

# Buddhist Stories

From the Dhammapada Commentary

## Part I

Translated from the Pāli by

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## Publisher's Note

This anthology has been compiled from Eugene Watson Burlingame's classic translation of the background stories from the Dhammapada Commentary, *Buddhist Legends*. Originally published in the Harvard Oriental Series, *Buddhist Legends* has been maintained in print since 1969 by the Pali Text Society. With the latter's permission, the Buddhist Publication Society issues this selection of these stories in booklet form in the Wheel Series, edited and arranged by Bhikkhu Khantipálo. The publisher gratefully acknowledges the kindness of the Pali Text Society for granting permission to publish this anthology. Readers who would like to obtain the complete three-volume collection of *Buddhist Legends* may contact the Pali Text Society or inquire from bookshops specialising in Asian literature.



## Introduction

This book comprises Buddhist stories which have been selected from the old commentary to the Dhammapada. This anthology of fifty-six stories represents only a small part of the very large original work, which in its complete translation fills three large volumes. The stories selected here are perhaps among the best, and they will be those most appealing to us at a time more than two thousand years after their origin.

The Dhammapada (Dhp.) itself is the best known of all the collections of the Buddha's sayings, for it has been translated many times into English and into many other languages of the East and the West. It consists of 423 verses arranged into twenty-six chapters. A few of these verses were spoken as pairs and, more rarely, three or more of them were uttered by the Buddha together. Most are single stanzas which sum up the Dhamma that was necessary at that particular time.

No one knows how the Dhammapada was compiled. A great many of its verses are found elsewhere in the Pāli Canon, but a few are peculiar to this collection. Why these particular verses were formed into what we now call the Dhammapada is not clear, but we know that other Buddhist schools had Dhammapadas of their own which varied a good deal from the Pāli version.

If all the stories go back to the Buddha's days (which is unlikely, though the traditional view), then the collection could have been made for teaching purposes since many of the tales are both absorbing and instructive. But the random arrangement of the Dhp. itself

points to a time when the Buddha's words were orally transmitted and when a more logical rearrangement would have been difficult. Yet there is some order indeed, for the first verses point to the very heart of the Buddha's Teaching:

“Mental states are forerun by mind,  
Mind is chief, mind-made are they...”

The last chapter of verses on the arahat, the person who is of supreme worth since without any defilements, gives one a clear picture of the final goal reached in this world by patient effort and perseverance. But in between there is a mixture of verses and topics which are arranged more for ease of memorization than anything else.

It is likely that many of the Dhammapada stories do record events that happened in the Buddha's time, for they often quote from the Suttas or are based on them. In the latter case they always amplify the rather sparse accounts found in the Suttas. Sometimes the process of embroidery can be clearly seen, as when teachings or classifications not known during the Buddha's lifetime are attributed to him or to that period. Examples of this are the mention of the Three Piṭakas (the “baskets” into which the Buddha's words were arranged), which probably began to be compiled from the time of the First Council onwards; and mention of the two duties (*dhura*) for monks and nuns, that is, either scholarship (which meant oral repetition of the Buddha's words to pass them on to the next generation of students) or meditation—a dichotomy not clearly found in the Buddha's time. Many other examples could be given.

Some of the stories have no counterparts in the Suttas and we do not know where they came from. But as some of them are good stories, well told, conveying the taste of Dhamma, they have been included here. “The Weaver's Daughter” (No. 24) and the next tale of “A Certain Layman” are noteworthy examples.

The Dhammapada Commentary as we have it now was written down by the great Buddhaghosa and his pupils, nearly fifteen hundred years ago. They converted the collections of stories as found in old Sinhalese, together with the word-commentary explaining the verses, into Pāli, which even a thousand years after the Buddha was still a *lingua franca*. In that language it has remained, preserved on palm-leaf manuscripts, until modern times. The whole work has always been used as an enjoyable and easy text for novices learning the Pāli language.

After this brief sketch of the history of the Dhpa. stories it might be a good idea to give some hints on how to read them and how not to. They come from a culture far separated from us in time, though if we live in a Buddhist country the “distance” is not so great. However, modern Western-type education is based on very different assumptions from those which lie behind the world of the Dhpa. stories, a fact which may make some of them difficult to understand. Stories which I felt would not have much impact now, or which might easily lead to misunderstandings, have been left out of this selection. Even so, the ancient commentators did not hesitate to embroider them with the strange and marvellous, sometimes in the middle of an otherwise straightforward account. In this case I have included the tale thinking that its teaching will be remembered while the embroidery can be forgotten. The purpose of the stories, after all, is to illustrate the Dhamma and to provide memorable incidents which will serve as a pattern for one's own Dhamma practice. If this is forgotten (as seems to have been the case in later collections of Buddhist legends), then the marvellous takes over and the Dhamma teaching disappears. So when reading these stories it is the Dhamma which is important, not whether the incident concerned really happened. The old commentators were not concerned with history or whether precisely these words

were spoken or those things done, but they preserved and passed on these stories as examples: either as warnings of what should not be done, or as encouragements for Dhamma practice. This emphasis needs to be remembered, otherwise a reader with a critical mind, thinking, "That's impossible," will miss the real point of the story.

It is recommended that these stories be read and re-read so that they stick in the mind. When they can be remembered easily, one has then a store of Dhamma to carry around which can be related to everyday life. For oneself and for other people to whom one may relate them, they can convey "the taste of Dhamma."

When these stories are related in Buddhist countries during sermons in temples or at Dhamma-study classes, they are not repeated word for word as found in the Dhp. Commentary. Though their main features are unaltered, by being told orally they vary a great deal in the amount of detail included. Here they are presented as the text gives them, but some of the details may not be appropriate to repeat when retelling them. However, care should be taken that the story is not distorted, and even more care taken to see that the Dhp. verse which is the Buddha's word is not incorrectly quoted.

These stories, as the reader will see, range from the comic to the tragic. Indeed, some of the longest, not included here, have all the material for extended drama and have been used as dramatic presentations of the Dhamma. But however amusing or disturbing, the message is always that *kamma has its appropriate results*. Actually there is no real tragedy in the Western sense of this word because what is painful is also impermanent. Though one may be afflicted in this life, one's suffering cannot continue forever. Past life stories are quite common in the Dhp. Commentary and are often related by the Buddha to account for some attainment of happiness or misery in the lives of the people with whom he came into contact.

What is reproduced in these pages is a partly revised version of E.W. Burlingame's translation, entitled *Buddhist Legends*. The revision of these stories was undertaken at the behest of Ven. Nyanaponika Mahāthera. I have left much of the translator's work as it is found in the complete translation: his English style is excellent and his renderings usually very accurate. However, in reading through that three-volume work, a few question marks were inserted into the margins where the meaning was not clear. These points I have cleared up after consulting the Pali Text Society's edition of the Dhp. Commentary. Also, as the translation was made more than fifty years ago, some of the renderings of terms have now been more accurately translated. Generally I have followed the suggestions of the *Buddhist Dictionary* of Ven. Nyanatiloka Mahāthera, and those of Ven. Ñāṇamoli Thera in his various books.

I have used my own verse translation of the stanzas of the Dhammapada to replace the prose renderings in the original translation. It now only remains for me to give thanks to the late I.B. Horner, President of the Pali Text Society, for permission to base this book on the complete translation of the Dhp. Commentary published by the Society. Hopefully, this selection will whet the appetite and lead more people to read the entire work.

*Bhikkhu Khantipalo*

# Part I

## *Making Good Kamma*

### 1. The Story of Magha

BY HEEDFULNESS DID MAGHA GO TO THE LORDSHIP OF THE GODS.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while in residence at a summer-house near Vesālī with reference to Sakka king of gods.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Story of the Present: Mahāli's Question*

A Licchavi prince named Mahāli, who lived at Vesālī, hearing the Teacher recite the Suttanta entitled Sakka's Questions,<sup>2</sup> thought to himself, "The Supremely Enlightened One has described the great glory of Sakka. Has the Teacher seen Sakka? Or has he not seen Sakka? Is the Teacher acquainted with Sakka? Or is he not acquainted with Sakka? I will ask him."

So the Licchavi prince Mahāli drew near to where the Exalted One was, and having drawn near, saluted the Exalted One and sat down on one side.<sup>3</sup> And having sat down on one side, the Licchavi prince Mahāli spoke thus to the Exalted One: "Reverend sir, has the Exalted One seen Sakka king of gods?"—"Yes, Mahāli, I have indeed seen Sakka king of gods."—"Reverend sir, it must certainly have been a counterfeit of Sakka; for, reverend sir, it is a difficult matter to see Sakka king of gods."—"Nevertheless, Mahāli, I know Sakka; I know what qualities made him Sakka; I know by the cultivation of what qualities Sakka attained to the state of Sakka.

"Mahāli, in a previous state of existence Sakka king of gods was a human being, a prince named Magha: therefore is he called Maghavā. Mahāli, in a previous state of existence Sakka king of gods was a human being who in a previous state of existence gave gifts (*pure dānaṃ adāsi*); therefore he is called Purindada. Mahāli, in a previous state of existence Sakka king of gods was a human being who gave alms assiduously (*sakkaccaṃ*); therefore is he called Sakka. Mahāli, in a previous state of existence Sakka king of gods was a human being who gave a dwelling-place (*āvasathā*); therefore is he called Vāsava. Mahāli, in a previous state of existence Sakka king of gods was a human being who could think of as many as a thousand things (*sahassaṃ atthaṃ*) in an instant: therefore is he called Sahassakkha. Mahāli, Sakka king of gods has an asura maiden named Sujātā for his wife; therefore is he called Sujampati. Mahāli, Sakka king of gods bears sway as lord and master over the gods of the Thirty-three; therefore is he called King of Gods. Mahāli, Sakka king of gods in a previous state of existence as a human being took upon himself and fulfilled seven vows. Because he took upon himself and fulfilled these seven vows, Sakka attained to the state of Sakka.

"Now what were the seven? 'So long as I live, may I be the support of my mother and father. So long as I live, may I honour my elders. So long as I live, may I speak gentle words. So long as I live, may I never give way to back-biting. So long as I live, may I live the life of a householder with heart free from taint of avarice, generous in renunciation of what is mine, with open hand, delighting in liberality, attentive to petitions, delighting in the distribution

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<sup>1</sup> Sakka was the ruler of the gods in the Tāvātimsa heaven, the realm of the Thirty-three, one of the celestial realms in the sensual sphere.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sakka's Questions* (BPS Wheel No. 10).

<sup>3</sup> The portion of the story from this sentence through the verses is found at Saṃyutta Nikāya 11:3.

of alms. So long as I live, may I speak the truth. So long as I live, may I be free from anger. Should anger spring up within me, may I quickly get rid of it.' Mahāli, Sakka king of gods in a previous state of existence took upon himself and fulfilled these seven vows. Because he took upon himself and fulfilled these seven vows, Sakka attained to the state of Sakka."

If a man support his mother and father,  
If he honour his elders in the household,  
If he be gentle and friendly in conversation,  
If he avoid backbiting,  
If he steadfastly put away avarice,  
If he be truthful, if he conquer anger,  
Such a man the gods of the Thirty-three  
Call a good man.

When the Teacher said, "This, Mahāli, was what Sakka did in his previous existence as Prince Magha," Mahāli, desiring to hear the whole story of his conduct, asked the Teacher, "Reverend sir, how did Prince Magha conduct himself?"—"Well then," said the Teacher, "listen." So saying, he related the following story.

### *Story of the Past: How Magha Became Sakka*

In times long past a prince named Magha lived in the village of Macala in the kingdom of Magadha. One day he went to the place where the business of the village was carried on, removed with his foot the dust from the place where he stood, and having made a comfortable place for himself, stood there. Thereupon another struck him with his arm, pushed him aside, and took his place. But instead of becoming angry at the man, he made another comfortable place for himself and stood there. Thereupon another struck him with his arm, pushed him away, and took his place. But neither did he allow himself to become angry at this man; he merely made another comfortable place for himself and stood there. In like manner one man after another came out of his house, struck him with his arm, and pushed him away from the place which he had cleared for himself.

The prince thought to himself, "All these men appear to be pleased. Since this work of mine conduces to the happiness of men, it must be a meritorious work." So on the following day he took a spade and cleared a space as big as a threshing-floor, whereupon all the men came and stood there. In cold weather he built a fire to warm them, so that the place became a favourite resort for all. Then he thought to himself, "It behoves me to take upon myself the task of making the road smooth and even." So early in the morning he started out to make the road smooth and even, cutting down and removing all the branches of trees that needed to be removed. Thus did he spend his time.

Another man saw him and said to him, "Master, what are you doing?" He replied, "Master, I am treading the path that leads to heaven."—"I also am your companion."—"Be my companion, master; heaven is a pleasant place for many." Seeing these two, a third man asked the same question, received the same answer, and joined them; then a fourth, then a fifth, until finally there were thirty-three. All these men worked together with spades and axes and made the road smooth and even for a distance of one or two leagues. The village headman saw them and thought to himself, "These men are all following the wrong occupation. If they would only fetch fish and flesh from the forest, or indulge in strong drink, or do something else of the sort, I should make something by it." So he sent for them and asked them, "What is it you are doing?"—"Treading the path to heaven, master."—"That is no proper occupation for men living the lives of laymen. What you should do is to bring fish and flesh from the forest, indulge in strong drink, and have a

general good time." But they refused to follow his suggestion, and the more he urged them, the more firmly they refused to do as he suggested.

Finally the village headman became angry. "I will destroy them," said he. So he went to the king and said to him, "Your majesty, I see a band of thieves going about committing depredations." The king replied, "Go and catch them and bring them before me." So the village headman arrested the thirty-three youths and took them before the king. Without instituting an inquiry into their conduct, the king gave the following order: "Cause them to be trampled to death by an elephant." Thereupon Magha admonished his companions as follows, "Friends, we have no refuge but love. Therefore let your hearts be tranquil. Cherish anger towards no one. Let your hearts be full of love for the king and the village headman and the elephant that tramples you under his feet." The thirty-three youths followed the admonition of their leader. Such was the power of their love that the elephant dared not approach them.

When the king heard of this, he said, "If the elephant sees so many men, he will not venture to trample them under his feet. Have the men covered with heavy matting, and then order the elephant to trample them." So the village headman had the men covered with heavy matting and drove the elephant forwards to trample them. But when the elephant was yet a long way off, he turned round and went back. When the king heard what had happened, he thought to himself, "There must be some reason for this." So he caused the thirty-three youths to be brought before him and asked them, "Friends, is there anything which you have failed to receive at my hands?"—"Your majesty, what do you mean?"—"I am informed that you are a band of thieves and that you rove about the forest committing depredations."—"Your majesty, who said that?"—"Friends, the village headman so informed me."

"Your majesty, it is not true that we are thieves. The fact is, we are clearing a path to heaven for ourselves, and we do this and that. The village headman tried to persuade us to adopt an evil mode of life, and when we refused to follow his suggestions, he became angry at us and determined to destroy us. That is why he said this about us."—"Friends, this animal knows your good qualities; but I, who am a man, was unable to discern them. Pardon me." So saying, the king made the village headman their slave, together with his children and wife, gave them a riding-elephant, and presented that village to them to do with as they saw fit. Thought the thirty-three youths, "Even in this life the advantage to be derived from the performance of work of merit is clearly to be seen." And mounting the elephant by turns, they rode about the village.

As they went about the village, they took counsel together, saying, "It is our duty to perform yet more abundant works of merit. What shall we do?" Thereupon the following thought occurred to them, "Let us build at the crossing of the four highways a rest-house for the multitude, making it secure and strong." So they summoned a builder and ordered him to build a hall for them. And because desire for women had departed from them, they resolved to give women no share in the building of the hall.

Now there were four women living in Magha's house named Joy, Thoughtful, Goodness, and Wellborn. Goodness went secretly to the builder, gave him a bribe, and said to him, "Brother, give me the principal share in the building of this hall."—"Very well," replied the builder, agreeing to her proposal. Accordingly he first marked a tree out of which to make a pinnacle, felled it, and laid it aside to season.

Then he hewed it and planed it and bored it, and having fashioned it in the form of a pinnacle, carved the following inscription on it: "This is the Hall of Goodness." Having so done, he wrapped it in a cloth and laid it aside.

Now when he had completed the hall and the day came to erect the pinnacle, he said to the thirty-three youths, "Noble sirs, there is something we have forgotten."—"What is it, sir?"—"A pinnacle."—"Let us procure one."—"It is impossible to make one out of a freshly hewn tree. We should procure for a pinnacle a tree felled long ago and laid away to season."—"What had we best do under the circumstances?"—"If in anybody's house there is a completed pinnacle which has been laid away to season and which is for sale, that is the thing for you to search for." So they searched everywhere, and finding what they wanted in the house of Goodness, offered her a thousand pieces of money for it. But they were unable to secure it for the price they offered. Said Goodness, "If you will give me a share in the building of the hall, I will give you the pinnacle." But they replied, "We have resolved to give women no share in the building of this hall." Thereupon the builder said to them, "Noble sirs, what are you doing? With the exception of the world of Brahmā, there is no place from which women are excluded. Take the pinnacle, for if you do, our work will speedily be finished."—"Very well," said they. So they took the pinnacle and completed the hall. And they divided the hall into three parts, reserving one chamber for kings, another for the poor, and another for the sick.

Then the thirty-three youths built thirty-three seats, and having so done, gave the following orders to the elephant, "If a visitor comes and sits down in a seat, take him and lodge him in the house of whoever built and owns that seat. It then becomes the duty of the owner of that seat to see that his guest's feet and back are rubbed, to provide him with food both hard and soft, and with lodging; to perform for him, in fact, all the duties of hospitality." Accordingly, whenever a visitor came, the elephant would take him and conduct him to the house of the owner of the seat in which he had sat, and the owner of the seat would on that day perform for him all the duties of hospitality.

Magha planted an ebony-tree near the hall and built a stone seat at the foot of the ebony-tree. All those who entered the hall looked at the pinnacle, read the inscription, and said, "This is the Hall of Goodness." The names of the thirty-three youths did not appear.

Joy thought to herself, "The youths who built this hall resolved to deprive us of a share in the building thereof. But Goodness by her own cleverness obtained a share. I also ought to do something. What can I do?" Thereupon the following thought occurred to her, "Those who come to the hall should be provided with water for drinking and water for bathing. I will have a place dug for a pool." Accordingly Joy caused a bathing-pool to be built.

Thoughtful thought to herself, "Goodness has given a pinnacle, and Joy has caused a bathing-pool to be built. What can I do?" Thereupon the following thought occurred to her, "After those who come to the hall have drunk water and bathed they should be decked with garlands when they are ready to depart. I will cause a flower garden to be laid out." So Thoughtful caused a beautiful flower garden to be laid out. So many and so various were the flowers that grew therein that it was impossible for anyone to say, "Such and such a flower-bearing or fruit-bearing tree does not grow in this garden."

Now Wellborn thought to herself, "I am the daughter of the brother of the mother of Magha and likewise the wife of Magha. The merit of the work he has wrought accrues to me only, and the merit of the work I have wrought accrues to him only." Accordingly she did nothing but spend her time adorning herself.

Thus did Magha minister to his mother and father, honour his elders in the household, speak the truth, avoid harsh words, avoid backbiting, put away avarice, and not become angry. Even thus did he fulfil the seven precepts, as it is said:

If a man support his mother and father,  
If he honour his elders in the household,  
If he be gentle and friendly in conversation,  
If he avoid backbiting,  
If he steadfastly put away avarice,  
If he be truthful, if he conquer anger,  
Such a man the gods of the Thirty-three  
Call a good man.

Having attained so praiseworthy a state, Magha, upon reaching the end of the term of life allotted to him, was reborn in the world of the Thirty-three as Sakka king of gods. His companions were likewise reborn there. The builder was reborn as the god Vissakamma.<sup>4</sup>

Now at that time there were asuras dwelling in the world of the Thirty-three, and when they learnt that new gods had been reborn there, they prepared celestial drink for them.<sup>5</sup> But Sakka gave orders to his retinue that no one should drink it. The asuras, however, drank freely and became intoxicated. Thereupon Sakka thought to himself. "Why should I share my kingdom with these deities?" Then, giving a sign to his retinue, he caused them to pick up the asuras by the heels and fling them into the great ocean. So the asuras fell headlong into the ocean. By the power of their merit there sprang up at the foot of Mount Sineru the palace of the asuras and the tree that is called pied trumpet-flower.

When the conflict between the gods and the asuras was over and the asuras had been defeated, there came into existence the city of the Thirty-three. The distance from the eastern gate to the western gate was ten thousand leagues, and the distance from the southern gate to the northern gate was the same. Now this city was provided with a thousand gates and was adorned with gardens and pools, and in the midst thereof, as the fruit of the building of the hall, there arose a palace called the Palace of Victory. Its height was seven hundred leagues, and it was decked with banners three hundred leagues long. On staffs of gold were banners of jewels, and on staffs of jewels were banners of gold; on staffs of coral were banners of pearls, and on staffs of pearls were banners of coral; on staffs of the seven precious stones were banners of the seven precious stones. Such was the palace that arose as the fruit of the building of the hall; a thousand leagues was its height, and it was composed of the seven precious stones.

As the result of the planting of the ebony-tree, there arose the coral-tree, a hundred leagues in circumference. As the result of the building of the stone seat, there came into existence at the foot of the coral-tree the Yellowstone Throne, of a reddish yellow colour like that of the jasmine flower, sixty leagues in length, fifty leagues in breadth, and fifteen leagues thick. When Sakka sits down on this throne, half its mass sinks into the ground; when he rises, it is all above ground. The elephant was reborn as god Erāvaṇa. There are no animals in the world of the gods; so when he went into the garden to play, he would quit his form as a god and become the elephant Erāvaṇa, a hundred and fifty leagues in size. For the thirty-three youths, Erāvaṇa created thirty-three vessels, each two or three quarters of a league around.

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<sup>4</sup> Celestial architect or engineer-in-chief of the heavenly world.

<sup>5</sup> The asuras are the perennial enemies of the gods, frequently engaging them in battle.

In the centre of all, Erāvaṇa created for Sakka a vessel called Beautiful. It was thirty leagues in circumference, and above it was a canopy, twelve leagues in size, made entirely of precious stones. At regular intervals about the canopy there arose banners a league in length, made entirely of the seven precious stones. And from the lower edge of each banner depended a row of tinkling bells, which, when they were shaken by the gentle wind, gave forth sweet music like the mingled strains of the music of the five kinds of instruments or the singing of the celestial choir. In the centre of the pavilion a jewelled couch a league in length was prepared for Sakka. There Sakka reclined in state. Erāvaṇa created thirty-three vessels for the thirty-three gods. Each vessel bore seven tusks, each fifty leagues long; each tusk bore seven lotus-tanks; each lotus-tank bore seven lotus-plants; each lotus-plant bore seven flowers; each flower, seven leaves; and on each leaf danced seven celestial nymphs. Thus on all sides round about for a space of fifty leagues there were dancing assemblies poised on elephants' tusks. Such was the glory in the enjoyment of which lived Sakka king of gods.

When Goodness died, she was also reborn there. And at the same time there came into existence Goodness, the meeting hall of the gods, nine hundred leagues in extent, the most charming of all places. Here, on the eighth day of the month, the Dhamma is preached. Even today, when men behold a charming place, they say, "It is like Goodness, the meeting hall of the gods." When Joy died, she also was reborn there. And at the same time there came into existence a lotus-tank called Joy, five hundred leagues in extent. When Thoughtful died, she also was reborn there. And at the same time there came into existence Thoughtful's creeper-grove, five hundred leagues in extent. There they conduct the gods whose prognostics have appeared,<sup>6</sup> till they are overcome by confusion. But when Wellborn died, she was reborn as a crane in a certain mountain cave.

Sakka surveyed his wives and considered within himself, "Goodness has been reborn here and likewise Joy and Thoughtful. Now where has Wellborn been reborn?" Perceiving that she had been reborn as a crane in a mountain-cave, he thought to himself, "Because she did no work of merit, the foolish girl has been reborn as an animal. It is my duty to have her perform some work of merit and bring her here." So saying, he laid aside his proper form, and assuming a disguise, he went to her and asked, "What are you doing here?"—"But, master, who are you?"—"I am your husband, Magha."—"Where were you reborn, husband?"—"I was reborn in the heaven of the Thirty-three. Do you know where your companions were reborn?"—"No, husband, I do not."—"They also were reborn in the heaven of the Thirty-three as my wives. Should you like to see your companions?"—"How can I get there?" Said Sakka, "I will carry you." Placing her in the palm of his hand, he carried her to the realm of the gods and set her free on the bank of the lotus-tank named Joy. Then he said to the other three, "Should you like to see your companion Wellborn?"—"Sire, where is she?"—"On the bank of the lotus-tank named Joy." So the three went and looked at her. "Alas!" they cried out, "See what has been the result of the noble woman's spending her life in adorning herself! Look now at her beak! Look at her feet! Look at her legs! She presents a beautiful appearance indeed!" Thus did they ridicule her. Having so done, they departed.

Sakka went once more to her and said, "Did you see your companions?"—"Yes," replied Wellborn, "I saw them. They ridiculed me and then went their way. Take me back again." So Sakka took her back again, set her free in the water, and then asked her, "Did you see their celestial glory?"—"Yes, sire, I did."—"You also should employ such means as will enable you to obtain rebirth there."—"Sire, what shall I do?"—"If I admonish you, will you keep

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<sup>6</sup> There are five signs of the impending death of a god: their garlands wither, their clothes become soiled, they sweat profusely, their radiance fades, and they become uneasy.

my admonition?"—"Yes, sire, I will keep your admonition." So Sakka taught her the Five Precepts. Having so done, he said to her, "Be zealous in keeping the precepts," and departed.

Thenceforth she sought after and ate only such fish as had died a natural death. After a few days had passed, Sakka determined to test her. So he went, and taking the form of a fish, lay down on the surface of the sand, pretending to be dead. When she saw the fish, thinking that it was dead, she took it in her beak. Just as she was about to swallow the fish, it wriggled its tail. The instant she discovered the fish was alive she released it in the water. Sakka waited a little while, and then lay down before her on his back once more. Again thinking it was a dead fish, she took it in her beak. But just as she was about to swallow the fish, it moved the tip of its tail. The instant she saw the fish move its tail she knew it was alive, and therefore let it go. When Sakka had thus tested her three times and had satisfied himself that she was keeping the precepts faithfully, he revealed his identity to her and said, "I came here for the purpose of testing you. You are keeping the precepts faithfully. If you continue thus faithfully to keep them, before long you will be reborn as one of my wives. Be heedful." Having spoken thus, he departed.

Thenceforth she used for food either fish that had died a natural death or none at all. After only a few days had passed, she shrivelled up and died, and solely as the fruit of her virtuous conduct was reborn at Benares as the daughter of a potter. When she was about fifteen or sixteen years old, Sakka considered within himself, "Where has she been reborn?" Perceiving that she had been reborn at Benares as the daughter of a potter, he said to himself, "I ought now to go to her."

So filling a cart with the seven kinds of precious stones disguised as cucumbers, he drove into the city of Benares. "Come, get cucumbers!" he cried, as he entered the street. But when people came to him with coins in their hands, he said, "I do not part with my cucumbers for a price."—"On what terms do you part with them, then?" the people asked him. "I give them to the woman that keeps the precepts," he replied. "Master, what do you mean by 'precepts'? Are they black or brown or of some other colour?"—"You don't even know what precepts are; much less will you keep them. I will give my cucumbers to the woman who keeps the precepts."

"Master, there is a potter's daughter who is always going about saying, 'I keep the precepts.' Give them to her." The potter's daughter said to him, "Very well, master, give them to me."—"Who are you?"—"I am a maiden that has never failed to keep the precepts."—"For you alone have I brought these," said Sakka. And driving his cart to her house, he presented to her, in the guise of cucumbers, celestial treasure which cannot be taken away by others. And making his identity known to her, he said, "Here is wealth sufficient for you to live on. Keep the Five Precepts unbroken." So saying, he departed.

At the end of her existence as a potter's daughter she was reborn in the world of the asuras as the daughter of Vepacitti, king of asuras, a bitter enemy of Sakka. Since she had kept the precepts in two successive existences, she was fair of form, her skin was of a golden hue, and she was endowed with beauty and comeliness the like of which had never been seen. Vepacitti, king of asuras, said to all the asura princes who sought her in marriage, "You are not fit to marry my daughter." Having thus refused to give her in marriage to any of the asura princes, he said, "My daughter shall choose for herself such a husband as she sees fit." So saying, he assembled the host of asuras, and placing a garland of flowers in the hand of his daughter, said to her, "Choose for yourself a husband who suits you."

At that moment Sakka looked to see where she had been reborn. Perceiving what was taking place, he assumed the form of an aged asura and went and stood in the outer circle of the assembled company. The daughter of Vepacitti looked this way and that. Suddenly, because in a previous state of existence she had lived with Sakka, she was overwhelmed as by a mighty torrent by the power of the love for him which sprang up within her. And crying out, "He is my husband!" she threw the garland of flowers over his head. Said the asuras, "For a long time our king has been unable to find a husband suitable for his daughter. Now, however, he has found one. This fellow is old enough to be his daughter's grandfather." And they departed, hanging their heads with shame.

Sakka took her by the hand, cried out, "I am Sakka," and flew up into the air. The asuras exclaimed, "We have been fooled by Old Sakka," and started up in pursuit. Mātali the charioteer brought up the chariot called Chariot of Victory and stopped by the way. Thereupon Sakka assisted his bride to mount and set out for the city of the gods. Now when they reached the Forest of Silk-cotton Trees, the garuḍa fledglings, hearing the sound of the chariot and fearing they would be crushed to death, cried out.

When Sakka heard their cries, he asked Mātali, "What are they that are crying?"—"Garuḍa birds, sire."—"Why are they crying?"—"They hear the sound of the chariot and fear they will be crushed to death."—"Let not so numerous a host perish, crushed by the impact of the chariot, because of me alone. Cause the chariot to turn back." Thereupon Mātali gave the sign with the lash to the thousand Sindh horses and caused the chariot to turn back.

When the asuras saw that the chariot had turned back, they said, "Old Sakka started out in flight from the city of the asuras, but has just caused his chariot to turn back. Doubtless he has received reinforcements." And turning back, the asuras entered the city of the asuras by the same road by which they had come out and nevermore lifted up their heads. Sakka bore the asura maiden Wellborn to the city of the gods and installed her as the chief of twenty-five million celestial nymphs.

One day Wellborn asked Sakka for a boon, saying, "Great king, in this world of the gods I have neither mother nor father nor brother nor sister; therefore please take me with you wherever you go."—"Very well," replied Sakka, promising to do for her as she had asked. Thenceforth, when the tree that is called pied trumpet-flower blooms, the asuras cry out, "Now is the time when our heavenly coral-tree blooms," and straightway they sally forth to attack Sakka. Therefore Sakka posts a guard to defend the nāgas in the sea below, and likewise affords protection to the supaṇṇas and the kumbhaṇḍas and the yakkhas, and likewise to the Four Great Kings. And over all, for the purpose of averting disaster, he places before the gates of the city of the gods images of Indra bearing the thunderbolt in his hands. When the asuras, after defeating the nāgas and the other supernatural beings, approach the city of the gods and see the images of Indra, they cry out, "Sakka has made a sally," and flee away. (*End of Story of the Past.*)

"Thus, Mahāli, Prince Magha adopted the way of heedfulness. Because he was so heedful, he obtained such sovereignty so exalted and came to rule over the two worlds of the gods.<sup>7</sup> Heedfulness is praised by the Buddhas and by others likewise. For it is through heedfulness that all attain the higher attainments, both those that are worldly and those that transcend all worlds." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

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<sup>7</sup> The Four Great Kings and the Thirty-three gods.

30. Heedfulness is always praised,  
Heedlessness is ever blamed;  
By heedfulness did Magha go  
To the lordship of the gods.

## 2. The Old Brahmin and His Sons

THE TUSKER DHANAPĀLAKA NAMED.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Sāvattḥī with reference to the sons of a certain brahmin who had reached the decrepitude of old age.

The story goes that there lived in Sāvattḥī a certain brahmin who had four sons and whose wealth amounted to eight hundred thousand pieces of money. When his sons reached marriageable age, he arranged marriages for them and gave them four hundred thousand pieces of money. After the sons had married, the brahmin's wife died, whereupon the sons took counsel together, saying, "If this brahmin marries again, the family fortune will be divided among his wife's children and there will be nothing left of it. Come then! Let us succour our father and win his favour." Accordingly they waited upon him faithfully, providing him with the choicest food and the finest clothes, rubbing his hands and feet, and performing all of the other duties.

One day they went to wait upon him and found that he had fallen asleep, although it was broad daylight. As soon as he awoke, they rubbed his hands and his feet, and while thus engaged, spoke to him of the disadvantage of living in separate houses. Said they, "We will wait upon you after this manner so long as you live; give us the rest of your wealth also." In compliance with their request the brahmin gave each of them a hundred thousand more. He kept nothing for himself but his under and upper garments; all the rest of his wealth and possessions he divided into four portions and handed over to his sons.

For a few days his eldest son ministered to his needs. One day, however, as he was returning to the house of his eldest son after his bath, his daughter-in-law, who stood at the gate, saw him and said to him, "Did you give your eldest son a hundred or a thousand pieces of money more than you gave your other sons? You certainly gave each of your sons two hundred thousand pieces of money. Do you not know the way to the house of any of your other sons?" The brahmin answered angrily, "Perish, vile woman!" and went to the house of his second son. But in a few days he was driven from the house of his second son as he had been from the house of the first, and in like manner from the houses of his two youngest sons. Finally he found himself without a single house he could enter.

Thereupon he retired from the world and became a monk of the Paṇḍaranga Order,<sup>8</sup> begging his food from door to door. In the course of time he became worn out by old age, and his body withered away as a result of the poor food he ate and the wretched quarters in which he was obliged to sleep. One day, after he had returned from his begging rounds, he lay down on his back and fell asleep. When he awoke from sleep and sat up and surveyed himself and reflected that there was no one of his sons to whom he might go for refuge, he thought to himself, "They say that the monk Gotama has a countenance that does not frown, a face that is frank and open, that his manner of conversing is pleasant, and that he greets strangers in a kind and friendly way. Possibly if I go to the monk Gotama, I shall receive a

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<sup>8</sup> A non-Buddhist sect.

friendly greeting.” So adjusting his under and upper garments, taking his alms bowl, and grasping his staff, he went to the Exalted One, even as it is said:<sup>9</sup>

Now a certain brahmin, a man who had formerly possessed wealth and social position, clad in rough garments, drew near to where the Exalted One was, and having drawn near, sat down respectfully on one side. And as he sat respectfully on one side, the Exalted One greeted him in a pleasant manner and said this to him, “How comes it, brahmin, that you are rough and clad in rough garments?”—“Sir Gotama, I have four sons living in this world, but instigated by their wives, they have driven me out of their houses.”—“Well then, brahmin, learn these stanzas thoroughly, and when the people are gathered together in the hall and your sons are gathered together with them, recite them before the assembled company:

“They at whose birth my heart was glad,  
They for whose being much I longed,  
They, instigated by their wives,  
Are as a dog that drives off swine.  
Wicked and worthless they say to me,  
‘Dear father’ or ‘Dear Dad’ again:  
Demons are they in guise of sons  
Forsaking me in my old age;  
Just as a worn-out useless horse  
Is no longer led to its food  
So is the father of these fools;  
Though old, he begs at others’ doors.  
Better in truth the staff for me  
Than sons who are disobedient.  
It serves to drive off savage bulls  
And likewise keeps off savage dogs.  
It goes before me in the dark  
And in the deeps it steadies me,  
And by the power of this staff  
Having slipped, I stand up again.”

The brahmin, taught by the Teacher, learned these stanzas by heart. On the day appointed for the brahmins to assemble, the sons of the brahmin pushed their way into the hall, dressed in their costliest garments, adorned with all their jewels, and sat down on a costly seat in the midst of the brahmins. Thereupon the brahmin said to himself, “Now is my opportunity.” So he entered the hall, made his way into the midst of the assemblage, lifted up his hand, and said, “I desire to recite certain stanzas to you; please listen to me.”—“Recite them, brahmin; we are listening.” So the brahmin stood there and recited the stanzas which he had learned from the Teacher.

Now at that time this was the law of mankind: *If any devour the substance of mother and father, and support not mother and father, he shall be put to death.* Therefore the sons of that brahmin fell at their father’s feet and begged him to spare their lives, saying, “Dear father, spare our lives!” Out of the softness of a father’s heart the brahmin said, “Sirs, do not kill my sons; they will support me.” The men said to his sons, “Sirs, if from this day you do not take proper care of your father, we will kill you.” The sons, thoroughly frightened, seated their father in a chair, raised the chair with their own hands, and carried their father home. They anointed the body of their father with oil, flying this way and that in their haste, bathed him,

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<sup>9</sup> Saṃyutta Nikāya 7:14.

employing perfumes and aromatic powders, and having so done, summoned their wives and said to them, "From this day forth you are to take proper care of our father; if you neglect this duty, we shall punish you." And they set the choicest dishes before him.

As the result of the wholesome food which the brahmin was given to eat and the comfortable quarters in which he slept, strength came back to him after a few days and his senses were refreshed. As he surveyed his person, he thought to himself, "I have gained this success through the monk Gotama." So desiring to make him a present, he took a pair of cloths and went to the Exalted One, and after exchanging friendly greetings, took his seat respectfully on one side. Then he laid the pair of cloths at the feet of the Exalted One, and said to him, "Sir Gotama, we brahmins desire that a teacher shall receive the offering which is his due; may my lord Gotama, my teacher, accept the offering which is due to him as a teacher." Out of compassion for the brahmin, the Teacher accepted the present which he had brought, and taught Dhamma to him. At the conclusion of the sermon the brahmin was established in the Refuges. Thereupon the brahmin said to the Teacher, "Sir Gotama, my sons provide me regularly with four meals; two of these I give to you." The Teacher replied, "That is well, brahmin; but we shall go only to such houses as we please." So saying, he dismissed him.

The brahmin went home and said to his sons, "Dear sons, the monk Gotama is my friend, and I have given him two of the meals with which you regularly provide me. When he arrives, be not heedless of your duty."—"Very well," replied his sons, promising to do as he said. On the following day the Teacher set out on his alms round and stopped at the door of the house of the brahmin's eldest son. When the brahmin's eldest son saw the Teacher, he took his bowl, invited him into the house, seated him on a costly couch, and gave him the choicest foods. On the succeeding days the Teacher went to the houses of the other sons in order, and all of them provided hospitable entertainment for him in their houses.

One day when a holiday was at hand, the eldest son said to his father, "Dear father, in whose honour shall we make merry?" The brahmin replied, "The monk Gotama is my friend, and I know no others."—"Well then, invite him for tomorrow with his five hundred monks." The brahmin did so. So on the following day the Teacher came to the house with his attendant monks. The house was smeared with fresh cow dung and decked in festive array. The brahmin provided seats within the house for the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha, and served them with rich porridge sweetened with honey and with the choicest foods, both hard and soft. In the course of the meal the brahmin's four sons sat down before the Teacher and said to him, "Sir Gotama, we care tenderly for our father; we never neglect him. Just look at him!" The Teacher replied, "You have done well. Wise men of old likewise cared tenderly for their mother and father." So saying, he related in detail the *Mātuposaka Nāgarāja Jātaka* (Jāt. No. 455), in which the story is told of how the *sallakī*-tree and the *kuṭaja*-plant grew up and blossomed in the absence of the elephant. Having so done, he pronounced the following stanza:

324. The tusker Dhanapālaka named,  
Pungent rut exuding, uncontrolled,  
Bound, he does not eat a mouthful,  
The tusker mourns the elephant-wood.

### Word Commentary

*Dhanapāla*: At this time the king of Kāsi sent an elephant-trainer to a charming elephant-grove and caused an elephant to be taken captive; this is the name of the elephant. *Pungent but exuding*: acrid juice; for in the rutting season the root of the elephant's ear bursts. As a rule, when trainers try to subdue elephants at this time with hook or spear or lance, the elephants become fierce. But this elephant was excessively fierce; therefore it is said: *Pungent rut exuding, uncontrolled/Bound, he does not eat a mouthful*. When by command of the king this elephant was led, bound to the elephant-stable and made to stand in a place screened with a curtain of many colours, decked with festoons, and garlands, overhung with a variegated canopy, although the king himself offered him food of various choice flavours and fit for a king, he refused to eat. It is with reference to his entrance into the elephant-stable that the words are employed. *Bound, he does not eat a mouthful, /The tusker mourns the elephant-wood*: No matter how delightful the place in which he lodged, nevertheless he remembered the elephant-wood. Now his (blind) mother, who remained in the forest, suffered greatly by reason of separation from her son. Her son thought to himself, "I am not fulfilling the obligation of a son to succour his mother. What do I care for this food?" Thus he remembered only the solemn obligation resting upon a son to succour his mother. Now inasmuch as it was possible for him to fulfil this obligation only by being in the elephant-grove, therefore it is said: *The tusker mourns the elephant-wood*.

As the Teacher related this Jātaka, detailing his own deed in a previous state of existence, his hearers shed floods of tears, and by reason of the softness of their hearts became fully attentive. Thus did the Exalted One, knowing full well what would be of advantage to them, proclaim the Truths and teach the Dhamma. At the conclusion of the lesson the brahmin, together with his sons and daughters-in-law, was established in the fruit of stream-entry.

## 3. A Certain Brahmin

BY GRADUAL PRACTICE FROM TIME TO TIME.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana in Sāvattḥī with reference to a certain brahmin.

The story goes that early one morning this brahmin went out of the city, stopped at the place where the monks put on their robes, and stood and watched them as they put on their robes.<sup>10</sup> Now this place was thickly overgrown with grass. As one of the monks put on his robe, the edge of the robe dragged through the grass and became wet with drops of dew. Thought the brahmin, "The grass should be cleared away from this place." So on the following day he took his mattock, went there, cleared the place and made it as clean and smooth as a threshing-floor. The day after, he went to that place again. As the monks put on their robes, he observed that the edge of the robe of one of the monks dropped to the ground and dragged in the dust. Thought the brahmin, "Sand should be sprinkled here." So he brought sand and sprinkled it on the ground.

Now one day before breakfast the heat was intense. On this occasion he noticed that as the monks put on their robes, sweat poured from their bodies. Thought the brahmin, "Here I ought to cause a shelter to be erected." Accordingly he caused a shelter to be erected. Again one day, early in the morning, it rained. On this occasion also, as the brahmin watched the monks, he noticed that their robes were wetted by the drops of rain. Thought the brahmin,

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<sup>10</sup> This means that they had the lower robe on already but carried the upper robe folded until they reached the city when it (and the outer robe of patches if it had been instituted at this time) was put on over both shoulders for entering an inhabited area.

“Here I ought to cause a hall to be erected.” So there he caused a hall to be erected. When the hall was finished, he thought to himself, “Now I will hold a festival in honour of the completion of the hall.” Accordingly he invited the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha, seated the monks within and without the hall, and gave alms.

At the conclusion of the meal he took the Teacher’s bowl to permit him to pronounce the words of thanksgiving. “Reverend sir,” said he, “as I stood in this place when the monks were putting on their robes and watched them, I saw this and that, and I did this and that.” And beginning at the beginning, he told the Teacher the whole story. The Teacher listened to his words and then said, “Brahmin, a wise man by doing good works, time after time, little by little, gradually removes the stains of his own evil deeds.” So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

239. By gradual practice from time to time,  
Little by little let the sage  
Blow off his own blemishes  
Just as a smith with silver.

## 4. The Bondswoman Puṇṇā

FOR THOSE WHO ARE EVER VIGILANT.... THIS INSTRUCTION was given by the Teacher while he was in residence on Mount Vulture Peak with reference to Puṇṇā, a bondswoman of the treasurer of Rājagaha.

The story goes that one day they gave her much rice to pound. She pounded away until late at night, lighting a lamp to work by; finally she became very weary and, in order to rest, stepped outside and stood in the wind with her body moist with sweat. Now at that time the Venerable Dabba Mallaputta was the one who allotted lodgings to the monks. Having listened to the Dhamma, he then lighted his finger so that he might show the monks the way to their respective lodgings, and preceding them, he created, by power of meditation, a light for them.

The light enabled Puṇṇā to see the monks making their way along the mountain. She thought to herself, “As for me, I am oppressed by my own discomfort, and so, even at this time, am unable to sleep. Why is it that the reverend monks are unable to sleep?” Having considered the matter, she came to the following conclusion, “It must be that some monk who resides there is sick, or else is suffering from the bite of some reptile.” So when it was dawn, she took some rice-flour, placed it in the palm of her hand, moistened it with water, and having thus mixed a chapatti, cooked it over a bed of charcoal. Then, saying to herself, “I will eat it on the road leading to the bathing-place on the river,” she placed the chapatti in a fold of her dress, and taking a water-pot in her hand, set out for the bathing-place on the river.

The Teacher set out on the same path, intending likewise to enter that village for alms. When Puṇṇā saw the Teacher, she thought to herself, “On other days when I have seen the Teacher, I have had no alms to give him, or if I have had alms to give him, I have not seen him; today, however, not only do I meet the Teacher face to face, but I have alms to give him. If he would accept this chapatti without considering whether the food is of inferior or superior quality, I would give it to him.” So setting her water-pot down on one side, she saluted the Teacher and said to him, “Reverend sir, accept this coarse food and bestow your blessing upon me.”

The Teacher looked at the Elder Ānanda, whereupon the elder drew a bowl out from under a fold of his robe and presented it to the Teacher. The Teacher held out the bowl and received therein the offering of the chapatti. When Puṇṇā had placed the chapatti in the Teacher's bowl, she bowed down to him respectfully and said to him, "Reverend sir, may the Truth which you have beheld be of avail to me also." The Teacher replied, "So be it." And remaining standing as before, he pronounced the words of thanksgiving. Thereupon Puṇṇā thought to herself, "Although the Teacher bestowed on me a blessing as he took my chapatti, yet he will not eat it himself. He will doubtless keep it until he has gone a little way and will then give it to a crow or a dog. Then he will go to the house of some king or prince and make a meal of choice food."

Thought the Teacher to himself, "What was the thought in the mind of this woman?" Perceiving what was in her mind, the Teacher looked at the Elder Ānanda and intimated that he wished to sit down. The elder spread out a robe and offered the Teacher a seat. The Teacher sat down outside the city and ate his breakfast. The deities squeezed out nectar, food proper to gods and men alike throughout the circle of the worlds, even as one squeezes a honeycomb, and imparted it to the Teacher's food. Puṇṇā stood looking on. At the conclusion of the Teacher's breakfast the elder gave him water. When the Teacher had finished his breakfast, he addressed Puṇṇā and said, "Puṇṇā, why have you blamed my disciples?"—"I do not blame your disciples, reverend sir."—"Then what did you say when you saw my disciples?"

"Reverend sir, the explanation is very simple. I thought to myself: 'As for me, I am oppressed by my own discomfort, and so am unable to sleep. Why is it that the reverend monks are unable to sleep? It must be that some monk who resides there is sick, or else is suffering from the bite of some reptile.' " The Teacher listened to her words and then said to her, "Puṇṇā, in your own case it is because you are afflicted with discomfort that you are unable to sleep. But my disciples are assiduously watchful and therefore they do not sleep." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

226. For those who are ever vigilant  
And train themselves by night and day,  
Upon Nibbāna ever intent,  
Their pollutions are eradicated

At the conclusion of the lesson Puṇṇā, even as she stood there, was established in the fruit of stream-entry; the assembled company also profited by the lesson.

The Teacher, having eaten the chapatti which Puṇṇā made of rice-flour and cooked over a bed of coals, returned to the monastery. Thereupon the monks began a discussion in the Hall of Truth:

"Brethren, how hard it must have been for the Supremely Enlightened One to eat the chapatti of rice-flour which Puṇṇā cooked over a bed of coals and gave him!" At that moment the Teacher drew near and asked them, "Monks, what are you discussing now as you sit here all gathered together?" When they told him, he said, "Monks, this is not the first time I have eaten red-rice powder which she gave me; the same thing happened to me in a previous state of existence also." And the Teacher related the Kuṇḍakasindhavapotaka Jātaka in detail (Jāt. No. 254).

## 5. Treasurer Catfoot

DO NOT DISREGARD MERIT, SAYING.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to Treasurer Catfoot, *Biḷālapāḍaka*.

For once upon a time the residents of *Sāvattḥī* banded themselves together and gave alms to the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha. Now one day the Teacher, in rejoicing (with their merits), spoke as follows, "Lay disciples, here in this world one man himself gives, but does not urge others to give; in the various places where he is reborn, such a man receives the blessing of wealth but not the blessing of a following. A second man does not himself give, but urges others to give; in the various places where he is reborn, such a man receives the blessing of a following but not the blessing of wealth. A third man neither himself gives nor urges others to give; in the various places where he is reborn such a man receives neither the blessing of wealth nor the blessing of a following. Lastly, a man both himself gives and urges others to give; in the various places where he is reborn, such a man receives both the blessing of wealth and the blessing of a following."

Now a certain wise man who stood listening to the Teacher's discourse on the Dhamma thought to himself, "This is indeed a wonderful thing! I will straightaway perform works of merit leading to both of these blessings." Accordingly he arose and said to the Teacher, as the latter was departing, "Reverend sir, accept our offering of food tomorrow."—"But how many monks do you need?"—"All the monks you have, reverend sir." The Teacher graciously consented to come. Then the layman entered the village and went here and there, proclaiming, "Women and men, I have invited the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha for tomorrow's meal. Give rice and whatever else is needed for making rice-porridge and other kinds of food, each providing for as many monks as his means permit. Let us do all the cooking in one place and give alms in common."

Now a certain treasurer, seeing that the layman had come to the door of his shop, became angry and thought to himself, "Here is a layman who, instead of inviting as many monks as he could himself accommodate, is going about urging the entire village to give alms." And he said to the layman, "Fetch the vessel you brought with you." The treasurer took grains of rice in three fingers, and presented them to the layman similarly with different kinds of pulses. Ever after that the treasurer bore the name Catfoot, *Biḷālapāḍa*. Likewise in presenting ghee and jaggery to the layman, he placed a little pot in the layman's vessel and dribbled out his offering drop by drop into one corner, giving him only a very little.

The lay disciple placed together the offerings which the rest presented to him, but placed apart by themselves the offerings of the treasurer. When the treasurer saw the layman do this, he thought to himself, "Why does he place apart by themselves the offerings I have presented to him?" In order to satisfy his curiosity, he sent a serving-boy with orders to follow the layman, saying to the serving-boy, "Go find out what he does with my offerings." The layman took the offerings with him, and saying, "May the treasurer receive a rich reward," put two or three grains of rice into the porridge and cakes, distributing beans and drops of oil and jaggery-pellets in all the vessels. The serving-boy returned and told the treasurer what the layman had done. When the treasurer heard his report, he thought to himself, "If the layman blames me in the midst of the assembled company, I will strike him and kill him the moment he takes my name upon his lips."

On the following day, therefore, the treasurer hid a knife in a fold of his undergarment and went and stood waiting at the refectory. The layman escorted into the refectory the

Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha, and then said to the Exalted One, “Reverend sir, at my suggestion the populace has presented these offerings to you. All those persons whom I urged to give have given rice and other provisions according to their respective ability. May all of them receive a rich reward.” When the treasurer heard this, he thought to himself, “I came here with the intention of killing the layman in case he took my name upon his lips by way of blame; in case, for example, he said, ‘So and so took a pinch of rice and gave it to me.’ But instead of so doing, this layman has included all in his request for a blessing, both those who measured out their gifts in pint-pots and those who took pinches of food and gave, saying, ‘May all receive a rich reward.’ If I do not ask so good a man to pardon me, punishment from the king will fall upon my head!” And straightaway the treasurer prostrated himself before the layman’s feet and said, “Pardon me, master.”—“What do you mean?” asked the layman. Thereupon the treasurer told him the whole story.

The Teacher, seeing this act, asked the steward of the offerings, “What does this mean?” Thereupon the layman told him the whole story, beginning with the incidents of the previous day. Then the Teacher asked the treasurer, “Is his story correct, treasurer?”—“Yes, reverend sir.” Then said the Teacher, “Disciple, one should never regard a good deed as a small matter and say, ‘It is a mere trifle.’ One should never regard lightly an offering given to a Buddha, or to the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha, and say of it, ‘It is a mere trifle.’ For wise men who do works of merit, in the course of time, become filled with merit, even as a water-vessel which stands uncovered becomes filled with water.” So saying, he showed the connection, and teaching the Dhamma, pronounced the following stanza:

122. Do not disregard merit, saying:  
 ‘That will not come to me’—  
 For by the falling of water drops  
 A water jar is filled:  
 The sage with merit fills himself,  
 Gathering it little by little.

## 6. The Brahmin with a Single Robe

MAKE HASTE TOWARDS THE GOOD.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the brahmin Little One-Robe, Cūla Ekasāṭaka.

For in the dispensation of the Buddha Vipassī there lived a brahmin named Mahā Ekasāṭaka, Big One-robe, and he it was who was reborn in the present dispensation in Sāvattihī as Cūla Ekasāṭaka, Little One-robe. For Cūla Ekasāṭaka possessed only a single under garment, and his wife possessed only a single under garment, and both of them together possessed only a single upper garment. The result was that whenever either the brahmin or his wife went out of doors, the other had to stay at home. One day an announcement was made that there would be a preaching at the monastery. Said the brahmin to his wife, “Wife, an announcement is made that there will be a preaching at the monastery. Will you go to hear the Dhamma by day or by night? For we do not have enough upper garments between us to go together.” The brahmin’s wife replied, “Husband, I will go in the daytime.” So saying, she put on the upper garment and went.

The brahmin spent the day at home. At night he went to the monastery, seated himself in front of the Teacher, and listened to the Dhamma. As he listened to the Dhamma, the five sorts of joy arose within him, suffusing his body. He greatly desired to do honour to the

Teacher, but the following thought restrained him, "If I give this garment to the Teacher, there will be no upper garment left for my wife or me." A thousand selfish thoughts arose within him; then a single believing thought arose within him. Then thought of self arose within him and overmastered the believing thought. Even so did the mighty thought of self seize, as it were, and bind and thrust out the believing thought. "I will give it! No, I will not give it!" said the brahmin to himself.

As he thus reflected, the first watch passed and the second watch arrived. Even then he was not able to bring himself to give the garment to the Teacher. Then the last watch came. Finally the brahmin thought to himself, "While I have been fighting with thoughts of faith and thoughts of self, two watches have elapsed. If these powerful thoughts of self increase, they will not permit me to lift up my head from the four states of suffering.<sup>11</sup> I will therefore give my gift." Thus the brahmin finally overmastered a thousand thoughts of self and followed the lead of a thought of faith. Taking his garment, he laid it at the Teacher's feet and thrice cried out with a loud voice, "I have conquered! I have conquered!"

King Pasenadi of Kosala happened to be listening to the Dhamma. When he heard that cry, he said, "Ask him what he has conquered." The king's men asked the brahmin the question, and the brahmin explained the matter to them. When the king heard the explanation, he said, "It was a hard thing to do what the brahmin did. I will do him a kindness." So he caused a pair of garments to be presented to him. The brahmin presented these garments also to the Tathāgata. Then the king doubled his gift, presenting the brahmin first with two pairs of garments, then with four, then with eight, finally with sixteen. The brahmin presented all these garments also to the Tathāgata. Then the king directed thirty-two pairs of garments to be presented to the brahmin. But to avoid having it said, "The brahmin has not kept a single pair for himself, but has given away every pair he received," he said to the brahmin, "Keep one pair for yourself and give another pair to your wife." So saying he caused the brahmin to keep two pairs and let him give the remaining thirty pairs to the Tathāgata alone. Even had the brahmin given away what he possessed a hundred times, the king would have met his gifts with equal gifts.

(In a former state of existence Mahā Ekasāṭaka kept for himself two pairs of garments out of sixty-four he received; Cūḷa Ekasāṭaka kept two out of thirty-two.)

The king gave orders to his men, "It was indeed a hard thing to do what the brahmin did. Fetch my two blankets into the presence-chamber." They did so. The king presented him with the two blankets, valued at a thousand pieces of money. But the brahmin said to himself, "I am not worthy to cover my body with these blankets. These are suitable only for the religion of the Buddha." Accordingly he made a canopy of one of the blankets and hung it up in the Perfumed Chamber over the Teacher's bed;<sup>12</sup> likewise he made a canopy of the other blanket and hung it up in his own house over the spot where the monk who resorted to his house for alms took his meals. In the evening the king went to visit the Teacher. Recognising the blanket, he asked him, "Reverend sir, who was it that honoured you with the gift of this blanket?"—"Ekasāṭaka." Thought the king to himself, "Even as I believe and rejoice in my belief, even so does this brahmin believe and rejoice in his belief." Accordingly he presented to him four elephants, four horses, four thousand pieces of money, four women, four female slaves, and four most excellent villages. Thus therefore did the king cause the brahmin to be given the "gift of fours."

The monks started a discussion in the Hall of Truth: "Oh, how wonderful was the deed of Cūḷa Ekasāṭaka! No sooner done than he received all manner of presents of four! As soon as

<sup>11</sup> Asuras, ghosts, animals, and hell-realm beings.

<sup>12</sup> The "Perfumed Chamber" (*gandhakuṭī*) is the name of the Buddha's personal cottage in Jetavana.

he did a good deed, straightaway the fruit thereof was given to him." The Teacher approached and asked the monks, "Monks, what are you sitting here now talking about?" When they told him, he said, "Monks, had Ekasāṭaka been able to bring himself to give me his gift in the first watch, he would have received the 'gift of sixteens'; had he been able to do so in the middle watch, he would have received the 'gift of eights'; because it was not until late in the last watch that he gave me his gift, he received only the 'gift of fours.' He who does good works should not put away the impulse to good that arises within him, but should act on the instant. A meritorious deed tardily done brings its reward, but tardy is the reward it brings. Therefore a man should perform a good work the instant the impulse to good arises within him." So saying, he showed the connection, and teaching the Dhamma, pronounced the following stanza:

116. Make haste towards the good  
And check one's mind from evil;  
If one is slow in making merit,  
One's mind delights in evil

## 7. Pāṭhika the Naked Ascetic

THE FAULTS OF OTHERS.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Sāvattihī with reference to Pāṭhika the naked ascetic.<sup>13</sup>

At Sāvattihī, we are told, the wife of a certain householder ministered to the needs of a naked ascetic named Pāṭhika, treating him as she would her own son. Of her nearest neighbours, those who went to hear the Teacher teach the Dhamma returned praising the virtues of the Buddhas in manifold ways, saying, "Oh, how wonderful is the preaching of the Buddhas!" When the woman heard her neighbours thus praise the Buddhas, she desired to go to the monastery and hear the Dhamma. So she put the matter to the naked ascetic, saying, "Noble sir, I desire to go and hear the Buddha." But as often as she made her request, the naked ascetic dissuaded her from going, saying, "Do not go!" The woman thought to herself, "Since this naked ascetic will not permit me to go to the monastery and hear the Dhamma, I will invite the Teacher to my own house and hear the Dhamma right here."

Accordingly, when it was evening, she summoned her own son and sent him to the Teacher, saying to him, "Go and invite the Teacher to accept my hospitality for tomorrow." The boy started out, but went first to the place of residence of the naked ascetic, saluted him, and sat down. "Where are you going?" asked the naked ascetic. "By my mother's direction I am going to invite the Teacher."—"Do not go to him."—"All very well, but I am afraid of my mother. I am going."—"Let the two of us eat the fine things prepared for him. Do not go."—"No, my mother will give me a scolding."—"Well then, go. But when you go and invite the Teacher, do not say to him, 'Our house is situated in such and such a place, in such and such a street, and you may reach it by taking such and such a road.' Instead, act as if you lived nearby, and when you leave, run off as if you intended to take a different road, and come back here."

The boy listened to the instructions of the naked ascetic and then went to the Teacher and delivered the invitation. When he had done everything according to the instructions of the naked ascetic, he returned to the latter. Said the naked ascetic, "What did you do?" Said the

<sup>13</sup> See Dīgha Nikāya No. 24.

boy, "Everything you told me to do, noble sir."—"You have done very well. Now we shall both of us eat the good things prepared for him." On the following day, very early in the morning the naked ascetic went to that house, taking the boy with him, and the two sat down together in the back room.

The neighbours smeared that house with cow-dung, decked it with the five kinds of flowers, including the *lāja* flower, and prepared a seat of great price, that the Teacher might sit therein. (People who are not familiar with the Buddhas know nothing about the preparation of a seat for them. Nor do the Buddhas ever need a guide to direct them on their way. For on the day of Enlightenment, when they sit under the Bodhi-Tree, causing ten thousand worlds to quake, all paths become plain to them: "This path leads to hell, this path leads to the world of beasts, this path leads to the world of ghosts, this path leads to the world of humans, this path leads to the world of the gods, this path leads to the Deathless, to Great Nibbāna." There is never any need of telling them the way to villages, market-towns, or other places.)

Therefore the Teacher, very early in the morning, took bowl and robe and went straight to the house of the great female lay disciple. She came forth from the house, respectfully bowed down to the Teacher, escorted him into the house, poured the water of donation into his right hand, and gave him the choicest of food, both hard and soft. When the Teacher had finished his meal, the female lay disciple, desiring to have him pronounce words of thanksgiving, took his bowl, and the Teacher with his own sweet voice began the address of rejoicing. The lay disciple listened to the teaching of the Dhamma and applauded the Teacher, saying, "Well said! Well said!"

The naked ascetic, sitting there in the back room, heard the words of applause uttered by the lay disciple as she heard the Teacher teach the Dhamma. Unable to control himself, he remarked, "She is my disciple no longer!" and came out. And he said to the lay disciple, "Hag, you are lost for applauding this man thus." And he reviled both the female lay disciple and the Teacher in all manner of ways, and then ran off.

The lay disciple was so embarrassed by the naked ascetic's insulting words that her mind became completely distraught, and she was unable to concentrate her attention on the Teacher's discourse. The Teacher asked her, "Lay disciple, are you unable to fix your mind on my discourse?"—"Good and reverend sir," she replied, "my mind is completely distraught by the insulting words of this naked ascetic." Said the Teacher, "One should not consider the talk of such a contrary person; one should pay no attention to such as he; one should regard only what one has committed and omitted to do." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

50. Not the faults of others,  
Nor what they did and did not;  
But in oneself should be sought  
Things done and left undone.

## 8. Coppertoath the Thief-killer

THOUGH A THOUSAND SPEECHES ARE MADE OF MEANINGLESS LINES.... This instruction was given by the teacher while he was in residence at Veḷuvana with reference to Coppertoath, a public executioner.

We are told that five hundred thieves less one made a living by plundering villages and other acts of violence. Now a certain man with copper-coloured teeth and tawny skin, his body covered with scars, came to them and said, "Let me also live with you." They took him to the ringleader of the thieves, saying, "This man also wishes to live with us." The ringleader of the thieves looked at the man and thought to himself, "This man's nature is inordinately cruel. He is capable of cutting off the breast of his mother and eating it, or of drawing the blood from the throat of his father and drinking it." Therefore he refused his request, saying, "It will not do for this man to live with us."

Although he had thus been refused admission to the band of thieves, he went and won the favour of a certain pupil of the ringleader by his courteous attention to him. This pupil took the man with him, approached the ringleader of the thieves, and said to him, "Master, this man is a dutiful servant of ours; bestow your favour on him." Having made this request, he turned the man over to the ringleader of the thieves.

One day the citizens joined forces with the king's men, captured those thieves, took them to court, and arraigned them before the lords of justice. The justices ordered their heads to be chopped off with an axe. "Who will put these men to death?" said the citizens. After a thorough search they were unable to find a single man who was willing to put them to death. Finally they said to the ringleader of the thieves, "You put these men to death, and we will spare your life and give you a rich reward besides. You kill them." But because they had lived with him, he also was unwilling to put them to death. In like manner also all of the five hundred less one refused when asked. Last of all they asked that scarred, tawny, coppertooth. "Yes, indeed," said he, consenting. So he put to death all the thieves, and in return received his life and rich gifts besides.

In like manner also they brought in five hundred thieves from the country to the south of the city and arraigned them before the justices. When the justices ordered their heads to be chopped off, they asked each thief, beginning with the ringleader, to put his companions to death, but found not a single one willing to act as executioner. Then they said, "The other day a certain man put five hundred thieves to death. Where is he?"—"We saw him in such and such a place," was the reply. So they summoned him and said to him, "Put these men to death, and you will receive a rich reward."—"Yes, indeed," said he, consenting. So he put them all to death and received his reward.

The citizens consulted together and said, "This is a most excellent man. We will make him permanent executioner of thieves." So saying, they gave him the post. Later on they brought in five hundred thieves also from the west and still later five hundred also from the north, and he put them all to death. Thus he put to death two thousand thieves brought in from each of the four cardinal points. As time went on, and one or two men were brought in each day, he put them all to death. For a period of fifty-five years he acted as public executioner.

In old age he could no longer cut off a man's head with a single blow, but was obliged to deliver two or three blows, causing much unnecessary suffering to the victims. The citizens thought to themselves, "We can get another executioner of thieves. This man subjects his victims to much unnecessary torture. Of what use is he any longer?" Accordingly they removed him from his office. During his term of office as executioner of thieves, he had been accustomed to receive four perquisites: old clothes for him to wear, milk-porridge made with fresh ghee for him to drink, jasmine flowers wherewith to deck himself, and perfumes wherewith to anoint himself. But these four perquisites he received no longer. On the day he was deposed from office he gave orders that milk-porridge should be cooked for him. And taking with him old clothes and jasmine flowers and perfumes, he went to the river and bathed. Having so done, he put on the old clothes, decked himself with garlands, anointed

his limbs, and went home and sat down. They set before him milk-porridge made with fresh ghee and water for rinsing the hands.

At that moment the Elder Sāriputta emerged from his meditation. He said to himself, "Where ought I to go today?" Surveying his rounds for alms, he saw milk-porridge in the house of the former executioner. Considering within himself, "Will this man receive me kindly?" he became aware of the following: "This excellent man will receive me kindly and will thereby gain a rich reward." So the elder put on his robe, took his bowl, and showed himself at the door of the former executioner's house.

When the man saw the elder, his heart was filled with joy. He thought to himself, "For a long time I have acted as executioner of thieves, and many are the men I have put to death. Now milk-porridge has been prepared in my house, and the elder has come and stands at my threshold. Now I ought to present alms to his reverence." So he removed the porridge which had been set before him, approached the elder, and paid obeisance to him. And escorting him into his house, he provided him with a seat, poured the milk-porridge into his bowl, spread fresh ghee thereon, and standing beside him, began to fan him.

Now for a long time he had not received milk-porridge, and therefore desired greatly to drink thereof. The elder knowing his desire, said to him, "Lay disciple, drink your own porridge." The man placed the fan in the hand of another and drank the porridge. The elder said to the man who was fanning him, "Go fan the lay disciple instead." So while he was being fanned, the former executioner filled his belly with porridge, and then went and resumed fanning the elder. When the elder had finished his meal, he took his bowl.

When the elder began the words of thanksgiving to his host, the man was not able to fix his mind on the elder's discourse. The elder, observing this, said to him, "Lay disciple, why is it that you are not able to fix your mind on my discourse?"—"Reverend sir, for a long time I have done deeds of cruelty; I have put many men to death. It is because I keep recalling my own past deeds that I am unable to fix my mind on your reverence's discourse." The elder thought to himself, "I will play a trick on him." So he said to the man, "But did you do this of your own free will, or were you made to do it by others?"—"The king made me do it, reverend sir."—"If that is the case, lay disciple, what wrong did you do?" The bewildered disciple thought, "According to what the elder says, I have done no wrong." Said he to the elder, "Very well, reverend sir, continue your discourse."

As the elder pronounced the words of thanksgiving, the man's mind became tranquil; and as he listened to the Dhamma, he developed the quality of patience, and progressed in the direction of the path of stream-entry. When the elder had completed the words of rejoicing, he departed. The lay disciple accompanied him a little way and then turned back. As the lay disciple was returning, an ogress came along in the form of a cow, struck him with her shoulder, and killed him. So he died and was reborn in the world of the Tusita gods.

The monks began a discussion in the Hall of Truth: "He who was an executioner of thieves, he who for fifty-five years committed acts of cruelty, today was relieved of his office, today gave alms to the elder, today met death. Where was he reborn?" The Teacher came in and asked them, "Monks, what are you sitting here now talking about?" When they told him, he said, "Monks, that man has been reborn in the world of the Tusita gods."—"What did you say, reverend sir? He who killed men for so long a time has been reborn in the world of the Tusita gods?"—"Yes, monks. A great and good spiritual counsellor did he receive. He heard Sāriputta teach the Dhamma, and profiting thereby, acquired knowledge. When he departed from this existence, he was reborn in the world of the Tusita gods." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

“He who was executioner of thieves in the city  
Listened to words well spoken.  
Having gained patience accordingly,  
He went to heaven, and is in joy.”

“Reverend sir, there is no great power in words of thanksgiving, and this man had done much wrong. How could he gain something special with so little?” The Teacher replied, “Monks, do not measure the Dhamma I have taught as being little or much. One saying possessed of meaning is of surpassing merit.” So saying, he instructed them in the Dhamma by pronouncing the following stanza:

100. Though a thousand speeches  
Are made of meaningless lines,  
Better the single meaningful line  
By hearing which one is at peace.

## 9. Husband-honourer

ONLY GATHERING FLOWERS INDEED .... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Sāvattthī with reference to a woman named Husband-honourer, Patipūjikā. The story begins in the world of the Thirty-three gods.

The story goes that a god named Garland-wearer, Mālabhārī, entered the pleasure-garden in the world of the Thirty-three, accompanied by a thousand celestial nymphs. Five hundred of these nymphs climbed trees and threw down flowers; five hundred others gathered up the flowers that fell and decked the god with them. One of these nymphs, even as she sat on the branch of a tree, passed from that state of existence, her body vanishing like the flame of a lamp, and received a new conception in Sāvattthī in a certain family of station. Born with a recollection of her former states of existence, and remembering that she had been the wife of the god Garland-wearer, she made offerings of perfumes and garlands when she grew up, making the earnest wish to be reborn with her former husband.

When she was sixteen years of age, she married into another family. And even then, whenever she gave the monks ticket-food or fortnightly-food or food for the rainy season,<sup>14</sup> she would say, “May this offering assist me to obtain rebirth with my former husband.” Said the monks, “This woman, ever busy and active, yearns only for her husband.” Therefore they called her Husband-honourer, Patipūjikā. She cared regularly for the Hall of Assembly, supplied water for drinking, and provided seats for the monks. Whenever others desired to give ticket-food or fortnightly-food, they would bring it and give it to her, saying, “Dear lady, please present these to the Order of Monks.” Going to and fro in this manner, she obtained at one and the same time the “fifty-six qualities of goodness.” She became pregnant and at the end of ten lunar months gave birth to a son; when her son was old enough to walk, she gave birth to another son, and then to another, until she had four sons.

One day she gave alms, rendered honour to the monks, listened to the Dhamma and undertook the precepts, and at the end of that day died of some sudden sickness and was reborn with her former husband. During all that time the other celestial nymphs were decking the god with flowers. When the god Garland-wearer saw her, he said, “We have not seen you since morning. Where have you been?”—“I passed from this existence, husband.”—“What do you say?”—“Precisely so, husband.”—“Where were you

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<sup>14</sup> These are special types of meal-offerings that lay people make to the monks.

reborn?"—"In a family of station at Sāvattī."—"How long a time did you remain there?"—"At the end of the tenth lunar month I issued from the womb of my mother. When I was sixteen years old, I married into another family. I bore four sons, gave alms, and rendered honour to the monks, making an earnest wish to return and be reborn with you, husband."—"How long is the life of men?"—"Only a hundred years."—"So short as that?"—"Yes, husband."—"If men are reborn with so short a time as that to live, do they spend their time asleep and heedless, or do they give alms and render honour?"—"What do you say, husband? Men are ever heedless, as if reborn with an incalculable number of years to live, as if in no way subject to old age and death."

The god Garland-wearer was greatly agitated. Said he, "If, as you say, men are reborn with only a hundred years to live, and if they lie heedless and asleep, when will they ever obtain release from suffering?" (Now a hundred of our years are equivalent to a night and a day in the world of the Thirty-three gods, thirty such nights and days make up a month, twelve such months make up a year, and the length of their lives is a thousand such celestial years; or, in human reckoning, thirty-six million years. Thus it was that for that god not a single day had passed; nay, not more than a moment of time. Therefore he thought to himself, "If the life of men is so short, it is highly improper for them to give themselves up to a life of heedlessness.")

On the following day the monks, on entering the village, found the Hall of Assembly uncared for, no seats provided, no water supplied for drinking. "Where is Husband-honourer?" they asked. "Reverend sirs, how could you expect to see her? After your reverences had eaten and departed, she died in the evening." Thereupon monks who had not yet attained the fruit of stream-entry, remembering her kindly services to them, were unable to restrain their tears, while monks who had attained arahatship were deeply moved by Dhamma.

After eating their breakfast, they went to the monastery and asked the Teacher, "Reverend sir, Husband-honourer, busy and active, performed all manner of work of merit and yearned only for her husband. Now she is dead. Where was she reborn?"—"Monks, she was reborn with her own husband."—"But, reverend sir, she is not with her husband."—"Monks, she yearned not for that husband. Her husband was the god Garland-wearer in the world of the Thirty-three. She passed from that state of existence while decking him with flowers. Now she has returned to where she was before and has been reborn with him."—"Reverend sir, is what you say true?"—"Yes, monks, what I say is true."—"Oh, how short, reverend sir, is the life of creatures in this world! Early in the morning she served us with food, and in the evening she sickened and died." The Teacher replied, "Yes, monks, the life of creatures in this world is indeed short. Therefore while creatures in this world yet yearn for the things of earth and have not yet satisfied their desires for sensual pleasures, death overpowers them and carries them off wailing and weeping." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

48. Only gathering flowers, indeed,  
Insatiate in sensual desire,  
With a mind clinging—just such a man  
Must the Ender bring under his sway.

## 10. A Certain Monk

THE MIND IS VERY HARD TO CHECK.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Sāvattthī with reference to a certain monk.

In the country of the king of the Kosalans, it appears, at the foot of a mountain, was a certain thickly settled village named Mātika. Now one day sixty monks, who had received from the Teacher a subject of meditation leading to arahatship, came to this village and entered it for alms. Now the headman of this village was a man named Mātika. When Mātika's mother saw the monks, she provided them with seats, served them with rice-porridge flavoured with all manner of choice flavours, and asked them, "Reverend sirs, where do you desire to go?"—"To some pleasant place, great lay disciple." Knowing that the monks were seeking a place of residence for the season of the rains, she prostrated herself at their feet and said to them, "If the noble monks will reside here during these three months, I will take upon myself the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts and will perform Uposatha-day practices." The monks consented, thinking to themselves, "With her assistance we shall be free from anxiety on account of food and shall be able to effect escape from the round of existence."

Mātika's mother superintended the erection of a monastery to serve as their place of residence, presented it to them, and the monks took up their residence there. On a certain day they met together and admonished each other as follows, "Brethren, it behoves us not to live the life of heedlessness, for before us stand the eight great hells with gates wide open, even as our own houses. Now we have come here thus, having received a subject of meditation from the living Buddha. And the favour of the Buddhas cannot be won by a deceitful person, even though he walk in their very footsteps. Only by doing the will of the Buddhas can their favour be won. Therefore be heedful. Two monks may neither stand nor sit in any one place. In the evening we shall meet together to wait upon the elder, and early in the morning we shall meet together when it is time to go the rounds for alms. At other times two of us must never be together. If, however, a monk is taken sick, let him come to the monastery court and strike the block.<sup>15</sup> At the signal given by a stroke on the block, we will come together and provide a remedy for him." Having made this agreement, they entered upon residence.

One day, while the monks were in residence, that female disciple took ghee, molasses, and other kinds of medicine and in the evening, accompanied by a retinue of bondsmen and servants, went to the monastery. Seeing no monks, she asked some men, "Where have the noble monks gone?"—"My lady, they must be sitting in their own respective night quarters and day quarters."—"What must I do in order to see them?" Men who knew about the agreement made by the Order of Monks said; "If you strike the block, my lady, they will assemble." So she struck the block. When the monks heard the sound of the block, they thought to themselves, "Someone must be sick." And coming forth from their several quarters, they assembled in the monastery court. No two monks came by the same path.

When the female lay disciple saw them approach one at a time, each from his own quarters, she thought to herself, "My sons must have had a quarrel with each other." So, after paying obeisance to the Order of Monks, she asked them, "Have you had a quarrel, reverend sirs?"—"No, indeed, great lay disciple."—"If, reverend sirs, there is no quarrel among you, how is it that whereas in coming to our house you came all together, today you do not approach in that manner, but instead approach one at a time, each from his own quarters?"—"Great lay disciple, we were sitting each in his own cell engaged in the practice

<sup>15</sup> A hollow or solid block of hardwood, still used in Asian monasteries.

of meditation.”—“What do you mean, reverend sirs, by this expression, ‘practice of meditation’?”—“We rehearse the thirty-two constituent parts of the body<sup>16</sup> and thus obtain a clear conception of the decay and death inherent in the body, great lay disciple.”—“But, reverend sirs, are you alone permitted to rehearse the thirty-two constituent parts of the body and thus obtain a clear conception of the decay and death inherent in the body; or are we also permitted to do this?”—“This practice is forbidden to none, great lay disciple.” “Well then, teach me also the thirty-two constituent parts of the body and show me how to obtain a clear conception of the decay and death inherent in the body.”—“Very well, lay disciple,” said the monks, “learn them.” So saying, they taught her all. She began at once to rehearse the thirty-two constituent parts of the body, striving thereby to obtain for herself a clear conception of the decay and death inherent in the body. So successful was she that even in advance of those monks she attained the three paths and the three fruits, and by the same paths won the four analytical knowledges and mundane super-knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Arising from the bliss of the paths and the fruits, she looked with divine vision and considered within herself, “At what time did my sons attain this state?” Immediately she became aware of the following, “All these monks are still in the bondage of lust, hatred, and delusion. They have not yet, by the practice of deep meditation, induced insight.” Then she pondered, “Do my sons possess the dispositions requisite for the attainment of arahatship or do they not?” She perceived, “They do.” Then she pondered, “Do they possess suitable lodgings or do they not?” Immediately she perceived that they did. Then she pondered, “Have they proper companions or have they not?” Immediately she perceived that they had. Finally she pondered the question, “Do they receive proper food or do they not?” She perceived, “They do not receive proper food.”

From that time on she provided them with various kinds of rice-porridge and with all manner of hard food and with soft food flavoured with various choice flavours. And seating the monks in her house, she offered water of donation<sup>18</sup> and presented the food to them, saying, “Reverend sirs, take and eat whatever you desire.”

As the result of the wholesome food they received, their minds became tranquil; and as the result of tranquillity of mind, they developed insight and attained arahatship together with the analytical knowledges. Then the thought occurred to them, “The great female lay disciple has indeed been our support. Had we not received wholesome food, we should never have attained the paths and the fruits. As soon as we have completed our residence and done the ceremony of Pavāraṇā<sup>19</sup> let us go and visit the Teacher.” Accordingly they took leave of the great female lay disciple, saying, “Lay disciple, we desire to see the Teacher.”—“Very well, noble sirs,” said she. So she accompanied them on their journey a little way, and then, saying, “Look in on us again, reverend sirs,” and many other pleasant words, she returned to her house.

When those monks arrived at Sāvattihī, they paid obeisance to the Teacher and sat down respectfully on one side. The Teacher said to them, “Monks, you have evidently fared well, had plenty to eat, and have not been troubled on account of food.” The monks replied, “We have indeed fared well, reverend sir, had plenty to eat, and have by no means been troubled on account of food. For a certain female lay disciple, the mother of Mātika, knew the course of our thoughts, in so much that the moment we thought, ‘Oh, that she would prepare such

<sup>16</sup> Beginning: hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin. See *Mirror of the Dhamma* (BPS Wheel No. 54).

<sup>17</sup> That is, she attained the path and fruit of non-returning, accompanied by certain other advanced types of meditative knowledge and psychic powers.

<sup>18</sup> She offered the water of donation as a symbol of offering merits to her relatives or other beings born in states of suffering.

<sup>19</sup> A ceremony held at the end of the rains residence, when monks invite admonition from their fellow-monks.

and such food for us!' she prepared the very food we thought of and gave it to us." Thus did they recite her praises.

A certain monk, who heard his fellow monks praise the virtues of their hostess, conceived a desire to go there. So obtaining a subject of meditation from the Teacher, he took leave of the Teacher, saying, "Reverend sir, I intend to go to that village." And departing from Jetavana, he arrived in due course at that village and entered the monastery. On the very day he entered the monastery he thought to himself, "I have heard it said that this female lay disciple knows every thought that passes through the mind of another. Now I have been wearied by my journey and shall not be able to sweep the monastery. Oh, that she would send a man to make ready the monastery for me!" The female lay disciple, sitting in her house, pondering within herself, became aware of this fact and sent a man, saying to him, "Go make ready the monastery and turn it over to him." The man went and swept the monastery and turned it over to him. Then the monk, desiring to have water to drink, thought to himself, "Oh, that she would send me some sweetened water!" Straightaway the female lay disciple sent it. On the following day, early in the morning, he thought to himself, "Let her send me soft rice-porridge with some dainty bits!" The female lay disciple straightway did so. After he had finished drinking the porridge, he thought to himself, "Oh, that she would send me such and such solid food!" The female lay disciple straightaway sent this also to him.

Then he thought to himself, "This female lay disciple has sent me every single thing I have thought of. I should like to see her. Oh, that she would come to me in person, bringing with her soft food seasoned with various choice seasonings!" The female lay disciple thought to herself, "My son wishes to see me, desires me to go to him." So procuring soft food, she went to the monastery and gave it to him. When he had eaten his meal, he asked her, "Lay disciple, is your name Mātika's Mother?"—"Yes, dear son."—"You know the thoughts of another?"—"Why do you ask me, dear son?"—"You have done for me every single thing I have thought of; that is why I ask you."—"Many are the monks who know the thoughts of another, dear son."—"I am not asking anyone else. I am asking you, lay disciple." Even under these circumstances the female lay disciple avoided saying, "I know the thoughts of another," and said instead, "Those who do not know the thoughts of another do thus, my son."

Thereupon the monk thought to himself, "I am in a most embarrassing position. They that are still worldlings like me entertain both noble and ignoble thoughts. Were I to entertain a single inappropriate thought, she would doubtless change her attitude towards me, as they seize a thief with the goods by his hair. Therefore I had best run away from here." So he said to the female lay disciple, "Lay disciple, I intend to go away."—"Where are you going, noble sir?"—"To the Teacher, lay disciple."—"Reside here for a while, reverend sir."—"I can no longer reside here, lay disciple. I must positively go away." With these words he departed and went to the Teacher.

The Teacher asked him, "Monk, are you no longer residing there?"—"No, reverend sir, I cannot reside there any longer."—"For what reason, monk?"—"Reverend sir, that female lay disciple knows every single thought that passes through my mind. It occurred to me, "They that are still worldlings like me entertain both noble and ignoble thoughts. Were I to entertain a single inappropriate thought, she would doubtless change her attitude towards me, as they seize a thief with the goods by his hair. That is why I have returned."—"Monk, that is the very place where you ought to reside."—"I cannot, reverend sir. I will not reside there any longer."—"Well then, monk, can you guard just one thing?"—"What do you mean, reverend sir?"—"Guard your thoughts alone, for thoughts are hard to guard. Restrain your thoughts alone. Do not concern yourself with anything else, for thoughts are unruly." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

35. The mind is very hard to check  
And swift it falls on what it wants;  
The training of the mind is good,  
A mind so tamed brings happiness.

When the Teacher had admonished that monk, he dismissed him, saying, "Go, monk, concern yourself with nothing else. Resume residence in that same place." And that monk, after being admonished by the Teacher, went to that same place and did not think thoughts concerned with exterior things.

The great female lay disciple looked with divine vision and seeing the elder, she determined by her own knowledge alone the following fact, "My son has now gained a Teacher who gives admonition and has returned once more." And at once she prepared wholesome food and gave it to him. Once having received wholesome food, in but a few days the elder attained arahatship.

As the elder passed his days in the enjoyment of the bliss of the paths and the fruits, he thought to himself, "The great female lay disciple has indeed been a support to me. By her assistance I have gained release from the round of existence." And he considered within himself, "Has she been a support to me in my present state of existence only or has she been a support to me in other states of existence also, as I have passed from one state of existence to another in the round of existences?" With this thought in mind he recalled a hundred states of existence less one. Now in a hundred states of existence less one that female lay disciple had been his wife, and her affections had been set on other men, and she had caused him to be deprived of life. When, therefore, the elder beheld the huge pile of demerit she had accumulated, he thought to himself, "Oh, what wicked deeds this female lay disciple has committed!"

The great female lay disciple also sat in her house, considering within herself the following thought, "Has my son reached the goal of the holy life?" Perceiving that he had attained arahatship, she continued her reflections as follows, "When my son attained arahatship, he thought to himself, 'This female lay disciple has indeed been a powerful support to me.' Then he considered within himself, 'Has she been a support to me in previous states of existence also or has she not?' With this thought in mind he recalled a hundred states of existence less one. Now in a hundred states of existence less one I conspired with other men and deprived him of life. When, therefore, he beheld the huge pile of demerit I thus accumulated, he thought to himself, 'Oh, what wicked deeds this female lay disciple has committed!' Is it not possible that, as I have passed from one state of existence to another in the round of existences, I have rendered assistance to him?"

Considering the matter further, she called up before her mind her hundredth state of existence and became aware of the following: "In my hundredth state of existence I was his wife. On a certain occasion, when I might have deprived him of life, I spared his life. I have indeed rendered great assistance to my son." And still remaining seated in her house she said, "Discern further and consider the matter." By the power of the divine ear the monk immediately heard what she said. Discerning further, he called up before his mind his hundredth state of existence and perceived that in that state of existence she had spared his life. Filled with joy, he thought to himself, "This female lay disciple has indeed rendered great assistance to me." Then and there, reciting the questions relating to the four paths and fruits, he attained the remainderless element of Nibbāna.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This means, in ordinary terms, that he passed away.

# Part II

## *Doing Evil*

### 11. The Lay Disciple Atula

FROM DAYS OF OLD IT HAS BEEN, ATULA.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the lay disciple Atula.

Atula was a lay disciple who lived at Sāvattihī, and he had a retinue of five hundred other lay disciples. One day he took those lay disciples with him to the monastery to hear the Dhamma. Desiring to hear the Elder Revata teach the Dhamma, he saluted the Elder Revata and sat down respectfully on one side. Now this Elder Revata was a solitary recluse, delighting in solitude even as a lion delights in solitude, and thus he had nothing to say to Atula.

"This elder has nothing to say," thought Atula. Provoked, he arose from his seat, went to the Elder Sāriputta, and took his stand respectfully on one side. "For what reason have you come to me?" asked the Elder Sāriputta. "Reverend sir," replied Atula, "I took these lay disciples of mine to hear the Dhamma and approached the Elder Revata. But he had nothing to say to me; therefore I was provoked at him and have come here. Teach the Dhamma to me." – "Well then, lay disciple," said the Elder Sāriputta, "sit down." And forthwith the Elder Sāriputta expounded the Abhidhamma at great length.

Thought the lay disciple, "The Abhidhamma is exceedingly abstruse, and the elder has expounded this alone to me at great length; of what use is he to us?" Provoked, he took his retinue with him and went to the Elder Ānanda. Said the Elder Ānanda, "What is it, lay disciple?" Atula replied, "Reverend sir, we approached the Elder Revata for the purpose of hearing the Dhamma and got not so much as a syllable from him. Provoked at this, we went to the Elder Sāriputta and he expounded to us at great length the Abhidhamma alone with all its subtleties. 'Of what use is he to us?' we thought to ourselves and provoked at him also, we came here. Teach the Dhamma to us, reverend sir." – "Well then," replied the Elder Ānanda, "sit down and listen." Thereupon the Elder Ānanda expounded the Dhamma to them very briefly, and making it very easy for them to understand.

But they were provoked at the Elder Ānanda also, and going to the Teacher, saluted him, and sat down respectfully on one side. Said the Teacher to them, "Lay disciples, why have you come here?" – "To hear the Dhamma, reverend sir." – "But you have heard the Dhamma." – "Reverend sir, first we went to the Elder Revata, and he had nothing to say to us; provoked at him, we approached the Elder Sāriputta, and he expounded the Abhidhamma to us at great length; but we were unable to understand his discourse, and provoked at him we approached the Elder Ānanda; the Elder Ānanda, however, expounded the Dhamma to us very briefly, therefore we were provoked at him also and came here."

The Teacher heard what they had to say and then replied, "Atula, from days of old until now it has been the invariable practice of men to blame him who said nothing, him who said much, and him who said little. There is no one who deserves unqualified blame and no one who deserves unqualified praise. Even kings are blamed by some and praised by others. Even the great earth, even the sun and moon, even a Supremely Enlightened Buddha, sitting and speaking in the midst of the fourfold assembly,<sup>21</sup> some blame and others praise. For

<sup>21</sup> Of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

blame or praise bestowed by utter simpletons is a matter of no account. But he whom a man of learning and intelligence blames or praises—he is blamed or praised indeed.” So saying, he pronounced the following stanzas:

227. From days of old it has been, Atula—  
This is not only of today:  
They blame one who keeps silent,  
They blame one who speaks much,  
They blame one who says little too—  
There is no one in the world unblamed.

228. There never was, and never will be,  
Nor is there found at present  
A person blamed exclusively  
Nor yet one wholly praised.

229. But if the wise praise a man,  
After observing him day by day—  
One of flawless conduct, astute,  
In wisdom and virtue well-composed—

230. Who can blame that worthy one  
Like ornament of finest gold?  
Even the devas praise him,  
By Brahmā, too, he is praised.

## 12. Ciñcā the Brahmin Girl

THE PERSON OF FALSE SPEECH – TRANSGRESSOR OF ONE PRINCIPLE.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to Ciñcā Mānavikā.

For in the first period after the Enlightenment the disciples of the Master multiplied and innumerable gods and men entered on the plane of the noble ones.<sup>22</sup> And as the glory of his virtues became widely known, rich gain and high honour were bestowed upon him. But as for the sectarians, lost to them were gain and honour alike, even as fireflies lose their brilliance before the coming of the sun. And they gathered in the street and cried out, “Is the monk Gotama the only Buddha? We also are Buddhas! Does that alone which is given to him yield abundant fruit? That which is given to us brings abundant fruit also. Therefore give alms to us; bestow honour upon us.” With such words as these did they appeal to the multitude, but for all their appeal they got neither gain nor honour. Accordingly they met together in secret and considered within themselves, “By what means can we cast reproach upon the monk Gotama in public and so put an end to the gain and honour bestowed upon him?”

Now at that time there lived in Sāvattihī a certain wandering nun named Ciñcā Mānavikā. She possessed surpassing beauty and loveliness; a very celestial nymph was she; from her body proceeded forth rays of light. Now a certain harsh counsellor made this proposal, “With the assistance of this woman we shall be able to cast reproach upon the monk Gotama, and so put an end to the gain and honour bestowed upon him.” – “That is the way!” exclaimed the sectarians, agreeing to his proposal.

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<sup>22</sup> Meaning that they attained the paths and fruits up to arahantship.

Ciñcā Mānavikā went to the monastery of the sectarians, saluted them, and stood waiting; but the sectarians had nothing to say to her. Thereupon she said, "What fault do you find in me?" This question she repeated three times; then she said, "Noble sirs, I appeal to you for an answer. Noble sirs, what fault do you find in me? Why do you not speak to me?" – "Sister," replied the sectarians, "Don't you know the monk Gotama, who goes about doing us harm, depriving us of gain and honour alike?" – "No, noble sirs, I do not know him; but is there anything I can do to help you in this matter?" – "Sister, if you wish us well, summon up your resources, contrive to cast reproach upon the monk Gotama, and so put an end to the gain and honour bestowed upon him." – "Very well, noble sirs," replied Ciñcā Mānavikā. "I will take all the responsibility; have no anxiety as to the outcome." So saying, she departed.

From that time on, she employed all of her skill in the arts of a woman to effect her purpose. When the residents of Sāvattī were returning from Jetavana after listening to the Dhamma, she would put on a cloak the colour of cochineal, and bearing perfumes and garlands in her hands, would walk in the direction of Jetavana. "Where are you going at this time of day?" people would ask her. "What business of yours is it where I am going?" she would reply. She would spend the night near Jetavana at the monastery of the sectarians, and early the following morning, when throngs of lay disciples were coming out of the city for the purpose of rendering the morning greeting to the Teacher, she would wend her way back and re-enter the city. "Where have you spent the night?" people would ask her. "What business of yours is it where I have spent the night?" she would reply.

After the lapse of a month and a half, whenever they asked her this question, she would reply, "I spent the night at Jetavana alone with the monk Gotama in the Perfumed Chamber." And by her answer she caused doubts and misgivings to spring up in the minds of those who were still worldlings. And they said to themselves, "Is this true, or is it false?" When three or four months had gone by she wrapped her belly about with bandages, to create the impression that she was pregnant, and dressing herself in a scarlet cloak, she went about, saying, "I have conceived a child by the monk Gotama." Thus did she deceive utter simpletons.

When eight or nine months had gone by, she fastened a disc of wood to her belly, drew a cloak over it, produced swellings all over her body by pounding her hands and feet and back with the jaw-bone of an ox, and pretending to be physically exhausted, went one evening to the Hall of Truth and stood before the Tathāgata. There, in his gloriously adorned Seat of Truth, sat the Tathāgata teaching the Dhamma. And standing there before him, Ciñcā Mānavikā opened her lips and reviled him, saying, "Mighty monk, mighty is the throng to which you teach the Dhamma; sweet is your voice, soft are your lips. Nevertheless you are the one by whom I have conceived a child, and the time of my delivery is near at hand. But in spite of all this, you make no effort to provide a lying-in chamber for me, nor do you offer to provide me with ghee and oil and such other things as I need. And failing yourself to attend to your duty, neither do you say to any one of your supporters, the king of Kosala, or Anāthapiṇḍika, or Visākhā, your eminent female lay disciple, 'Do for this young woman what should be done for her.' You know well enough how to take your pleasure, but you do not know how to look after the child you have begotten." Thus did she revile the Tathāgata in the midst of the congregation, even as a woman with a mass of dung in her hand might seek to defile the face of the moon.

The Tathāgata stopped his discourse, and like a lion's roar, cried out, "Sister, as to whether what you have said is true or false, that is something which only you and I know." – "Yes, mighty monk, but who is to decide between the truth and the falsehood of what is

known only to you and to me?" At that moment Sakka's seat showed signs of heat. Thereupon Sakka pondered the cause and became aware of the following, "Ciñcā Mānavikā is falsely accusing the Tathāgata." Thereupon Sakka said to himself, "I will clear up this matter," and forthwith set out with four deities. The deities turned themselves into little mice. With one bite of their teeth these little mice severed the cords with which the disc of wood was fastened to the belly of the woman. At that moment the wind blew up the cloak which was wrapped about her, and the disc of wood fell upon her feet, cutting off the toes of both her feet.

Thereupon the multitude cried out, "A hag is reviling the Supremely Enlightened One." They spat on her head, and taking clods of earth and sticks in their hands, drove her out of the Jetavana. As she passed out of sight of the Tathāgata, the great earth split apart, an abyss opened under her feet, and flames shot up from the Avīci hell. Thus was she swallowed up, enveloped as it were in a scarlet blanket such as is presented by wealthy families, and reborn in the Avīci hell. From that time the gain and honour of the sectarians decreased, but the offerings presented to the Master increased more and more.

On the following day the monks began a discussion in the Hall of Truth: "Brethren, Ciñcā Mānavikā, because she falsely accused the Possessor of Eminent Virtues, the Foremost Recipient of Offerings, the Supremely Exalted, came to utter ruin." The Teacher approached and asked, "Monks, what are you sitting here now talking about?" When they told him, he said, "Monks, this is not the first time she has falsely accused me and come to utter ruin; she did the same thing in a previous state of existence also." Having thus spoken, he said:

Unless a king discern clearly  
Fault on the part of another,  
After himself investigating carefully all the facts,  
Both small and great,  
He should not inflict punishment.

So saying, he related in detail this Mahā Paduma Jātaka (Jāt. No. 472).

### *Story of the Past: The Lewd Woman and the Youth*

At that time, it appears, Ciñcā Mānavikā was reborn as one of the chief consorts of the king, fellow-wife of the mother of the Future Buddha, Prince Mahā Paduma. She invited the Great Being<sup>23</sup> to lie with her, and when he refused to do so, disfigured her own body with her own hands, feigned sickness, and told the king, "Your son brought me to this pass because I would not lie with him." The king, hearing this, was filled with rage, and straightaway flung the Great Being down Robbers' Cliff. The deity dwelling in the mountain chasm cared for him and placed him safe and sound within the hood of the king of the dragons. The king of the dragons carried him to the abode of the dragons and honoured him by conferring upon him half his kingly power. After the Great Being had dwelt there for a year, he conceived a desire to adopt the life of an ascetic. Accordingly he went to the Himalaya country, adopted the life of an ascetic, and in the course of time developed the direct knowledges by the practice of deep meditation.

Now a certain forester happened to see him there and reported the matter to the king. Thereupon the king went to him, exchanged friendly greetings with him, learned what had happened, and offered to bestow his kingdom upon the Great Being. The Great Being, however, declined his offer and admonished him as follows, "For my part, I have no desire

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<sup>23</sup> The Bodhisatta or future Buddha in his earlier existences.

to rule. But as for you, you should keep unimpaired the ten royal virtues,<sup>24</sup> avoid evil deeds, and rule your kingdom justly." Thereupon the king arose from his seat in tears and went back to the city. On the way there he asked his ministers, "Through whose fault was I separated from one endowed with such uprightness?" – "Your chief consort was to blame for this, your majesty." Thereupon the king had her taken by the heels and flung head first down Robbers' Cliff. And entering his city, from then on he ruled his kingdom justly. At that time Prince Mahā Paduma was the Great Being, and the fellow-wife of his mother was Ciñcā Mānavikā. (*End of Story of the Past.*)

When the Teacher had made this matter clear, he said, "Monks, in the case of those who have abandoned one thing – the speaking of truth – who have become confirmed in falsehood, who have rid themselves of (the chance of a happy) next world, there is no evil deed which they will not commit." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

176. The person of false speech—  
Transgressor of one principle,<sup>25</sup>  
Rejecter of the other world:  
There is no evil he cannot do.

### 13. The Black Ogress

NOT BY ENMITY AT ANY TIME.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to a certain barren woman.

It appears that a certain householder's son, on the death of his father, did all the farm and household work by himself alone and took care of his mother as well. Now his mother said to him, "Dear son, I will fetch you a young wife." – "Dear mother, do not speak like that. My sole desire is to take care of you so long as you shall live." – "Dear son, you alone are doing the farm and household work, and I am not satisfied to have it so; let me fetch you a young wife." He protested time and again, and then held his peace.

The mother left the house, intending to go to a certain family and fetch home the daughter of that family. Her son asked her, "To what family are you going?" – "To such and such a family." He would not let her go to the family she had in mind, but told her of a family he liked better. So she went to the family he fancied, selected a wife for her son, and having set the day, installed her in her son's house. The woman turned out to be barren.

Then said the mother to the son, "Son, you had me fetch you a wife you yourself selected. Now she turns out to be barren. Without children a family dies out, and the line is not continued. Therefore let me fetch you another young wife." – "Enough said, dear mother," replied the son; but the mother repeated her request time and again. The barren wife heard the talk and thought to herself, "It is certain that sons cannot disobey the words of their mothers and fathers. Now if she fetches him a wife who is fruitful, they will treat me like a slave. Suppose I were to fetch him a young woman of my own selection?"

So the barren wife went to a certain family and selected a young woman for him. But she immediately encountered the opposition of the young woman's parents, who said to her,

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<sup>24</sup> Giving, virtuous conduct, renunciation, uprightness, gentleness, austerity, non-anger, harmlessness, patience, non-opposition (to the will of the people).

<sup>25</sup> Truthfulness is the one necessary principle (*dhamma*)

“Woman, what are you saying?” The barren wife replied, “I am a barren woman, and without children a family dies out. If your daughter gives birth to a son, she will be mistress of the family and the wealth thereof. Therefore give your daughter to me for my husband.” She finally prevailed upon them to grant her request, and taking the young woman with her, installed her in her husband’s house.

Then this thought occurred to her, “If my rival gives birth to a son or daughter, she alone will be mistress of the household. I must see to it that she shall not give birth to a child.” So the barren wife said to her rival, “As soon as you have conceived a child in your womb, please let me know.” – “Very well,” replied her rival. In accordance with her promise, as soon as she had conceived, she told her fellow-wife.

Now the barren wife was accustomed to give her rival a meal of rice-porridge regularly every day with her own hand. So along with the food she gave her a drug to cause abortion. The result was that her rival had a miscarriage. Again the second time the fruitful wife conceived a child and informed the barren wife, and again her fellow-wife did as before and brought about a miscarriage.

The women who lived in the neighbourhood asked the fruitful wife, “Is not your rival putting an obstacle in your way?” When she told them the facts, they said to her, “You foolish woman, why did you do this? This woman was afraid you would get the upper hand, so she mixed a preparation to bring about a miscarriage and gave it to you. Do not tell her again.” Accordingly the third time the fruitful wife said nothing to her rival. But the barren wife, seeing her belly, said to her, “Why did you not tell me that you had conceived a child?” Said the fruitful wife, “It was you who brought me here, and twice you have caused me to suffer a miscarriage; why should I tell you?”

“Now I am lost,” thought the barren wife. From that time on she watched to catch her rival off her guard. When the baby in the womb was fully matured, she took advantage of an opportunity, mixed a drug, and gave it to her. But because the baby in the womb was fully mature, an abortion was out of the question, and the result was that the child lodged across the neck of the womb. Immediately the mother suffered acute pains and feared that her hour had come.

“You have killed me!” she cried. “It was you alone that brought me here; it was you alone that killed my three children. Now I also am going to die. When I have passed out of this existence, may I be reborn as an ogress able to devour your children.” And having made this earnest wish, she died, and was reborn in that very house as a cat. The husband seized the barren wife, and saying to her, “It was you who destroyed my family,” beat her soundly with elbows, knees, and otherwise. As the result of the beating she received, she sickened and died, and was reborn in that very house as a hen.

So the fruitful wife was reborn as a cat, and the barren wife was reborn as a hen. The hen laid eggs, and the cat came and ate them. This happened three times. Said the hen, “Three times you have eaten my eggs, and now you are seeking an opportunity to eat me too. When I have passed out of this existence, may I be able to eat you and your offspring.” And having made this earnest wish, she passed out of that existence, and was reborn as a leopardess. The cat was reborn as a doe.

So the barren wife, at the end of her existence as a hen, was reborn as a leopardess; and the fruitful wife, at the end of her existence as a cat, was reborn as a doe. Thrice the doe brought forth young, and thrice the leopardess went and devoured the doe’s offspring. When the doe came to die, she said, “Thrice this beast has devoured my offspring, and now she intends to devour me too. When I have passed out of this existence, may I be able to

devour her and her offspring.” And having made this earnest wish, she was reborn as an ogress. When the leopardess passed out of that existence, she was reborn in Sāvattthī as a young woman of station.

So the fruitful wife, at the end of her existence as a doe, was reborn as an ogress; and the barren wife, at the end of her existence as a leopardess, was reborn in Sāvattthī as a young woman of station. When the latter grew up, she was married and went to live with her husband’s family in a little settlement near the gate of the city. After a time she gave birth to a son. The ogress disguised herself as a dear friend of the young woman and went to see her. “Where is my friend?” said the ogress. “In the inner room; she has just given birth to a child.” – “Did she give birth to a son or a daughter? I should like to see her.” So saying, the ogress went in. While pretending to be looking at the child, she seized him, devoured him, and then went out. Again a second time she devoured a child of the young wife in the same way.

The third time the young wife was pregnant she addressed her husband, “Husband, in this place an ogress has devoured two sons of mine and escaped. This time I intend to go to the house of my parents to give birth to my child.”

Now at this time the ogress was away doing her turn at drawing water. (For Vessavaṇa’s ogresses take their turn at drawing water from Lake Anotatta, passing it along from the source.<sup>26</sup>)

At the expiration of four or five months they are released; the others die from exhaustion.) The moment the ogress was released from her turn at drawing water, she went quickly to the young wife’s house and inquired, “Where is my friend?” – “Where you will not see her. There is an ogress that devours every child she bears in this house, and therefore she has gone to the house of her parents.” – “She may go wherever she likes, but she will not escape from me.” Spurred on by an impulse of hatred, the ogress dashed towards the city.

On the day appointed for the naming of the child, the mother bathed him, gave him a name, and then said to her husband, “Husband, now we will go back to our own home.” Accordingly she took the boy in her arms and set out with her husband along the path leading through the grounds of the monastery. When they reached the monastery pool, the young wife gave the boy to her husband and bathed in the pool. When she had finished her bath, her husband bathed in the pool. While the husband was bathing, the wife remained near, giving suck to her child.

Just then the ogress drew near. The young wife saw her coming and recognised her. Immediately she screamed with a loud voice, “Husband! Husband! Come quickly! Come quickly! Here is that ogress!” Not daring to wait until her husband came, she turned and dashed into the monastery.

Now at this time the Teacher was teaching the Dhamma in the midst of the Order. The young wife laid her boy at the feet of the Tathāgata and said, “I give you this child; spare the life of my son.” The deity Sumana, who resided in the gate, prevented the ogress from entering. The Teacher addressed the Elder Ānanda, saying, “Go, A3nanda, summon that ogress within.” The Elder summoned her within. The young wife said, “Here she comes, reverend sir.” Said the Teacher, “Let her come; make no noise.”

When the ogress came and stood before him, the Teacher said: “Why have you done so? Had you not come face to face with a Buddha like me, you would have cherished hatred towards each other for an aeon, like the snake and the mongoose, who trembled and quaked

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<sup>26</sup> Vessavaṇa is one of the divine kings in the heaven of the Four Great Kings. He rules over the ogres and ogresses.

with enmity, like the crows and the owls. Why do you return hatred for hatred? Hatred is quenched by love, not by hatred." And when he had thus spoken, he pronounced the following stanza:

4. Not by enmity at any time  
Are those with enmity allayed:  
They are allayed by amity—  
This is an ancient principle.

At the conclusion of the stanza the ogress was established in the fruit of stream-entry.

The Teacher said to the woman, "Give your child to this ogress." – "I am afraid to, reverend sir." – "Fear not, you have no reason to be alarmed because of her." The young wife gave her child to the ogress. The ogress kissed and caressed him, gave him back again to his mother, and began to weep. The Teacher asked her, "Why do you weep?" – "Reverend sir, in the past I have managed somehow or other to get a living, but I have never had enough to eat. Now how am I to live?" Then the Teacher comforted her, saying, "Do not worry." And turning to the mother, he said, "Take this ogress home with you, let her live in your own house, and feed her with the choicest rice-porridge."

So the young wife took the ogress home with her, lodged her on the back veranda, and fed her with the choicest rice-porridge. Now when the rice was threshed and the flail was raised, she feared that it would strike her head. So she said to her friend, "I shall not be able to live here any longer; lodge me elsewhere." She was lodged successively in the flail-hut, the water hut, the bake-house, the storeroom for nimbs, the dust-heap, and the village gate. But she refused to live in any of these places, saying, "Here the flail rises as if it would split my head in two; here boys empty out slops; here dogs lie down; here boys attend to nature's needs; here they throw away sweepings; here village boys practise fortune-telling." So they lodged her in a quiet place by herself outside of the village, and there they brought her the choicest rice-porridge.

The ogress said to her friend, "This year there will be abundance of rain; therefore plant your crops in a moist place." Other people's crops were destroyed either by excessive moisture or by drought, but the crops of the young wife flourished above measure.

People asked the young wife, "Woman, your crops are destroyed neither by excessive moisture nor by drought. When you plant your crops, you seem to know in advance whether the season will be wet or dry. How is this?" The young wife replied, "I have a friend, an ogress, who tells me whether the season will be wet or dry; and I plant my crops according to her directions on high or low ground. Don't you see? Every day the choicest rice-porridge and other kinds of food are carried out of our house and offered to her. If you also carry the choicest rice-porridge and other kinds of food to her, she will look after your crops also."

Straightaway all the residents of the city rendered honour to her. On her part, from that time forth, she looked after the crops of all. And she received abundant gifts and a large retinue. Subsequently she established the eight tickets for food, which are kept up even to this present day.

## 14. The Five Laymen

THERE IS NO FIRE LIKE LUST.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to five lay disciples.

The story goes that these five men went to the monastery desiring to hear the Dhamma, and having saluted the Teacher, sat down respectfully on one side. Now in the case of the Buddhas, no such thought ever enters their mind as the following: "This man is a khattiya, this man is a brahmin, this is a rich man, this is a poor man; I will teach the Dhamma to this man in such a way as to exalt him; I will not do so, however, in the case of this other man." It matters not with reference to what subject the Buddhas teach the Dhamma. They place reverence for the Dhamma before all else, and teach the Dhamma as though they were bringing down the celestial river from the sky.

But though the Tathāgata taught the Dhamma in this way to the five men who sat about him, one of the five, even as he sat there, fell asleep, another sat and dug the earth with his finger, another sat and shook a tree, another gazed at the sky. Only one listened attentively to the Dhamma. As the Elder Ānanda stood there fanning the Teacher, he observed the conduct of the five men and said to the Teacher, "Reverend sir, you are teaching the Dhamma even as thunders the thunder which accompanies a heavy rain, but even as you teach the Dhamma, these men sit doing this and that." – "Ānanda, do you not know these men?" – "No, reverend sir, I do not."

"Of these five men, he that sits there sound asleep was reborn as a snake in five hundred states of existence, and in each of these states of existence he laid his head in his coils and fell asleep; therefore at the present time also he is sound asleep; not a sound I make enters his ear."

"But, reverend sir, tell me, was this in successive states of existence or at intervals?" – "Ānanda, at one time this man was reborn as a human being, at another time as a god, and at another time as a snake. Indeed it would be impossible, even with the knowledge of omniscience, to determine exactly the number of times he has undergone rebirth at intervals. But in five hundred successive states of existence he was reborn as a snake and fell asleep; not even yet is he sated with sleep."

"The man who sits there scratching the earth with his finger was reborn in five hundred successive states of existence as an earthworm and burrowed into the earth; hence he digs the earth at the present time also, and fails to hear my voice."

"The man who sits there shaking a tree was reborn in five hundred successive states of existence as a monkey, and from sheer force of habit acquired in previous states of existence, he still continues to shake a tree, and the sound of my voice does not enter his ears."

"The brahmin who sits there gazing at the sky was reborn in five hundred successive states of existence as an astrologer, and therefore today also he gazes at the sky just the same, and the sound of my voice does not enter his ears."

"The man who sits there listening attentively to the Dhamma was reborn in five hundred successive states of existence as a brahmin versed in the Three Vedas, devoted to the repetition of the sacred texts, and therefore listens attentively today also, as though he were putting together a sacred text."

"But, reverend sir, your teaching of the Dhamma cleaves the skin and penetrates to the marrow of the bones. Why is it that while you are teaching the Dhamma, they do not listen attentively?" – "Ānanda, you evidently imagine that my Dhamma is easy to listen to." –

“Why, reverend sir, do you mean that it is difficult to listen to?” – “Precisely so, Ānanda.” – “Why is that, reverend sir?” – “Ānanda, these living beings, during countless thousands of cycles of time, never heard of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Order, and therefore are unable now to listen to this Dhamma which I teach. In the round of existences without conceivable beginning, these living beings have been accustomed to listen to the speech of animals in its countless forms. Therefore they spend their time in places where men drink and amuse themselves, and therefore sing and dance; it is impossible for them to listen to the Dhamma.” – “But, reverend sir, for what reason is it that they are unable to listen to the Dhamma?”

The Teacher answered him as follows: “Ānanda, they are unable to do so by reason of lust, by reason of hatred, by reason of delusion. For there is no fire like the fire of lust, consuming living beings as it does, without leaving so much as ashes behind. To be sure, the world-conflagration which closes an epoch burns up the world without leaving anything behind, but this is a fire which breaks out only on the appearance of the seven suns, and this fire burns only at times and at seasons. But as for the fire of lust, there is no time when the fire of lust does not burn. Therefore I say that there is no fire like the fire of lust, no grip like hatred, no snare like delusion, and no river like craving.” So saying, the Teacher pronounced the following stanza:

251. There is no fire like lust,  
No captor like aversion;  
Unequaled is delusion’s net,  
No river like craving.

## 15. King Pasenadi of Kosala

A DULLARD DROWSY WITH MUCH GLUTTONY.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to King Pasenadi of Kosala.

At a certain period of his life this king used to eat boiled rice cooked by the bucketful, and sauce and curry in proportion. One day after he had his breakfast, unable to shake off the drowsy feeling occasioned by overeating, he went to see the Teacher and paced back and forth before him with a very weary look. Overcome by drowsiness, unable to lie down and stretch himself out, he sat down on one side. Thereupon the Teacher asked him, “Did you come, great king, before you were well rested?” – “Oh no, reverend sir,” replied he king, “but I always suffer greatly after eating a meal.” Then said the Teacher to him, “Great king, overeating always brings suffering in its train.” So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

325. A dullard drowsy with much gluttony,  
Engrossed in sleep, who wallows as he lies,  
Like a great porker stuffed with fattening food,  
Comes ever and again unto the womb.<sup>27</sup>

At the conclusion of the lesson the Teacher, desiring to help the king, pronounced the following stanza:

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<sup>27</sup> The translation of Ven. Nāṇamoli Thera from *The Guide* (PTS 1962).

If a man is ever mindful,  
If moderate in taking food,  
His sufferings will be but slight,  
He ages slowly, preserving his life.

The Teacher taught this stanza to Prince Uttara and said to him, “Whenever the king sits down to eat, you must recite this stanza to him, and by this means you must cause him to diminish his food.” In these words the Teacher told him just what means to employ. The prince did as he was directed. After a time the king was content with a pint-pot of rice at most, and became lean and cheerful. He established intimate relations with the Teacher and for seven days gave “the gifts beyond compare.”<sup>28</sup> When the Teacher pronounced the words of rejoicing for the gifts presented to him by the king, the assembled multitude obtained great spiritual advantage.

## 16. Great-wealth the Treasurer’s Son

HAVING LED NEITHER THE HOLY LIFE NOR RICHES WON WHILE YOUNG.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Isipatana with reference to Great-wealth, Mahādhana, the treasurer’s son.

Great-wealth, it appears, was reborn at Benares in a household worth eighty crores.<sup>29</sup> Now his mother and father thought to themselves, “We have a vast store of wealth in our house, and there is no necessity that our son should do anything else than enjoy himself according to his own good pleasure.” Accordingly they had him instructed in singing and in the playing of musical instruments, and that was all the instruction he received. Likewise in that same city, in a household worth eighty crores of treasure, a daughter was reborn. The same thought occurred to her mother and father also, and they had her instructed only in dancing and singing. When the two reached the proper age, they were married with the customary ceremonies. In the course of time both their parents died, and then there were twice eighty crores of treasure in the same house.

It was the custom of the treasurer’s son to go thrice a day to wait upon the king. One day a company of knaves who lived in that city thought to themselves, “If this treasurer’s son would only get drunk, it would be a fine thing for us. Let us show him how to get drunk.” Accordingly they procured strong drink, put roast meat, salt, and sugar in the skirts of their clothing, and taking roots and bulbs, seated themselves in a convenient place, watching the path by which he would approach from the royal palace. When they saw him approaching, they began to drink strong drink, placed particles of salt and sugar in their mouths, and took the roots and bulbs in their teeth and chewed them. And they said, “Live for a hundred years, master treasurer’s son! With your help may we be enabled to eat and drink to our heart’s content!” Hearing their words, the youth asked the little page who followed him, “What are these men drinking?” – “A certain drink, master.” – “Does it taste good?” – “Master, in this world of the living there is no kind of drink to be had comparable to this.” – “In that case,” said the youth, “I must have some, too.” So he caused the page to bring him first a little, and then a little more, and all this he drank.

Now in no long time those knaves discovered that he had taken up the habit of drinking. Then they flocked around him. As time went on, the crowd that surrounded him increased

<sup>28</sup> “The gifts beyond compare” are described in the Dhammapada Commentary in *Buddhist Legends*, 3:24ff.

<sup>29</sup> This is a way of saying “multi-millionaire.”

in numbers. He would spend a hundred or two hundred pieces of money at a time on strong drink. It became a habit with him after a time, wherever he happened to be, to pile up a heap of coins and call out as he drank, "Take this coin and fetch me flowers! Take this coin and fetch me perfumes! This man is clever at dicing, and this man at dancing, and this man at singing, and this man at the playing of musical instruments! Give this man a thousand and this man two thousand!" Thus did he spend his money.

In no long time he squandered all the eighty crores of treasure that formerly belonged to him. Then those knaves said to him, "Master, your wealth is all spent." – "Has my wife no money?" – "Yes, master, she has." – "Well then, fetch that too." And he spent his wife's money in precisely the same way. As time went on, he sold his fields and his parks and his gardens and his carriages. He even disposed of the vessels he used at meals, of his coverlets and his cloaks and couches. All that belonged to him, he sold, and the proceeds he spent in riotous living. In old age he sold his house, the property of his family. And those to whom he sold his house took possession of it and straightaway put him out. Thereupon, taking his wife with him, he found lodging near the house-wall of other people's houses. With a broken potsherd in his hand, he would go about begging alms. Finally he began to eat the leavings of other people's food.

One day he stood at the door of a rest house, receiving leavings of food presented to him by young novices. The Teacher saw him and smiled. Thereupon the Elder Ānanda asked him why he smiled. The Teacher explained the reason for his smile by saying, "Ānanda, just look here at Great-wealth, the treasurer's son! In this very city he has squandered twice eighty crores of treasure. Now, accompanied by his wife, he is begging alms. For if in the prime of life this man had not squandered his wealth, but had applied himself to business, he would have become the principal treasurer in this very city; and if he had retired from the world and become a monk, he would have attained arahatship, and his wife would have been established in the fruit of the third path. If in middle life he had not squandered his wealth, but had applied himself to business, he would have become the second treasurer; and if he had retired from the world and become a monk, he would have attained the fruit of the third path, and his wife would have been established in the fruit of the second path. If in the latter years of his life he had not squandered his wealth, but had applied himself to business, he would have become the third treasurer; and if he had retired from the world and become a monk, he would have attained the fruit of the second path, and his wife would have been established in the fruit of stream-entry. But now he has fallen away from the wealth of a layman and he has likewise fallen away from the estate of an ascetic. He has become like a heron in a dried-up pond." So saying, he pronounced the following stanzas:

155. Having led neither the holy life  
Nor riches won while young,  
They linger on like aged cranes  
Around a fished-out pond.

156. Having led neither the holy life  
Nor riches won while young,  
They lie around like worn-out bows  
Sighing about the past.