the (Sattaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta** (A 7.54).<sup>14</sup>

**1.5.2** Note also that all the three Suttas share a common factor—no (5)—that is, the consistent giver and the consistently faithful are reborn in heaven (in the next or future lives). While all the other benefits are enjoyed in this life itself, only this fifth benefit will come in the future life or lives. The preceding factor, in other words, are the bases for this fifth benefit.

That the teachings in all three Suttas go no further is understandable, as in **A 7.54** and **A 5.34**, the audience or interlocutor is general Sīha, a new lay convert to the Dharma. Hence, this is only a provisional and preparatory teaching forming the basis for further teaching (especially the 4 noble truths) and meditation.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.6 RELATED SUTTAS

**1.6.1 Visible fruits of recluship.** While the (Pañcaka Dāna,phala) Sīha Sutta (A 5.34) deals with “the visible benefits of giving” (*sandiṭṭhika dāna,phala*), **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2), as the title suggests, deal with “the fruits of recluship visible here and now” (*diṭṭh’eva dhamme sandiṭṭhikam*). Note that the Sāmañña,phala Sutta term is more exhaustive.

Both the Sīha Suttas [1.5.1] use the phrase, “the visible fruits [benefits] of giving” (*sandiṭṭhika dāna,phala*) in its list of 5 visible fruits (A 5.34) and of 7 visible fruits of giving (A 7.54). It is found in the last fruit or benefit, which is not one visible “here and now,” but in the next life (*samparāyika*), that is, rebirth in a heaven world.

All the fruits of recluship, however, are enjoyed here and now, whether they are worldly (such as the benefits of material support) or spiritual (the enjoyment of the blissful dhyanas) or salvific, that is, the at-

<sup>9</sup> (**Pañcaka**) **Saddha S** (A 5.38) uses the term “the peaceful and the true individuals” (*santo sappurisā*) instead of arhats.

<sup>10</sup> “(1) One is dear and agreeable to the multitude.”

<sup>11</sup> “(2) The truly good individuals associate with the giver.”

<sup>12</sup> See also Table 2.3 @ SD 45.9 (2). For more details, see SD 45.3 (Table 1.2).

<sup>13</sup> On spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇa,mittatā*), see **Spiritual friendship: A textual study**, SD 34.1.

<sup>14</sup> See E B Findly, *Dāna: Giving and getting in Pali Buddhism, Delhi*, 195-198.

<sup>15</sup> This teaching method is called the “gradual teaching” or “progressive talk” (*anupubbī,kathā*): see SD 30.8 (3.4.-2.2). For a more detailed analysis of related Suttas, see **Dān’ānisaṃsa S** (A 5.35) @ SD 45.3 (1.2).

taining of awakening in this very life itself. Indeed, practitioners, are urgently exhorted to gain awakening in this life itself, even the attaining of the first stage of sainthood, that of streamwinning.<sup>16</sup>

**1.6.2 The holy life and productivity.** In the (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha Sutta** (M 99), the Buddha answers the brahmin Subha's charge that while worldly work is productive, the work of a renunciant has no visible productive fruit. Similarly, the work of a **householder** (here obviously referring to the brahmins), like that of farming, may bring a small loss when it fails, or a great gain when it succeeds.

The work of a **renunciant**, too, may bring a small loss when it fails, or a great gain when it succeeds. The Buddha's point is that even with *little* "capital," either the householder or the renunciant, can make *great* gains. It is not a question of *status* but one of *action* that decides the results.<sup>17</sup> Here, in either case, great gains can be made with proper efforts.<sup>18</sup>

## 2 *Kūt'āgāra, sālā*

### 2.1 EARLY HISTORY

**2.1.1** The hall of the gabled house, or simply, "the gabled house," was a monastery complex, built by the Licchavis, in the Great Wood (*mahā, vana*), outside Vesālī.<sup>19</sup> Its name referred to a circular building with an upper storey and a pinnacled roof. According to the Commentaries, it was a monastic community residence (*saṅgh'ārāma*) built for the monks in the Great Wood (DA 1:309). Part of it consisted of a storied pinnacled house, with a hall on the ground floor, surrounded with only by pillars.

These pillars supported a gabled chamber which formed the main part of the Buddha's fragrant cell (*gandha, kūṭi*) there.<sup>20</sup> Below it was the meeting hall (*sālā*). The whole building was oriented from north to south, facing east (DA 1:311). It is on account of this hall that the whole monastery came to be known as the "hall of the gabled (or pinnacled) house" (*kūt'āgāra, sālā*).

Surrounding the main building were smaller quarters and other facilities for the monastics. There was an infirmary where the Buddha would often visit to check on and comfort the patients.<sup>21</sup>

**2.1.2 The Mahā, vastu**, a Sanskrit work of the Lokottara, vāda (a precursor of the Mahāyāna school), apparently refers to the area of the gabled hall by the name, "the bank of the monkey pool" (*markaṭa, hrada, tīra*), and takes it to be the name of a shrine (*caitya*; P *cetiya*) there (probably an ancient sacred spot).<sup>22</sup> It is possible that this was the original name of the actual spot where the monastic complex was located.

### 2.2 THE BUDDHA AT THE GABLED HALL

**2.2.1 Noon rest.** It was customary for the Buddha, when staying at the gabled hall, to spend his noon rest at the foot of a tree in the woods outside the Great Wood. Visitors coming at that time would, if they insisted on seeing the Buddha, would seek him there or be conducted to him there.<sup>23</sup>

**2.2.2 Order of nuns.** It was while the Buddha was residing in the gabled hall that he, upon Ānanda's intercession, finally granted the request of the 500 Sakya women, led by Pajāpatī Gotamī to be ordained as nuns. They had followed the Buddha there all the way from Kapila, vatthu.<sup>24</sup> At the gabled house, too,

<sup>16</sup> See any of the 10 suttas of the **Okkanti Saṃyutta** (S 25), esp (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

<sup>17</sup> For a fuller statement on this, see **Vāseṭṭha S** (M 98/2:196) = (Sn 3.9/596-656/115-123), SD 37.1.

<sup>18</sup> M 99 @ SD 38.6. See also **Bahu, kāra S** (It 4.8 or 4.1.8), where the Buddha declares that both householders and the renunciants need one another (It 4.8/111), SD 82.8.

<sup>19</sup> Vesālī (Skt Vaiśālī). Its ancient site is called Raja Vishal Ka Garh ("King Vishal's Fort"), located near modern Besarh (20 mi = 35 km) north of Hajipur: <http://www.indiavideo.org/bihar/travel/raja-vishal-ghar-vaishali-8792.php>.

<sup>20</sup> MA 2:268; SA 3:265; AA 2:332; UA 184; VA 2:393.

<sup>21</sup> See eg **Gelaṅṅa S 1** (S 36.7/4:210-213), SD 76.8; **Gelaṅṅa S 2** (S 36.8/213 f), SD 76.9; **Gilāna S** (A 5.121/3:-142), SD 76.2.

<sup>22</sup> Mvst 1:300. The Skt form *kūt'āgāra, sālā* is mentioned at Divyāvadāna 136.7, 200.21; Avadāna, śataka 1.8.5, 279.5; Mūla Sārvāstī, vāda Vinaya (Gilgit ed Dutt) 1:224.14, where it is said to be located on the "bank of monkey pool" (*markaṭa, hrada, tīra*).

<sup>23</sup> See eg **Mahāli S** (D 6,2-5/1:150 f); **Licchavi Kumāraka S** (A 5.58/ 3:75 f); also DA 1:310.

<sup>24</sup> V 2:253 f; A 8:51, 4:274 f; J 2:392. See SD 1.9 (2.2).

the Buddha gave Pajāpati Gotamī, at her request, a summary of his doctrine, as recorded in **the (Mahā Pajāpati) Ovāda Sutta** (A 8.52).<sup>25</sup>

### **2.2.3 The Buddha's last days**

2.2.3.1 Three months before passing away, while residing in the gabled house, the Buddha announced his impending death (D 16,3.51/2:120). This then would be the last time that the Buddha visited the hall.

2.2.3.2 It was here, too, around the same time—not recorded in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, but in **the Kalīngara Sutta** (S 20.8)—that the Buddha warns about the impending downfall of the Licchavī. He points out the strengths and weaknesses of the Licchavīs, hinting at their eventual conquest by Ajāta, sattu, and warns the monks of their own future.<sup>26</sup>

**2.3 AFTER THE BUDDHA.** Apparently, the gabled hall thrived as a Buddhist monastic centre for at least a few centuries after the Buddha, as evident from references to it in the Sinhala chronicle, the Mahāvamsa. One account refers to the elder Yasa Kakaṇḍa,putta as a resident of the gabled house, and who presided over the second Buddhist council, held at Vesālī, a hundred years after the Buddha's passing (Mahv 4.11-12).

A second account speaks of a large group of monks from this monastery who came to Sri Lanka in the first century CE to attend the foundation-laying ceremony of the Mahā,thūpa (the great stupa) at Anurādhapura (Mahv 1.29-33).

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## The (Fives) Discourse on Sīha (on the visible fruits of giving)

A 5.34

1 At one time the Blessed One was residing in the hall of the gabled house<sup>27</sup> in the Great Wood outside Vesālī.

### The visible fruits of giving

1.2 Then the general Sīha approached [39] the Blessed One, Having saluted the Blessed One, he sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

1.3 “Bhante, would you [the Blessed One] be able to point out the visible fruit [benefit] of giving?”<sup>28</sup>

2 “Yes, Sīha,” said the Blessed One,

(1) “The giver, Sīha, a master giver is dear and agreeable to the multitude.<sup>29</sup>

*Sīha, that the giver, a master giver is dear and agreeable to the multitude*—this, too, is a visible fruit of giving.

(2) Furthermore, Sīha, truly good [peaceful] individuals associate with the giver, a master giver.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> A 8.52/4:280 @ SD 102.1.

<sup>26</sup> S 20.8/2:267 f @ SD 100.5.

<sup>27</sup> “The hall of the gabled house,” or simply “the gabled house” (*kūṭ'āgāra, sālā*) located . See Intro (2).

<sup>28</sup> *Sakkā nu kho bhante bhagavā\* sandiṭṭhikam dāna, phalam paññāpetun 'ti.* [\*bhagavā only in Be; also not found at A 7.54 ad loc.] Note that the question here has *dāna, phalam* in the singular, but the Buddha answers, giving plural benefits.

<sup>29</sup> *Dāyako sīha dāna, pati bahuno janassa piyo hoti manāpo.*

<sup>30</sup> *Puna c'aparam sīha dāyakaṃ dāna, patim santo sappurisā bhajanti.* On the “truly good individuals” (*santo sappurisā*), see (**Pañcaka) Saddha S** (A 5.38, 1.2) n, SD 45.9.

*Sīha, that good individuals associate with the giver, a master giver—this, too, is a visible fruit of giving.*

(3) Furthermore, Sīha, a good reputation of the giver, a master giver, spreads around.

*Sīha, that the good reputation of the giver, a master giver, spreads around*<sup>31</sup>—this, too, is a visible fruit of giving.

(4) Furthermore, Sīha, whatever assembly that the giver, the master giver, approaches, whether it is an assembly of kshatriyas, or an assembly of brahmins, or an assembly of householders, or an assembly of recluses, he approaches them with confidence, without nervousness.<sup>32</sup>

*Sīha, that whatever assembly that the giver, a master giver, approaches—whether it is an assembly of kshatriyas, or an assembly of brahmins, or an assembly of householders, or an assembly of recluses—he approaches them with confidence, without nervousness—this, too, is a visible fruit of giving.*

(5) Furthermore, Sīha, when the body of the giver, a master giver, breaks up, after death, he is reborn in a happy place, a heaven world.<sup>33</sup>

*Sīha, that when the body of the giver, a master giver, breaks up, after death, he is reborn in a happy place, a heaven world—this is a fruit of giving in the future.*<sup>34</sup>

### Sīha's testimony

3 When this was said, general Siha said this to the Blessed One:<sup>35</sup>

“Bhante, here I do not go by faith in the Blessed One regarding these 4 visible fruits of giving. For, I know them myself.

(1) I, bhante, am a giver, a master giver—*dear and agreeable of the multitude*.

(2) I, bhante, am a giver, a master giver—*good [peaceful] individuals associate with me*.

(3) I, bhante, am a giver, a master giver—*my good reputation spreads around, thus:*

‘General sīha is a giver, a sponsor, a sangha supporter!’<sup>36</sup>

(4) I, [40] bhante, am a giver, a master giver—*whatever assembly that I approach, whether it is an assembly of kshatriyas, or an assembly of brahmins, or an assembly of householders, or an assembly of recluses, I approach them with confidence, without nervousness.*

3.2 Bhante, here I do not go by faith in the Blessed One regarding these 4 visible fruits of giving. For, I, too know them.”

(5) But, bhante, when the Blessed One said this:

‘*When the body of the giver, a master giver, breaks up, after death, he is reborn in a happy place, a heaven world,*’

This I do not know. But here, I go by faith in the Blessed One.”

3.3 “That is so, Sīha! That is so, Sīha! When the body of the giver, a master giver, breaks up, after death, he is reborn in a happy place, a heaven world.”

### The verses of giving

4 *Dadaṃ piyo hoti bhajanti naṃ bahū  
kittiṃ ca pappoti yaso ca vaḍḍhati*<sup>37</sup> *I  
amaṅku, bhūto parisāṃ vigāhati  
visārado hoti naro amaccharī*

The giver is beloved; many associate with him.  
He gains a reputation, and his fame grows.  
He enters an assembly without nervousness;  
a generous man is one with confidence.

<sup>31</sup> *Puna c'aparam sīha dāyakkassa dāna, patino kalyāṇo kitti, saddo abbhuggacchati.*

<sup>32</sup> *Puna c'aparam sīha dāyako dāna, pati yaṃ yad eva parisāṃ upasaṅkamati yadi khattiya, parisāṃ yadi brāhmaṇa, parisāṃ yadi gaha, pati, parisāṃ yadi samaṇa, parisāṃ, visārado [Ce visārado 'va] upasaṅkamati amaṅku, bhūto.*

<sup>33</sup> *Puna c'aparam sīha dāyako dāna, pati kāyassa bhedā param maraṇā sugatim saggam lokam upapajjati.*

<sup>34</sup> *Idaṃ [Ke idaṃ pi sīha] samparāyikaṃ dāna, phalan'ti.*

<sup>35</sup> Sīha gives similar responses in (**Sattaka Dāna, phala**) **Sīha S** (A 7.54.9), SD 22.16.

<sup>36</sup> *Sīho senā, pati dāyako kārako saṅgh'upaṭṭhāko'ti.*

<sup>37</sup> So Be; Ke Se yasassa vaḍḍhati; Ke yasam pavaddhati.

- 5 *Tasmā hi dānāni dadanti paṇḍitā  
vineyya macchera,malam sukh'esino.  
Te dīgha,rattam tidive patiṭṭhitā  
devānaṃ sahavya,gatā ramanti te<sup>38</sup>  
katāvakaṣā kata,kusalā ito cutā<sup>39</sup>  
sayam,pabhā anuvicaranti nandanam<sup>40</sup>* Therefore, the wise give gifts,  
seeking happiness, he would remove the selfish stain.  
Long are they settled in the heaven of “threes,”  
rejoicing in communion with the devas there.  
From this chance of doing good, from here he goes,  
self-radiant, to wander in Nandana.<sup>41</sup>
- 6 *Te tattha nandanti ramanti modare  
samappitā kāma,guṇehi pañcahi  
katvāna vākyam asitassa tādino<sup>42</sup>  
ramanti sagge<sup>43</sup> sugatassa sāvaka'ti* There they delight, enjoy, rejoice themselves,  
replete with the five cords of sense-pleasures.  
Having done such an unattached one's word,  
the disciples of the well-gone rejoice in heaven.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>38</sup> So Be; Ce *sahabyataṃ gatā ramanti*; Ke *sahabyatā ramanti te*.

<sup>39</sup> So Be; Se *tato cutā*.

<sup>40</sup> So Be; Ke Se *nandane*.

<sup>41</sup> **Nandana** is a pleasure garden in the sense-world heaven of the 33 gods (*tāvatisa*), whose leader is Sakra (*sakka*).

<sup>42</sup> On the gen form, *tādino*, see **Sabba Kamma Jaha S** (U 3.1,12/21) + SD 39.3 (1.4).

<sup>43</sup> So Be; Ke *man'ti sumanā*; Be:Kaṃ Se *kaman'ti sabbe*.