

MN 81 Ghaṭikāra Sutta - Ghaṭikāra the Potter

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1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the [Blessed One](#) was wandering among the Kosalans together with a large Sangha of [bhikkhus](#).

2. Then in a certain place beside the main road the Blessed One smiled. It occurred to the venerable Ānanda: “What is the reason, what is the cause, for the Blessed One’s smile? Tathāgatas do not smile for no reason.” So he arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, and extending his hands in reverential salutation towards the Blessed One, asked him: “Venerable sir, what is the reason, what is the cause, for the Blessed One’s smile? Tathāgatas do not smile for no reason.”

3. “Once, Ānanda, in this place there was a prosperous and busy market town called Vebhalinga, with many inhabitants and crowded with people. Now the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, lived near the market town Vebhalinga. It was here, in fact, that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, had his monastery; it was here, in fact, that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, resided and advised the Sangha of bhikkhus.”

4. Then the venerable Ānanda folded his patchwork cloak in four, and spreading it out, said to the Blessed One: “Then, venerable sir, let the Blessed One be seated. Thus this place will have been used by two Accomplished Ones, Fully Enlightened Ones.”

The Blessed One sat down on the seat that had been made ready and addressed the venerable Ānanda thus:

5. “Once, Ānanda, in this place there was a prosperous and busy market town called Vebhalinga, with many inhabitants and crowded with people. Now the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, lived near the market town Vebhalinga. It was here, in fact, that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, had his monastery; it was here, in fact, that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, resided and advised the Sangha of bhikkhus.

6. “In Vebhalinga, the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, had as a supporter, as his chief supporter, a potter named Ghaṭikāra. Ghaṭikāra the potter had as a friend, as his close friend, a brahmin student named Jotipāla.

“One day the potter Ghaṭikāra addressed the brahmin student Jotipāla thus: ‘My dear Jotipāla, let us go and see the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. I hold that it is good to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened.’ The brahmin student Jotipāla replied: ‘Enough, my dear Ghaṭikāra, what is the use of seeing that bald-pated recluse?’

“A second and third time the potter Ghaṭikāra said: ‘My dear Jotipāla, let us go and see the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. I hold that it is good to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened.’ And a second and third time the brahmin student Jotipāla replied: ‘Enough, my dear Ghaṭikāra, what is the use of seeing that bald-pated recluse?’ — ‘Then, my dear Jotipāla, let us take a loofah and bath powder and go to the river to bathe.’ — ‘Very well,’ Jotipāla replied.

7. “So the potter Ghaṭikāra and the brahmin student Jotipāla took a loofah and bath powder and went to the river to bathe. Then Ghaṭikāra said to Jotipāla: ‘My dear Jotipāla, there is the monastery of the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, quite nearby. I hold that it is good to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened.’ Jotipāla replied: ‘Enough, my dear Ghaṭikāra, what is the use of seeing that bald-pated recluse?’

“A second and third time the potter Ghaṭikāra said: ‘My dear Jotipāla, let us go and see the Blessed One Kassapa...’ And a second and third time the brahmin student Jotipāla replied: ‘Enough, my dear Ghaṭikāra, what is the use of seeing that bald-pated recluse?’

8. “Then the potter Ghaṭikāra seized the brahmin student Jotipāla by the belt and said: ‘My dear Jotipāla, there is the monastery of the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, quite nearby. Let us go and see the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. I hold that it is good to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened.’ Then the brahmin student Jotipāla undid his belt and said: ‘Enough, my dear Ghaṭikāra, what is the use of seeing that bald-pated recluse?’

9. “Then, when the brahmin student Jotipāla had washed his head, the potter Ghaṭikāra seized him by the hair and said: ‘My dear Jotipāla, there is the monastery of the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, quite nearby. Let us go and see the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. I hold that it is good to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened.’

“Then the brahmin student Jotipāla thought: ‘It is wonderful, it is marvellous that this potter Ghaṭikāra, who is of a different birth, should presume to seize me by the hair when we have washed our heads! Surely this can be no simple matter.’ And he said to the potter Ghaṭikāra: ‘You go as far as this, my dear Ghaṭikāra?’ — ‘I go as far as this, my dear Jotipāla; for so much do I hold that it is good to see that Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened!’ — ‘Then, my dear Ghaṭikāra, let go of me. Let us visit him.’

10. “So Ghaṭikāra the potter and Jotipāla the brahmin student went to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. Ghaṭikāra, after paying homage to him, sat down at one side, while Jotipāla exchanged greetings with him, and

when this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he too sat down at one side. Ghaṭṭikāra then said to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened: 'Venerable sir, this is the brahmin student Jotipāla, my friend, my close friend. Let the Blessed One teach him the [Dhamma](#).'

"Then the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, instructed, urged, roused, and gladdened Ghaṭṭikāra the potter and Jotipāla the brahmin student with an exposition of the Dhamma. At the conclusion of the exposition, having delighted and rejoiced in the Blessed One Kassapa's words, they rose from their seats, and after paying homage to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, keeping him on their right, they departed.

11. "Then Jotipāla asked Ghaṭṭikāra: 'Now that you have heard the Dhamma, my dear Ghaṭṭikāra, why don't you go forth from the home life into homelessness?' — 'My dear Jotipāla, don't you know that I support my blind and aged parents?' — 'Then, my dear Ghaṭṭikāra, I shall go forth from the home life into homelessness.'

12. "So Ghaṭṭikāra the potter and Jotipāla the brahmin student went to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. After paying homage to him, they sat down at one side and Ghaṭṭikāra the potter said to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened: 'Venerable sir, this is the brahmin student Jotipāla, my friend, my close friend. Let the Blessed One give him the going forth.' And the brahmin student Jotipāla received the going forth from the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, and he received the full admission.

13. "Then not long after Jotipāla the brahmin student had received the full admission, a half-month after he had received the full admission, the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, having stayed at Vebhalinga as long as he chose, set out to wander towards [Benares](#). Wandering by stages, he eventually arrived at Benares, and there he went to live in the Deer Park at [Isipatana](#).

14. "Now King Kikī of Kāsi heard: 'It seems that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, has reached Benares and is living in the Deer Park at Isipatana.' So he had a number of state carriages made ready, and mounting a state carriage, drove out from Benares with the full pomp of royalty in order to see the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. He went thus as far as the road was passable for carriages, and then he got down from his carriage and went forward on foot to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened. After paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, instructed, urged, roused, and gladdened King Kikī of Kāsi with an exposition of the Dhamma.

15. "At the conclusion of the exposition, King Kikī of Kāsi said: 'Venerable sir, let the Blessed One together with the Sangha of bhikkhus consent to accept tomorrow's meal from me.' And the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, accepted in silence. Then, knowing that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, had accepted, he rose from his seat and after paying homage to him, keeping him on his right, he departed.

16. "Then, when the night had ended, King Kikī of Kāsi had good food of various kinds prepared in his own dwelling — red rice stored in the sheaf with the dark grains picked out, along with many sauces and curries — and he had the time announced to the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, thus: 'It is time, venerable sir, the meal is ready.'

17. "Then, it being morning, the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, he went with the Sangha of bhikkhus to the dwelling of King Kikī of Kāsi and sat down on the seat made ready. Then, with his own hands, King Kikī of Kāsi served and satisfied the Sangha of bhikkhus headed by the [Buddha](#) with the various kinds of good food. When the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, had eaten and had put his bowl aside, King Kikī of Kāsi took a low seat, sat down at one side and said: 'Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept from me a residence for the Rains in Benares; that will be helpful for the Sangha.' — 'Enough, king, my residence for the Rains has already been provided for.'

"A second and a third time King Kikī of Kāsi said: 'Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept from me a residence for the Rains in Benares; that will be helpful for the Sangha.' — 'Enough, king, my residence for the Rains has already been provided for.'

The king thought: 'The Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, does not accept from me a residence for the Rains in Benares,' and he was very disappointed and sad.

18. "Then he said: 'Venerable sir, have you a better supporter than I am?' — 'I have, great king. There is a market town called Vebhalinga where a potter named Ghaṭṭikāra lives. He is my supporter, my chief supporter. Now you, great king, thought: "The Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, does not accept from me a residence for the Rains in Benares," and you were very disappointed and sad; but the potter Ghaṭṭikāra is not and will not be so. The potter Ghaṭṭikāra has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. He abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wine, liquor, and intoxicants, which are the basis of negligence. He has perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and he possesses the virtues loved by noble ones. He is free from doubt about suffering, about the origin of suffering, about the cessation of suffering. He eats only one meal a day, he observes celibacy, he is virtuous, of good character. He has laid aside gems and gold, he has given up gold and silver. He does not dig the ground for clay using a pick with his own hand; what is left over from embankments or thrown up by rats, he brings home in a carrier; when he has made a pot he says: "Let anyone who likes set down some selected rice or selected beans or selected lentils, and let him take away whatever he likes." He supports his blind and aged parents. Having destroyed the five lower fetters, he is one who will reappear spontaneously [in the Pure Abodes] and there attain final [Nibbāna](#) without ever returning from that world.

19. "On one occasion when I was living at Vebhalinga, it being morning, I dressed, and taking my bowl and outer robe, I went to the potter Ghaṭṭikāra's parents and asked them: "Where has the potter gone, please?" — "Venerable sir, your supporter has

gone out; but take rice from the cauldron and sauce from the saucepan and eat.”

“I did so and went away. Then the potter Ghaṭṭikāra went to his parents and asked: “Who has taken rice from the cauldron and sauce from the saucepan, eaten and gone away?” — “My dear, the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, did.”

“Then the potter Ghaṭṭikāra thought: “It is a gain for me, it is a great gain for me that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, has so much trust in me!” And rapture and happiness never left him for a half-month or his parents for a week.

20. “On another occasion when I was living at Vebhalinga, it being morning, I dressed, and taking my bowl and outer robe, I went to the potter Ghaṭṭikāra’s parents and asked them: “Where has the potter gone, please?” — “Venerable sir, your supporter has gone out; but take some porridge from the vessel and sauce from the saucepan and eat.”

“I did so and went away. Then the potter Ghaṭṭikāra went to his parents and asked: “Who has taken porridge from the vessel and sauce from the saucepan, eaten and gone away?” — “My dear, the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, did.”

“Then the potter Ghaṭṭikāra thought: “It is a gain for me, it is a great gain for me that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, has so much trust in me!” And rapture and happiness never left him for a half-month or his parents for a week.

21. “On another occasion when I was living at Vebhalinga my hut leaked. Then I addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Go, bhikkhus, and find out if there is any grass at the potter Ghaṭṭikāra’s house.” — “Venerable sir, there is no grass at the potter Ghaṭṭikāra’s house; there is the grass thatch on his roof.” — “Go, bhikkhus, and remove the grass from the potter Ghaṭṭikāra’s house.”

“They did so. Then the potter Ghaṭṭikāra went to his parents and asked: “Who has removed the grass from the roof?” — “The bhikkhus did, my dear; the hut of the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, is leaking.”

“Then the potter Ghaṭṭikāra thought: “It is a gain for me, it is a great gain for me that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, has so much trust in me!” And rapture and happiness never left him for a half-month or his parents for a week. Then that house remained three whole months with the sky for a roof, and yet no rain came in. Such is the potter Ghaṭṭikāra.’

“It is a gain for the potter Ghaṭṭikāra, it is a great gain for him that the Blessed One Kassapa, accomplished and fully enlightened, relies on him thus.’

22. Then King Kikī of Kāsi dispatched to the potter Ghaṭṭikāra five hundred cartloads of red rice stored in the sheaf, and also sauce materials to go with it. Then the king’s men went to the potter Ghaṭṭikāra and told him: ‘Venerable sir, there are five hundred cartloads of red rice stored in the sheaf, and also sauce materials to go with it, dispatched to you by King Kikī of Kāsi; please accept them.’ — ‘The king is very busy and has much to do. I have enough. Let this be for the king himself.’

23. “Now, Ānanda, you may think thus: ‘Certainly, someone else was the brahmin student Jotipāla on that occasion.’ But it should not be regarded thus. I was the brahmin student Jotipāla on that occasion.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ānanda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.