

Buddhist Stories

From the Dhammapada Commentary Part III

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 Khantipālo. 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.

Part I.

What Novices Can Do

31. The Elder Sangharakkhita's Nephew

FARING FAR, WANDERING ALONE.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Sāvattthī with reference to Sangharakkhita.

The story goes that a certain youth of respectable family living at Sāvattthī, after hearing a discourse of the Teacher, made his renunciation and went forth, obtained acceptance as a monk, and in but a few days attained arahatship. He was known as the Elder Sangharakkhita. When a nephew of the Elder Sangharakkhita came of age, he went forth under the elder, and after obtaining acceptance entered upon the rains residence at a certain monastery.¹

Receiving two robes such as are worn by monks during the period of the rains, one seven cubits long, the other eight cubits long, he decided to present the robe eight cubits long to his preceptor and to keep the robe seven cubits long for himself. When he had completed the rains residence, he set out for the purpose of seeing his preceptor and journeyed from place to place, receiving alms along the way.

He arrived at the monastery before the elder arrived. Entering the monastery, he swept the elder's day-quarters, set out water for bathing the feet, prepared a seat, and then sat down, watching the road by which the elder would approach. When he saw the elder approach, he advanced to meet him, took his bowl and robe, seated the elder with the words, "Please be seated, reverend sir," took a palm-leaf fan and fanned him, gave him water to drink, and bathed his feet. Finally he brought forth the robe, laid it at the elder's feet, and said, "Reverend sir, please wear this robe." Having done so, he resumed fanning him. Said the elder to the nephew, "Sangharakkhita, I have a complete set of robes; you wear this robe yourself." – "Reverend sir, from the moment I received this robe I set my heart on giving it to you alone. Please make use of it." – "Never mind, Sangharakkhita, my set of robes is complete; you wear this robe yourself." – "Reverend sir, please do not refuse the robe, for if you wear it, great will be the fruit I shall receive thereby."

Although the younger monk repeated his request several times, the elder refused to accept the present of the robe. So, as the younger monk stood there fanning the elder, he thought to himself, "While the elder was a layman, I stood in the relation of nephew to him. Since he has been a monk, I have been his fellow-resident. But in spite of this he is not willing as my preceptor to share my possessions. If he is not willing to share my possessions with me, why should I longer remain a monk? I will become a householder once more." Then the following thought occurred to him, "It is a hard thing to live the household life. Suppose I become a householder once more; how shall I gain a living?" Finally the following thought occurred to him:

¹ The "going forth" (*pabbajjā*) is the novice ordination. "Acceptance" (*upasampadā*) is full ordination as a bhikkhu.

“I will sell this robe eight cubits long and buy a she-goat. Now she-goats are very prolific, and as fast as the she-goat brings forth young, I will sell them, and in this way accumulate some capital. As soon as I have accumulated some capital, I will take a wife. My wife will bear me a son, and I will name him after my uncle. I will put my son in a go-cart, and taking son and wife with me, will go to pay my respects to my uncle. As I journey by the way, I will say to my wife, ‘Just bring me my son; I wish to carry him.’ She will reply, ‘Why should you carry this boy? Come, push this go-cart.’ So saying, she will take the boy in her arms, thinking to herself, ‘I will carry him myself.’ But lacking the necessary strength to carry him, she will let him fall in the path of the wheels, and the go-cart will run over him. Then I will say to her, ‘You would not even give me my own son to carry, although you were not strong enough to carry him yourself. You have ruined me.’ So saying, I will bring down my stick on her back.”

Thus pondered the younger monk as he stood fanning the elder. As he concluded his reflections, he swung his palm-leaf fan and brought it down on the head of the elder. The elder considered within himself, “Why did Sangharakkhita strike me on the head?” Immediately becoming aware of every single thought that had passed through the mind of his nephew, he said to him, “Sangharakkhita, you did not succeed in hitting the woman; but what has an old monk done to deserve a beating?” The younger monk thought to himself, “Oh, I am ruined! My preceptor, it appears, knows every thought that has passed through my mind. What have I to do with the life of a monk any longer?” Straightaway he threw his fan away and started to run off. But the young monks and novices ran after him, caught him, and led him to the Teacher.

When the Teacher saw those monks, he asked them, “Monks, why have you come here? Have you captured a monk?” – “Yes, reverend sir. This young monk became discontented and ran away, but we captured him and have brought him to you.” – “Monk, is what they say true?” – “Yes, reverend sir.” – “Monk, why did you commit so grievous a fault? Are you not the son of a Buddha of strenuous effort? And once having gone forth in the dispensation of a Buddha like me, though you failed through self-conquest to win for yourself the attainments of stream-entry or once-returning or non-returning, even so why did you commit so grievous a fault as this?”

“I am discontented, reverend sir.” – “Why are you discontented?” In reply the younger monk related the whole story of his experiences, from the day he received the robes worn by monks in residence to the moment when he struck the elder on the head with his palm-leaf fan. “Reverend sir,” said he, “That is why I ran away.” Said the Teacher, “Come, monk; be not disturbed. The mind has a way of dwelling on subjects that are far off. One should strive to free it from the bonds of lust, hatred, and delusion.” So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

37. Faring far, wandering alone,
Formless and lying in a cave –
Those who restrain the mind
Are freed from Māra’s bonds.

32. The Elder Tissa's Novice

PEACEFUL IS HIS MIND.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the novice of the Elder Tissa.

The story goes that a certain youth of good family, residing at Kosambī, went forth and obtained acceptance as a monk in the dispensation of the Teacher. After his acceptance, he was known as Elder Kosambivāsī Tissa. After he had kept the rains at Kosambī, his supporter brought a set of three robes and offerings of ghee and jaggery² and laid them at his feet. The elder said to him, "What are these, lay disciple?" – "Reverend sir, have you not kept residence with me during the season of the rains? Those who keep residence in our monastery always receive these offerings; please accept them, reverend sir." – "Never mind, lay disciple, I have no need of them." – "Why is that, reverend sir?" – "I have no novice to make things allowable for me, friend."³ – "Reverend sir, if you have no novice to make things allowable, my son will become your novice."

The elder graciously accepted the offer. The lay disciple brought his own son, but seven years old, to the elder, and committed him into the elder's hands, saying "Please give him the going forth, reverend sir." The elder moistened the boy's hair, taught him the formula of meditation on the first five of the constituent parts of the body,⁴ and gave him the going forth. The instant the razor touched his hair, he attained arahatship together with the analytical knowledges.

The elder, having given him the going forth, remained there for a fortnight. Then, deciding to visit the Teacher, he directed the novice to take the requisites, and set out on his journey. On the way he entered a certain monastery. The novice obtained lodging for the elder and looked after it for him.

While he was thus engaged, it grew dark and he was therefore unable to provide a lodging for himself. When the time came for the novice to wait upon the elder, the novice approached the elder and sat down. The elder asked the novice, "Novice, have you not neglected to provide yourself with a lodging?" – "Reverend sir, I have had no opportunity to look after a lodging for myself." – "Well then, remain with me. It will inconvenience you to lodge outside in the place reserved for visitors." So saying, the elder, taking him with him, entered his own lodging. Now the elder had not yet attained the fruit of stream-entry, and as soon as he lay down, fell asleep. Thereupon the novice thought to himself, "Today is the third day during which I have occupied the same lodging with my preceptor. If I lie down to sleep, the elder will commit the offence of sleeping in common.⁵ Therefore I will spend the night sitting up." So assuming a cross-legged posture near the bed of his preceptor, he spent the night sitting up.

The elder rose at dawn and said to himself, "I must cause the novice to go out." So he took a fan which was placed at the side of the bed, struck the mat of the novice with the tip of the palm-leaf, and then, tossing the fan into the air, said, "Novice, go out" (so as to avoid the above

² Brown palm sugar, usually in soft cakes, allowed to monks as a refreshment.

³ It is one of the novice's duties to offer such medicines to monks who themselves may not keep them longer than seven nights.

⁴ Head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin. These are traditionally taught as a meditation subject on the occasion of the novice ordination.

⁵ The fifth offence of expiation (*pācittiya*): "Should any bhikkhu sleep for more than two or three nights along with one not fully ordained (as a bhikkhu), this entails expiation."

offence). The handle of the fan struck the novice in the eye and straightaway put out his eye. "What did you say, reverend sir?" said the novice. "Rise and go out," was the reply. The novice, instead of saying, "Reverend sir, my eye has been put out," covered his eye with one hand and went out. Moreover, when it was time for him to perform his duties as novice, he did not say, "My eye has been put out," nor did he remain seated, but covering his eye with one hand and taking a handbroom in the other, he swept out the privy and the washroom, after which, setting out water for washing the face, he swept out the elder's cell.

When he advanced to present the toothstick to the elder, he presented it to him with only one hand. His preceptor said to him, "This novice is not properly trained. Is it proper for a novice to present a toothstick to teachers and preceptors with one hand?"⁶ – "Reverend sir, I know perfectly well what is the proper form, but one of my hands is engaged." – "What is the matter, novice?" Then the novice told him the whole story, beginning at the beginning. When the elder heard his story, he was deeply moved and said to himself, "Oh, what a grave deed I have done!" Then he said to the novice, "Pardon me, most excellent youth; I did not know this. Be my refuge." And extending his clasped hands in an attitude of reverent salutation, he crouched on the ground before the feet of the seven-year-old novice. Then said the novice to him, "It was not for this purpose, reverend sir, that I spoke. I said this for the purpose of sparing your feelings. You are not to blame in this matter and neither am I. The round of existences alone is to blame for this. It was because I wished to spare you remorse that I did not tell you the real facts."

The novice tried to comfort the elder, but he would not be comforted. Overcome with remorse, he took the novice's requisites and proceeded to the Teacher. As the Teacher sat, he observed him approaching. The elder went to the Teacher, saluted him, and exchanged friendly greetings with him. The Teacher asked him, "Monk, is everything well with you? I trust that you have suffered no excessive discomfort." The elder replied, "All is well with me, reverend sir. I have suffered no excessive discomfort. But here is a young novice whose good qualities surpass anything I have ever seen."

"Why, what has he done, monk?" Thereupon the elder told him the whole story, beginning at the beginning and concluding as follows, "Reverend sir, when I asked him to pardon me, he said this to me, 'You are not to blame in this matter and neither am I. The round of existences alone is to blame for this. Be not disturbed.' Thus he tried to comfort me, appearing to cherish neither anger nor hatred towards me. His good qualities surpass anything I have ever seen." Said the Teacher to the elder, "Monk, those who have rid themselves of the taints cherish neither anger nor hatred towards anyone. On the contrary, their senses are in a state of calm and their thoughts are in a state of calm." So saying, he joined the connection, and teaching the Dhamma, pronounced the following stanza:

96. Peaceful is his mind,
Peaceful too his speech and action,
Who, truly knowing, is released,
Perfectly tranquil and wise.

⁶ Respectful offering is done with both hands.

33. Paṇḍita the Novice

IRRIGATORS LEAD THE WATERS.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the novice Paṇḍita.

Story of the Past: Sakka and the Poor Man

In times past, they say, Kassapa the Supremely Enlightened One, accompanied by a retinue of twenty thousand monks freed from the taints, paid a visit to Benares. Thereupon the residents, mindful of the fame they should acquire thereby, united in bands of eight or ten and presented the visiting monks with the customary offerings. Now it happened one day that the Teacher, in rejoicing with the merits of the donors at the end of the meal, spoke as follows: "Lay disciples, here in this world one man says to himself, 'It is my bounden duty to give only that which is my own. Why should I urge others to give?' So he himself gives alms, but does not urge others to give. That man, in his future states of existence, receives the blessing of wealth, but not the blessing of a following. Another man urges others to give, but does not himself give. That man receives in his future states of existence the blessing of a following, but not the blessing of wealth. Another man neither himself gives nor urges others to give. That man, in his future states of existence, receives neither the blessing of wealth nor the blessing of a following, but lives as an eater of remnants. Yet another man not only himself gives, but also urges others to give. That man, in his future states of existence, receives both the blessing of wealth and the blessing of a following."

Now a certain wise man who stood there heard this and thought to himself, "I will straightaway act so as to obtain both blessings for myself." Accordingly he paid obeisance to the Teacher and said, "Reverend sir, tomorrow receive alms from me." – "How many monks do you wish me to bring?" – "How many monks are there in your following, reverend sir?" – "Twenty thousand monks." – "Reverend sir, tomorrow bring all your monks and receive alms from me." The Teacher accepted his invitation.

The man entered the village and announced, "Men and women, I have invited the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha to take a meal here tomorrow; each and all of you give to as many monks as you are able." Then he went about inquiring how many each could provide for. "We will supply ten"; "We will supply twenty"; "We will supply a hundred"; "We will supply five hundred," they replied, each giving in proportion to their means. All of the pledges he wrote down in order on a leaf.

Now at that time there lived in this city a certain man who was so poor that he was known as Prince of Paupers, Mahāduggata. The solicitor, meeting him face to face, said also to him, "Sir Mahāduggata, I have invited the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha for tomorrow's meal; tomorrow the residents of the city will give alms. How many monks will you provide for?" – "Sir, what have I to do with monks? Monks need rich men to provide for them. But as for me, I possess not so much as a small measure of rice wherewith to make porridge tomorrow; what have I to do with monks?"

Now it behoves a man who urges others to give to be circumspect; therefore when the solicitor heard the poor man plead his poverty as an excuse, instead of remaining silent, he spoke to him as follows, "Sir Mahāduggata, there are many people in this city who live in luxury, eating rich food, wearing soft clothes, adorned with all manner of adornments, and

sleeping on beds of royal splendour. But as for you, you work for your living and yet get scarcely enough to fill your belly. That being the case, does it not seem to you likely that the reason why you yourself get nothing is that you have never done anything for others?" – "I think so, sir." – "Well, why do you not do a work of merit right now? You are young, and you have plenty of strength; is it not your bounden duty while you are earning a living to give alms according to your ability?" Even as the solicitor spoke, the poor man was overcome with emotion and said, "Write my name on the leaf for one monk; no matter how little I may earn, I will provide food for one monk." The solicitor said to himself, "What is the use of writing one monk on the leaf?" and omitted to write down the name.

Mahāduggata went home and said to his wife, "Wife, tomorrow the residents of the village will provide food for the Order of Monks. I, also, was requested by the solicitor to provide food for one monk; therefore we also will provide food for one monk tomorrow." His wife, instead of saying to him, "We are poor; why did you promise to do so?" said, "Husband, what you did was quite right. We are poor now because we have never given anything; we will both work for hire and give food to one monk." So both of them went out to look for work.

A rich merchant saw Mahāduggata and said to him, "Sir Mahāduggata, do you wish to work for hire?" – "Yes, your honour." – "What kind of work can you do?" – "Whatever you would like to have done." – "Well then, we are going to entertain three hundred monks; come, split wood." And he brought an axe and a hatchet and gave them to him. Mahāduggata put on a stout girdle and, exerting himself to the utmost, began to split wood, first tossing the axe aside and taking the hatchet, and then tossing the hatchet aside and taking the axe. The merchant said to him, "Sir, today you work with unusual energy; what is the reason for it?" – "Master, I expect to provide food for one monk." The merchant was pleased at heart and thought to himself, "It is a difficult task this man has undertaken; instead of remaining silent and refusing to give because of his poverty, he says, 'I will work for hire and provide food for one monk.' "

The merchant's wife also saw the poor man's wife and said to her, "Woman, what kind of work can you do?" – "Whatever you wish to have done." So she took her into the room where the mortar was kept, gave her a winnowing-fan, a pestle, and so on, and set her at work. The woman pounded the rice and sifted it with as much joy and pleasure as if she were dancing. The merchant's wife said to her, "Woman, you appear to take unusual joy and pleasure in doing your work; what is the reason for it?" – "Lady, with the wages we earn at this work we expect to provide food for one monk." When the merchant's wife heard this, she was pleased and said to herself, "What a difficult task it is that this woman is doing!"

When Mahāduggata had finished splitting the wood, the merchant gave him four measures of rice as pay for his work and four more as an expression of goodwill. The poor man went home and said to his wife, "The rice I have received for my work will serve as a supply of provisions for us. With the pay you have earned procure curds, oil, wood, relishes, and utensils." The merchant's wife gave the woman a cup of ghee, a vessel of curds, an assortment of relishes, and a measure of clean rice. The husband and wife between them therefore received nine measures of rice.

Filled with joy and satisfaction at the thought that they had received food to bestow in alms, they rose very early in the morning. Mahāduggata's wife said to him, "Husband, go seek leaves for curry and fetch them home." Seeing no leaves in the shop, he went to the bank of the river.

And there he went about picking up leaves, singing for joy at the thought, "Today I shall have the privilege of giving food to the noble monks."

A fisherman who had just thrown his big net into the water and was standing close by thought to himself, "That must be the voice of Mahāduggata." So he called him and asked, "You sing as though you were overjoyed at heart; what is the reason?" – "I am picking up leaves, friend." – "What are you going to do?" – "I am going to provide food for one monk." – "Happy indeed the monk who shall eat your leaves!" – "What else can I do, master? I intend to provide for him with the leaves I have myself gathered." – "Well then, come here." – "What do you wish me to do, master?" – "Take these fish and tie them up in bundles to sell for a shilling, sixpence and a penny."

Mahāduggata did as he was told, and the residents of the city bought them for the monks they had invited. He was still engaged in tying up bundles of fish when the time came for the monks to go on their rounds for alms, whereupon he said to the fisherman, "I must go now, friend; it is time for the monks to come." – "Are there any bundles of fish left?" – "No, friend, they are all gone." – "Well then, here are four redfish which I buried in the sand for my own use. If you intend to provide food for the monks, take them with you." So saying he gave him the redfish.

Now as the Teacher surveyed the world on the morning of that day, he observed that Mahāduggata had entered the net of his knowledge. And he considered within himself, "What is going to happen? Yesterday Mahāduggata and his wife worked for hire that they might provide food for one monk. Which monk will he obtain?" And he came to the following conclusion, "The residents will obtain monks to entertain in their houses according to the names written on the leaf; no other monk will Mahāduggata obtain, but only me." Now the Buddhas are said to show particular tenderness to poor men. So when the Teacher, very early in the morning, had attended to his bodily needs, he said to himself, "I will bestow my favour on Mahāduggata." And he went into the Perfumed Chamber and sat down.

When Mahāduggata went into his house with the fish, the Yellowstone Throne of Sakka, king of the gods, showed signs of heat.⁷ Sakka looked about and said to himself, "What can be the reason for this?" And he considered within himself, "Yesterday Mahāduggata and his wife worked for hire that they might provide food for one monk; which monk will he obtain?" Finally he came to the following conclusion, "Mahāduggata will obtain no other monk than the Buddha, who is sitting in the Perfumed Chamber with this thought in his mind, 'I will bestow my favour on Mahāduggata.' Now it is Mahāduggata's intention to offer the Tathāgata a meal of his own making, consisting of porridge and rice and leaf-curry. Suppose I were to go to Mahāduggata's house and offer to act as cook?"

Accordingly Sakka disguised himself, went to the vicinity of his house, and asked, "Would anyone like to hire a man to work for him?" Mahāduggata saw him and said to him, "Sir, what kind of work can you do?" – "Master, I am a man-of-all-work; there is nothing I do not know how to do. Among other things I know how to cook porridge and boil rice." – "Sir, we need your services, but we have no money to pay you." – "What work is it you have to do?" – "I wish to provide food for one monk and I should like to have someone prepare the porridge and rice." – "If you intend to provide food for a monk, it will not be necessary for you to pay me. Is it not

⁷ Sakka's throne becomes hot as a portend of some event of momentous virtue about to occur in the human world.

proper that I should perform a work of merit?" – "If that is the case, very well, sir; come in." So Sakka entered the poor man's house, had him bring the rice and other articles of food, and then dismissed him, saying, "Go and fetch the monk allotted to you."

Now the solicitor of alms had sent to the houses of the residents the monks according to the names on the leaf. Mahāduggata met him and said to him, "Give me the monk allotted to me." The solicitor immediately recollected what he had done and replied, "I forgot to allot you a monk." Mahāduggata felt as if a sharp dagger had been thrust into his belly. Said he, "Sir, why are you ruining me? Yesterday you urged me to give alms. So my wife and I worked all day for hire, and today I got up early in the morning to gather leaves, went to the bank of the river, and spent the day picking up leaves. Give me one monk!" And he wrung his hands and burst into tears.

People gathered about and asked, "What is the matter Mahāduggata?" He told them the facts, whereupon they asked the solicitor, "Is it true, as this man alleges, that you urged him to hire himself out for service to provide food for a monk?" – "Yes, noble sirs." – "You have done a grave wrong in that, while making arrangements for so many monks, you failed to allot this man a single monk." The solicitor was troubled by what they said and said to him, "Mahāduggata, do not ruin me. You are putting me to great inconvenience. The residents have taken to their several houses the monks allotted to them according to the names written on the leaf, and there is no monk in my own house whom I can take away and give to you. But the Teacher is even now sitting in the Perfumed Chamber, having just bathed his face; and without are seated kings, royal princes, commanders-in-chief, and others, waiting for him to come forth, that they may take his bowl and accompany him on his way. Now the Buddhas are accustomed to show particular tenderness to a poor man. Therefore go to the monastery, pay obeisance to the Teacher, and say to him, 'I am a poor man, reverend sir. Bestow your favour on me.' If you have merit, you will undoubtedly obtain what you seek."

So Mahāduggata went to the monastery. Now on previous occasions he had been seen at the monastery as an eater of remnants of food. Therefore the kings, royal princes, and others said to him, "Mahāduggata, this is not meal time. Why do you come here?" – "Sirs," he replied, "I know it is not meal time; but I have come to pay obeisance to the Teacher." Then he went to the Perfumed Chamber, laid his head on the threshold, paid respectful obeisance to the Teacher, and said, "Reverend sir, in this city there is no man poorer than I. Be my refuge; bestow your favour on me."

The Teacher opened the door of the Perfumed Chamber, took down his bowl, and placed it in the poor man's hands. It was as though Mahāduggata had received the glory of a Universal Monarch. Kings, royal princes, and others gasped at each other. Now when the Teacher presents his bowl to a man, no one dares take it from him by force. But they spoke thus, "Sir Mahāduggata, give us the Teacher's bowl; we will give you all this money for it. You are a poor man; take the money. What need do you have of the bowl?" Mahāduggata said, "I will give it to no one. I have no need of money; all that I desire is to provide food for the Teacher." All without exception begged him to give them the bowl, but failing to get it, desisted.

The king thought to himself, "Money will not tempt Mahāduggata to give up the bowl, and no one can take from him the bowl which the Teacher has given to him of his own free will. But how much will this man's alms amount to? When the time comes for him to present his alms, I

will take the Teacher aside, conduct him to my house, and give him the food I have made ready." This was the thought in his mind even as he accompanied the Teacher.

Now Sakka, king of gods, prepared porridge, rice, leaf-curry, and other kinds of food, made ready a seat worthy of the Teacher, and sat down awaiting the arrival of the Teacher. Mahāduggata conducted the Teacher to his house and invited him to enter. Now the house in which he lived was so low that it was impossible to enter without bowing the head. But the Buddhas never bow their heads in entering a house. When they enter a house, the earth sinks or the house rises. This is the fruit of the generous alms they have given. And when they have departed and gone, all becomes as before. Therefore the Teacher entered the house standing quite erect, and having entered, sat down on the seat prepared by Sakka. When the Teacher had seated himself, the king said to Mahāduggata, "Sir Mahāduggata, when we begged you to give us the Teacher's bowl, you refused to do so. Now let us see what sort of alms you have prepared for the Teacher."

At that moment Sakka uncovered the dishes and showed the porridge, rice, and other kinds of food. The perfume and fragrance that arose enveloped the whole city. The king surveyed the porridge, rice, and other foods, and said to the Exalted One, "Reverend sir, when I came here, I thought to myself, 'How much will Mahāduggata's alms amount to? When he presents his alms, I will take the Teacher aside, conduct him to my house, and give him the food I have myself prepared.' But as a matter of fact, I have never yet seen such provisions as these. If I remain here, Mahāduggata will be annoyed; therefore I will depart." And having paid obeisance to the Teacher, he departed. Sakka presented the porridge and other food to the Teacher and faithfully ministered to his needs. After the Teacher had eaten his meal, he returned thanks, rose from his seat, and departed. Sakka made a sign to Mahāduggata, who thereupon took the Teacher's bowl and accompanied him.

Sakka turned back, stopped at the door of Mahāduggata's house, and looked up at the sky. Thereupon there came down from the sky a rain of the seven kinds of jewels. The jewels filled all the vessels in his house and the very house itself. When there was no room left in the house, they took the children in their arms, carried them outside, and stood there. When Mahāduggata returned from accompanying the Teacher and saw the children standing outside the house, he asked, "What does this mean?" – "Our whole house is filled with the seven kinds of jewels, so much that there is no room to go in." Mahāduggata thought to himself, "Today I have received the reward of the alms I have given." Thereupon he went to the king, made obeisance to him, and when the king asked him why he had come, he said, "Your majesty, my house is filled with the seven kinds of jewels; accept this wealth." The king thought, "This very day have the alms given to the Buddhas reached their consummation." And he said to the man, "What must you have to remove the jewels?" – "Your majesty, it will require a thousand carts to remove all of this wealth." The king sent out a thousand carts and had the wealth removed and dumped in the palace court. It made a heap as high as a palm tree.

The king assembled the citizens and asked them, "Is there anyone in this city who possesses so much wealth as this?" – "There is not, your majesty." – "What ought to be done for a man possessed of so much wealth as this?" – "He should be given the post of treasurer, your majesty." The king bestowed high honour upon him and gave him the post of treasurer. Then he pointed out the site of a house occupied by a former treasurer, and said to him, "Have the bushes that are growing there removed, build a house and reside in it."

As the ground was being cleared and levelled, urns of treasure came to light with their brims touching each other. When Mahāduggata reported this to the king, the latter said, “It is through your merit that these urns have come to light; you alone shall have them.” When Mahāduggata had completed the house, he gave alms for seven days to the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha. Thereafter, having lived out his allotted term of life in the performance of works of merit, Mahāduggata was reborn at the end of his life in the world of the gods. After enjoying celestial glory for the space of the interval between the appearances of two Buddhas, he passed from that state of existence in the dispensation of the present Buddha, and was conceived in the womb of the daughter of a rich merchant of Sāvathī, a supporter of the Elder Sāriputta. (*End of Story of the Past.*)

Story of the Present: Paṇḍita the Novice

When the mother and father of the merchant’s daughter learned that she had conceived a child in her womb, they saw to it that she received the treatment necessary for the protection of the embryo. After a time the longing of pregnancy came upon her and she thought to herself, “Oh, that I might make offerings of the choicest portions of redfish to the five hundred monks headed by the Marshal of the Dhamma.⁸ Oh, that I might put on yellow robes, sit down in the outer circle of the seats, and partake of the food left uneaten by these monks!” She expressed her longing to her mother and father and fulfilled her longing, whereupon it subsided. Thereafter she held seven festivals more, and provided the five hundred monks headed by the Marshal of the Dhamma with the choicest portions of redfish. This was the fruit of his offering of the choicest portions of redfish in his former existence as the poor man, Mahāduggata.

Now on the day appointed for the naming of the child the mother said to the Elder Sāriputta, “Reverend sir, confer the moral precepts on your servant.” Said the elder, “What is the name of this child?” – “Reverend sir, from the day this child came into existence in my womb, those of this household who were stupid and deaf and dumb became wise; therefore the name of my child shall be Young Wiseman, Paṇḍita Dāraka.” The elder then conferred the moral precepts on the child.

Now from the day of his birth his mother resolved, “I will not interfere with the desire of my son.” When he was seven years old, he said to his mother, “I desire to become a monk under the elder.” She replied, “Very well, dear child; long ago I made up my mind not to interfere with your desire.” So she invited the elder to her house, provided him with food, and said to him, “Reverend sir, your servant desires to become a monk; I will bring him to the monastery this evening.” Having seen the elder off, she gathered her kinsfolk together and said to them, “This very day I shall render the honours appropriate to the occasion of my son’s leaving the life of a layman.” So she prepared rich gifts, and taking the child to the monastery, committed him to the hands of the elder, saying, “Reverend sir, give him the going forth.”

The elder spoke to him of the difficulties of going forth. The boy replied, “I will carry out your admonitions, reverend sir.” “Well then,” said the elder, “Come!” So saying, he wetted his hair, taught him the formula of meditation on the first five of the constituent parts of the body,⁹ and gave him the going forth. His mother and father remained at the monastery for seven days,

⁸ Ven. Sāriputta Thera.

⁹ See p.136, n.3.

making offerings consisting wholly of the choicest portions of redfish to the Order of Monks headed by the Buddha. Having done so, they returned home.

On the eighth day the elder took the novice with him to the village. He did not, however, accompany the monks. Why was this? Not yet had the novice acquired a pleasing manner of taking his bowl and robe; not yet had he acquired a pleasing manner of walking, standing, sitting, and lying. Besides, the elder had duties to perform at the monastery. So when the Order of Monks had entered the village for alms, the elder went the rounds of the entire monastery, swept the places that had not been swept, filled the empty vessels with water for drinking and refreshment, and restored to their proper places the beds, chairs, and other articles of furniture that had been left in disorder. Having done so, he entered the village. It was because he did not wish to give the sectarians, who might enter the empty monastery, a chance to say, "Behold the habitations of the disciples of the Monk Gotama!" that he cleaned up the entire monastery before entering the village. Therefore on that particular day, having instructed the novice how to take his bowl and robe, he entered the village somewhat later than usual.

As the novice proceeded with his preceptor, he saw a ditch by the roadside. "What is that, reverend sir?" he asked. "That is called a ditch, novice." – "What do they use it for?" – "They use it to lead the water this way and that, for irrigating their grain fields." – "But, reverend sir, has the water mind or bile?"¹⁰ – "It has not, friend." – "But, reverend sir, can they lead anything like this, which lacks reason, to whatever place they desire?" – "Yes, friend." The novice thought to himself, "If they can lead even such a thing as this, which lacks mind, to whatever place they wish, why cannot also they that have mind bring their own mind under their own control and cause it to do the monks' duty?"¹¹

Proceeding farther, he saw arrow-makers heating reeds and sticks over the fire and straightening them by sighting with them out of the corner of their eye. "What are these men, reverend sir?" he asked. "They are arrow-makers, friend." – "What are they doing?" – "They are heating reeds and sticks over the fire and straightening them." – "Have these reeds a mind, reverend sir?" – "They are without mind, friend." The novice thought to himself, "If they can take reeds, which are without mind, and straighten them by heating them over the fire, why cannot also they that have mind bring their own mind under control and cause it to do the monks' duty?"

Proceeding yet farther, he saw carpenters fashioning spokes, rims, naves, and other parts of wheels. "Reverend sir, what are these men?" he asked. "These men are carpenters, friend." – "What are they doing?" – "Out of pieces of wood they make wheels and other parts of carts and other vehicles, friend." – "But do these objects possess mind, reverend sir?" – "No, friend, they are without mind." Then this thought occurred to the novice, "If they can take these logs of wood lacking mind and make wheels and so forth out of them, why cannot also they that have mind bring their own mind under control and cause it to do the monks' duty?"

Having seen all these things, the novice said to the elder, "Reverend sir, if you will be so good as to take your bowl and robe, I should like to turn back." The elder, not allowing himself to think, "This young novice who has just gone forth addresses me thus!" said, "Bring them, novice," and took his bowl and robe. The novice paid obeisance to the elder and turned back,

¹⁰ "Mind or bile" (*cittaṃ vā pittaṃ vā*): an idiomatic phrase in Pāli with rhyming words, which English cannot imitate.

¹¹ The monks' duty is the attainment of arahantship.

saying, "Reverend sir, when you bring me food, be kind enough to bring me only the choicest portions of redbfish." – "Where shall we get them, friend?" – "Reverend sir, if you cannot obtain them through your own merit, you will succeed in obtaining them through my merit."

The elder thought to himself, "Should this young novice sit outside, some danger may befall him." Therefore he gave him a key and said to him, "Open the door of the hut where I reside, go in, and remain there." The novice did so. Sitting down, he investigated with wisdom his own physical body and thoroughly comprehended his own personality. Through the power of his virtue Sakka's seat showed signs of heat. Sakka considered within himself, "What can be the cause of this?" and came to the following conclusion, "The novice Paṇḍita has given his preceptor his bowl and robe and turned back, saying, 'I will strive for the attainment of arahatship'; therefore I also ought to go there."

So Sakka addressed the Four Great Kings,¹² saying, "Drive away the birds that make their homes in the monastery park and guard the approaches from all quarters." And he said to the moon-deity, "Hold back the disc of the moon"; and to the sun-deity, "Hold back the disc of the sun." Having so said, he went in person to the place where hung the rope for opening and closing the door and stood on guard. There was not so much as the sound of a withered leaf in the monastery. The novice's mind was tranquil, and before his meal he knew thoroughly his own personality and obtained the three lower fruits.

The elder thought, "The novice is seated in the monastery, and I can obtain food in such and such a house to assist him in his preparation." So he went to the house of a certain supporter, whose love and respect for him he well knew. Now the members of this household had obtained some redbfish that very day and were seated, watching for the elder to come. When they saw him coming, they said to him, "Reverend sir, it is good that you have come here." And they invited him in, gave him broth and hard food, and presented him with alms consisting of the choicest portions of redbfish. The elder allowed the purpose of his visit to be known, whereupon the members of the household said to him, "Eat your meal, reverend sir, and you shall also receive food to take with you." So when the elder had finished his meal, they filled his bowl with food consisting of the choicest portions of redbfish and gave it to him. The elder, thinking to himself, "The novice must be hungry," hastened back to the monastery with all speed.

Very early on the morning of that day the Teacher ate his meal and went to the monastery. And he considered within himself, "The novice Paṇḍita has given his preceptor his bowl and robe and turned back, saying, 'I will strive for the attainment of arahatship.' Will he reach the goal of his religious life?" Perceiving that he had attained the three lower fruits, he considered, "Has he or has he not the necessary factors to attain arahatship?" Perceiving that he had, he considered, "Will he or will he not be able to attain arahatship even before his meal?" And straightaway he perceived that he would.

Then the following thought occurred to him, "Sāriputta is hastening to the monastery with food for the novice and may perhaps interfere with his meditations. I will therefore sit down in the battlemented chamber on guard. When Sāriputta arrives, I will ask him four questions. While these questions are being answered, the novice will attain arahatship together with the analytical knowledges."

¹² The four deities that rule over the realm of the Four Great Kings, the lowest of the six sense-sphere heavens.

So he went and took his stand in the battlemented chamber, and when the elder arrived, the Teacher asked him four questions, each of which the elder answered correctly. These were the questions and answers. The Teacher asked Sāriputta, “Sāriputta, what have you got?” – “Food, reverend sir.” – “What does food produce, Sāriputta?” – “Sensation, reverend sir.” – “What does sensation produce, Sāriputta?” – “Material form, reverend sir.” – “What does material form produce, Sāriputta?” – “Contact, reverend sir.”¹³

This is the meaning of these questions: When a hungry man eats food, the food banishes his hunger and brings a pleasurable sensation. As a result of the pleasurable sensation which comes to a man who is satisfied by the eating of food, his body takes on a beautiful colour; and for this reason it is said that sensation produces material form. Now when a man is satisfied by the material form which is the product of the food he has eaten, he is filled with joy and delight; and with the thought in his mind, “Now I have attained happiness,” whether he lies down or sits down he obtains pleasurable contact.

While these four questions were being answered, the novice attained arahatship together with the analytical knowledges. Then the Teacher said to the elder, “Go, Sāriputta, give the food to your novice.” The elder went and knocked at the door. The novice came out, took the bowl from the elder’s hands, set it aside, and began to fan the elder with a palm-leaf fan. The elder said to him, “Novice, have your meal.” – “But you, reverend sir?” – “I have eaten; you eat yours.” Thus did a child seven years old, on the eighth day after going forth, like a freshly blossomed lotus, reflecting upon the subjects of reflection,¹⁴ sit down for his meal.

When he had washed his bowl and put it away, the moon-deity released the moon and the sun-deity the sun; the Four Great Kings abandoned their watch over the four quarters; Sakka the king of the gods gave up his post at the rope of the door; and the sun vanished from mid-heaven and disappeared.

The monks were annoyed and said, “Unwonted darkness has come on; the sun has disappeared from mid-heaven, and the novice has only just eaten; what does this mean?” The Teacher, aware of what they were saying, came and asked, “Monks, what are you saying?”

They told him. He replied, “Yes, monks, while this novice, fruitful in good works, was striving for the attainment of arahatship, the moon-deity held back the disc of the moon and the sun-deity the disc of the sun; the Four Great Kings stood on guard over the four quarters in the monastery park; Sakka king of the gods kept watch over the rope of the door; and I myself, although a Buddha, was unable to remain in an attitude of repose, but went to the battlemented chamber and stood guard over my son. Wise men who observe ditch-diggers leading the water, arrow-makers straightening their arrows, and carpenters fashioning wood, meditate on these things, and so obtain mastery over themselves and attain arahatship.” And joining the connection, he instructed them in the Dhamma by pronouncing the following stanza:

80. Irrigators lead the waters,
Arrow-makers bend the shafts,
Carpenters shape the wood:
Those who are wise tame themselves.

¹³ There is a play on words here which English can only reproduce in a laboured way: “Sāriputta, what have you got?” – “*Sustenance*, reverend sir.” – “What does *sustenance* sustain?” etc.

¹⁴ This refers to the reflection upon the proper purpose of eating almsfood, part of the monk’s discipline.

34. The Four Novices

AMONG THE HOSTILE UNHOSTILE.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to four novices.

The story goes that the wife of a certain brahmin prepared food for four specially designated monks, and said to the brahmin, her husband, "Go to the monastery, have the steward pick out four old brahmins, and bring them here." The brahmin went to the monastery and said, "Have four brahmins picked out for me and give them to me."¹⁵ There fell to him four seven-year-old novices who had attained arahatship: Saṅkicca, Paṇḍita, Sopāka, and Revata. The brahmin's wife had costly seats prepared and stood waiting. At sight of the novices, she was filled with rage, and sputtering as when salt is dropped on a brazier, she said to her husband, "You have gone to the monastery and brought back with you four youngsters not old enough to be your grandsons." She refused to let them sit on the seats which she had prepared, but spreading some low seats for them, said to them, "Sit here!" Then she said to her husband, "Brahmin, go and look out for some old brahmins and bring them here."

The brahmin went to the monastery, and seeing the Elder Sāriputta, said to him, "Come, let us go to our house," and took him back home with him. When the elder reached the house and saw the novices, he asked, "Have these brahmins received food?" – "No, they have received no food." Knowing that food had been prepared for just four persons, he said, "Bring me my bowl," and taking his bowl, departed. The brahmin's wife asked, "What did he say?" Her husband replied, "He said, 'These brahmins sitting here ought to receive food. Bring me my bowl.' So saying, he took his bowl and departed." Said the brahmin's wife, "It must be that he did not wish to eat; go quickly, look out for another brahmin and bring him here." The brahmin went back to the monastery, and seeing the Elder Moggallāna the Great, said the same thing to him, and brought him back home with him. When the Elder Moggallāna the Great saw the novices, he said the same thing as had the Elder Sāriputta, and taking his bowl, departed. Then said the brahmin's wife to her husband, "These elders do not wish to eat; go to the brahmins' enclosure (around the brahmins' houses) and bring back with you a single old brahmin."

Now the novices had nothing to eat from early morning and sat there famished with hunger. By the power of their merit Sakka's seat showed signs of heat. Considering within himself what might be the cause, he perceived that the novices had sat there from early morning and that they were weak and exhausted. "It is my duty to go there," thought Sakka. So disguising himself as an old brahmin, worn out by old age, he went to the brahmins' enclosure and sat down in the most conspicuous seat of the brahmins. When the brahmin saw him, he thought to himself, "Now my wife will be delighted," and saying, "Come, let us go home," he took him and went back home with him. When the brahmin's wife saw him, her heart was filled with delight. She took rugs and mats which were spread over two seats, spread them over one, and said to him, "Noble sir, sit here."

When Sakka entered the house, he respectfully saluted the four novices, and finding a place for himself at the edge of the seats where the novices were sitting, sat down cross-legged on the ground.

¹⁵ It is very typical of a brahmin to wish to give only to other brahmins even if they are monks. But *brahmins*, in the Buddhist sense of the word, are arahants. They are also "old" (venerable) in the Buddhist sense due to their attainment.

When the brahmin's wife saw him, she said to the brahmin, "For sure, you have brought a brahmin, but you have brought back with you one old enough to be your father. He is going about saluting novices young enough to be his grandsons. What use have we for him? Put him out!"

The brahmin seized him first by the shoulder, then by the arm, finally by the waist, and tried his best to drag him out, but he refused to stir from where he sat. Then the brahmin's wife said to her husband, "Come, brahmin, you take hold of one arm and I will take hold of the other." So the brahmin and his wife both took hold of his two arms, belaboured him about the back, and dragged him through the door out of the house. Nevertheless, Sakka remained sitting in the same place in which he had sat before, waving his hands back and forth.

When the brahmin and his wife returned and saw him sitting in the very same place in which he had sat before, they screamed screams of terror and let him go. At that moment Sakka made known his identity. Then the brahmin and his wife gave food to their guests. When those five persons had received food, they departed. One of the novices broke through the circular peak of the house; the second broke through the front part of the roof; the third broke through the back part of the roof; the fourth plunged into the earth, while Sakka departed from the house by another route. Thus did those five persons depart from the house by five different routes. From that time on, so it is said, that house was known as the House with the Five Openings.

When the novices returned to the monastery, the monks asked them, "Friends, what was it like?" – "Please don't ask us," replied the novices. "The brahmin's wife fumed with rage the moment she saw us. She refused to allow us to sit on the seats which she had prepared and said to her husband, 'Make haste and bring an old brahmin.' Our preceptor came, and seeing us said, 'These brahmins who are sitting here ought to receive food.' So saying, he ordered his bowl to be brought to him and departed. Then the brahmin's wife said to her husband, 'Bring another old brahmin.' Then the brahmin brought the Elder Moggallāna the Great. When the Elder Moggallāna the Great saw us, he said the same thing as had the Elder Sāriputta and departed. Then the brahmin's wife said to her husband, 'These elders do not wish to eat; brahmin, go to the brahmins' enclosure and bring back a single old brahmin.' The brahmin went there and brought back Sakka, who came in the disguise of a brahmin. When Sakka arrived, the brahmin and his wife gave us food."

"But were you not angry with them for what they did?" – "No, we were not angry." When the monks heard their reply, they reported the matter to the Teacher, saying, "Reverend sir, when these monks say, 'We were not angry,' they say what is not true, they utter falsehood." Said the Teacher, "Monks, those who have rid themselves of the evil passions oppose not those by whom they are opposed." So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

406. Among the hostile unhostile
Among the violent completely cool,
Detached amidst these who are attached –
That one I call a brāhmaṇa.

Part II.

How Dhamma is Practised

35. Worthy of Reverence

FROM WHOMEVER ONE LEARNS THE DHAMMA.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the Elder Sāriputta.

This venerable elder, we are told, first heard the Dhamma from the lips of the Elder Assaji; and from the day when he attained the fruit of stream-entry, in whatever quarter he heard that the Elder Assaji was residing, in that direction he would salute reverently with hands together, in that direction he would turn his head when he lay down to sleep. The monks said to each other, "Elder Sāriputta holds false views; on this very day he is going about doing reverence to the cardinal points." And they reported the matter to the Tathāgata.

The Teacher caused the elder to be summoned before him and asked him, "Sāriputta, is the report true that you are going about doing reverence to the cardinal points?" – "Reverend sir, you know me, and you yourself know whether or not I am going about doing reverence to the cardinal points." Then said the Teacher, "Monks, Sāriputta is not doing reverence to the cardinal points. The fact is that he first heard the Dhamma from the lips of the Elder Assaji, and from the day when he attained the fruit of stream-entry, he has revered his own teacher. For a monk should reverence the teacher through whom he has learned the Dhamma with the same degree of reverence with which a brahmin reverences the sacred fire." So saying, he taught the Dhamma, pronouncing the following stanza:

392. From whomever one learns the Dhamma—
The Teaching of the Perfect Buddha—
Devoutly one should honour him
As a brahmin does the sacred fire.

36. The Elder Attadattha

ONE'S OWN GOOD ONE SHOULD NOT NEGLECT.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the Elder Attadattha ("Own Good").

For when the Teacher was about to pass into Nibbāna, he said to his disciples, "Monks, four months from now I shall attain final Nibbāna." Thereupon seven hundred monks who had not yet attained the fruit of stream-entry were deeply moved, and never leaving the Teacher's side, whispered to each other, "Brethren, what are we to do?" But the Elder Attadattha thought to himself, "The Teacher says that four months from now he is to attain final Nibbāna. Now I have not yet freed myself from the power of the evil passions. Therefore so long as the Teacher yet remains alive, I will strive with all my might for the attainment of arahatship." Accordingly the Elder Attadattha no longer went with the monks.

Now the monks said to him, “Brother, why is it that you thus avoid our company and do not talk with us?” And conducting the Elder Attadattha to the Teacher, they laid the matter before him, saying, “Reverend sir, this elder does thus and so.” The Teacher asked the Elder Attadattha, “Why do you act thus?” The elder replied, “Reverend sir, you have said that four months from now you are to attain final Nibbāna; and I have determined that so long as you yet remain alive, I will strive with all my might for the attainment of arahatship.”

The Teacher applauded him for his wise decision and said to the monks, “Monks, whosoever sincerely loves me should be like the Elder Attadattha. For truly they honour me not who honour me only with perfumes and garlands. They only honour me who practise the Dhamma according to Dhamma. Therefore others also should follow the example of the Elder Attadattha.” So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

166. One’s own good one should not neglect
For another’s good however great:
Knowing well one’s own good
Be intent on one’s own good.

37. The Elder Ānanda’s Question

THE PERFUME OF FLOWERS GOES NOT AGAINST THE WIND.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Sāvattḥī by way of reply to a question which the Elder Ānanda asked him.

We are told that one evening, absorbed in meditation, the elder pondered the following thought: “The Exalted One receives the three perfumes of superlative excellence: namely, the perfume of sandal, the perfume of roots, and the perfume of flowers. Each of these perfumes, however, goes only with the wind. Is there possibly a substance whose perfume goes against the wind, or is there possibly a substance whose perfume goes both with the wind and against the wind?” Then the following thought occurred to him: “What is the use of my trying to determine this question all by myself? I will ask the Teacher, and the Teacher alone.” Accordingly he approached the Teacher and put the question to him. Therefore it is said:¹⁶

Now one evening the Venerable Ānanda arose from profound meditation and drew near to the place where the Exalted One was sitting, and when he had drawn near, he addressed the Exalted One as follows: “Reverend sir, there are these three substances whose perfume goes only with the wind and not against the wind. What are the three? The perfume of roots, the perfume of sandal, and the perfume of flowers. These, reverend sir, are the three substances whose perfume goes only with the wind and not against the wind. But, reverend sir, is there possibly a substance whose perfume goes with the wind, against the wind, and both with and against the wind?”

Said the Exalted One in answer to the question, “Ānanda, there is a substance whose perfume goes with the wind, against the wind, and both with and against the wind.” – “But, reverend sir, what is that substance whose perfume goes with the wind, against the wind, and both with and against the wind?” – “Ānanda, if in any village or market-town in this world any human being, whether man or woman, seeks refuge in the Buddha, seeks refuge in the Dhamma, seeks

¹⁶ The following is taken from Aṅguttara Nikāya 3:79.

refuge in the Order; if they refrain from killing living beings, from taking that which is not given, from wrong conduct in sexual relations, and from lying, and avoid occasions of carelessness through the use of liquor or spirits or other intoxicants; if they are virtuous, if they live the life of a householder in righteousness, with a heart free from the stain of avarice, if they are liberal and generous, if they are open-handed, if they take delight in giving, if they are attentive to petitions, if they delight in the distribution of alms, in all parts of the world monks and brahmins utter their praise. If in such and such a village or market-town either a man or a woman seeks refuge in the Buddha ... if they take delight in the distribution of alms, deities and spirits utter their praise. If in such and such a village or market-town either a man or a woman seeks refuge in the Buddha ... if they take delight in the distribution of alms, such acts as these, Ānanda, are the substance whose perfume goes with the wind, whose perfume goes against the wind, whose perfume goes both with and against the wind." So saying, he pronounced the following stanzas:

54. The perfume of flowers goes not against the wind,
Neither that of sandalwood, jasmine or *tagara*;
But the perfume of the virtuous goes against the wind,
The good person suffuses all directions.

55. Sandalwood or *tagara*,
Lotus or the jasmine great—
Of these various kinds of perfume
Virtue's perfume is unexcelled.

38. Angry Bhāradvāja

ANGERLESS DOES HE ENDURE ABUSE.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Veḷuvana with reference to Akkosa Bhāradvāja.¹⁷

For Akkosa Bhāradvāja had a brother named Bhāradvāja, whose wife, named Dhānañjānī, had attained the fruit of stream-entry. Whenever she sneezed or coughed or stumbled, she would breathe forth the solemn utterance, "Homage to the Exalted One, All-Worthy, Perfectly Enlightened!" One day, while distribution of food to brahmins was in progress, she stumbled, and immediately breathed forth that solemn utterance as usual with a loud voice.

The brahmin Bhāradvāja was greatly angered¹⁸ and said to himself, "No matter where it may be, whenever this vile woman stumbles, she utters the praise of this shaveling monkling in this fashion." And he said to his wife, "Now, vile woman, I will go and worst that teacher of yours in an argument." She replied, "By all means go, brahmin; I have never seen the man who could worst the Exalted One in an argument. Nevertheless, go ask the Exalted One a question." The brahmin went to the Teacher, and without even saluting him, stood on one side and asked him a question, pronouncing the following stanza:

"What must one slay to live at ease?
What must one slay to grieve no more?"

¹⁷ This story combines Saṃyutta Nikāya 7:1 and 7:2.

¹⁸ Because all his brahmin guests were scandalized by the wife's praising the Buddha and got up and left without touching the food, which perhaps they thought was ritually impure.

Of what one thing do you approve
The killing?—tell us, Gotama!”¹⁹

In answer, the Teacher pronounced the following stanza:

“To live at ease, anger must be slain.
With anger slain, one grieves no more.
Of anger with its poisoned root
And honeyed climax, brāhmaṇa,
The noble ones praise killing it:
When it is slain, one grieves no more.

Having serene confidence in the Teacher, the brahmin went forth and attained arahatship.

Now his younger brother, who was called Akkosa Bhāradvāja, heard the report, “Your brother has gone forth,” and greatly angered, he went and abused the Teacher with wicked, ugly words. But the Teacher subdued him by employing the illustration of food given to guests: [“Do you sometimes have guests, brahmin?” – “Yes, Master Gotama, I sometimes do.” – “Do you entertain them with various kinds of food?” – “Yes, I do.” – “Now, if they do not accept your food, to whom does it then belong?” – “If they do not accept it, it again belongs to us.” – “In the same way, brahmin, those words of scolding and abuse which you gave us, we do not accept; hence, brahmin, they belong to you.”²⁰]

Thereupon this brahmin too gained serene confidence in the Teacher, went forth and attained arahatship. Likewise Akkosa Bhāradvāja’s two younger brothers, Sundari Bhāradvāja and Bilañjika Bhāradvāja, abused the Teacher, but the Teacher subdued them, and they too went forth and attained arahatship.

One day in the Hall of Truth the monks began the following discussion: “How wonderful are the virtues of the Buddhas! Although these four brothers abused the Teacher, the Teacher, without so much as saying a word, became their refuge.” At that moment the Teacher drew near. “Monks,” said he, “What is the subject that engages your attention now as you sit here all gathered together?” – “Such and such,” replied the monks. Then said the Teacher, “Monks, because I possess the power of patience, because I am without defilements among those who are defiled, therefore I am truly the refuge of the multitude.” So saying he pronounced the following stanza:

399. Angerless does he endure abuse,
Beating and imprisonment,
Patience his power and armed might—
That one I call a brāhmaṇa.

¹⁹ The brahmin may have wanted the Buddha to approve of ritual sacrifice.

²⁰ The bracketed passage is added from Saṃyutta Nikāya 7:2.

39. Patience Subdues Violence

ONE SHOULD NOT STRIKE A BRĀHMAṆA.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Jetavana with reference to the Elder Sāriputta.

The story goes that once upon a time several men gathered together at a certain place and extolled the noble qualities of the elder, saying, "Oh, our noble master is endowed with patience to such a degree that even when men abuse him and strike him, he never gets the least bit angry!" Thereupon a certain brahmin who held false views asked, "Who is this that never gets angry?" – "Our elder." – "It must be that nobody ever provoked him to anger." – "That is not the case, brahmin." – "Well then, I will provoke him to anger." – "Provoke him to anger if you can!" – "Trust me," said the brahmin, "I know just what to do to him."

Just then the elder entered the city for alms. When the brahmin saw him, he stepped up behind him and struck him a tremendous blow with his staff on the back. "What was that?" said the elder, and without so much as turning around to look, continued on his way. The fire of remorse sprang up within every part of the brahmin's body. "Oh, how noble are the qualities with which the elder is endowed!" exclaimed the brahmin. And prostrating himself at the elder's feet, he said, "Pardon me, reverend sir." – "What do you mean?" asked the elder. "I wanted to try your patience and struck you." – "Very well, I pardon you." – "If, reverend sir, you are willing to pardon me, hereafter sit and receive your food only in my house." So saying, the brahmin took the elder's bowl, the elder yielding it willingly. The brahmin conducted him to his house and served him with food.

The bystanders were filled with anger. "This fellow," said they, "struck with his staff our noble elder, who is free from all offence; he must not be allowed to get away. We will kill him right here and now." And taking clods of earth and sticks and stones into their hands, they stood waiting at the door of the brahmin's house. As the elder rose from his seat to go, he placed his bowl in the hands of the brahmin. When the bystanders saw the brahmin going out with the elder, they said, "Reverend sir, order this brahmin who has taken your bowl to turn back." – "What do you mean, lay disciples?" – "That brahmin struck you and we are going to treat him in as he deserves." – "What do you mean? Did he strike you or me?" – "You, reverend sir." – "If he struck me, he begged my pardon; go your way." So saying, he dismissed the bystanders, and permitting the brahmin to turn back, the elder went back again to the monastery.

The monks were highly offended. "What sort of thing is this!" they exclaimed. "A brahmin struck the Elder Sāriputta a blow, and the elder straightaway went back to the house of the very brahmin who struck him and accepted food at his hands! From the moment he struck the elder, for whom will he any longer have any respect? He will go about pounding everybody right and left." At that moment the Teacher drew near. "Monks," said he, "what is the subject that engages your attention now as you sit here all gathered together?" – "This was the subject we were discussing." Said the Teacher, "Monks, no brahmin ever strikes another brahmin;²¹ it must have been a householder-brahmin who struck a monk-brahmin; for when a man attains the fruit of the third path, all anger is utterly destroyed in him." So saying, he expounded the Dhamma, pronouncing the following stanzas:

²¹ Note the play on the word "brahmin" again.

389. One should not strike a brāhmaṇa,
Nor for that should he react.
Shame on one who hits a brāhmaṇa,
More shame on him should he react!

390. Nothing is better for the brāhmaṇa
Than restraining the mind from what is dear.
When he turns away from the wish to harm
Just thus does his suffering subside.

40. Sirimā

BEHOLD THIS ORNAMENTED IMAGE.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Veḷuvana with reference to Sirimā.

Sirimā, the story goes, was a very beautiful courtesan of Rājagaha who had, during a certain rainy season, offended against the female lay disciple Uttarā, wife of the treasurer's son Sumana and daughter of the treasurer Puṇṇaka. Desiring to be on good terms with her again, she went to her house when the Teacher and the Order of Monks were within, and after the Teacher had finished his meal, asked him for pardon. Now on that day the Master pronounced within the hearing of Sirimā the following words of rejoicing with the merits of the donors:

223. Conquer anger by non-anger;
Conquer the evil with good;
By giving conquer the miserly:
By truth conquer the liar.

At the conclusion of the stanza Sirimā obtained the fruit of stream-entry. (This is a brief synopsis of the story; as for the complete story, it will be found related at length in the commentary on this stanza in the Chapter on Anger.)

Having thus attained the fruit of stream-entry, Sirimā invited the Master to be her guest, and on the following day presented rich offerings. From that time on she gave regularly eight food-tickets and from that time on eight monks came regularly to her house. "Accept ghee, accept milk," she would say, filling their bowls. What she gave to one monk would have sufficed for three or four; every day sixteen pieces of money were expended on the alms which were presented to the monks who visited her house.

Now one day a certain monk who had eaten the eight ticket-foods in her house went on a journey of three leagues and stopped at a certain monastery. In the evening, as he sat in the monastery, the monks asked him, "Friend, where did you obtain food just before you came here?" – "I have just eaten Sirimā's eight ticket-foods." – "Is the food which she gives pleasing to the taste, friend?" – "It is impossible to describe her food; it is the choicest of choice food that she gives, and a single portion would suffice even for three or four. But good as her food is, she herself is still more pleasing to look upon; such and such are the marks of beauty which she possesses." Thus did the monk describe her marks of beauty.

A certain monk heard the visiting monk describe her marks of beauty, and in spite of the fact that he had never seen her, nevertheless fell in love with her. He said to himself, "I ought to go

and see her." So having declared his seniority,²² he asked the visiting monk some questions. The visiting monk replied, "Tomorrow, friend, stand at that house, and being the most senior in the Order there, you will receive the eight ticket-foods." The monk immediately took bowl and robe and went out. Early in the morning, as the dawn rose, he entered the ticket-hall, and being the most senior in the Order there, received the eight ticket-foods in the woman's house.

Now it so happened that on the day before, just as the last monk who had received food in her house went out, the female lay disciple became afflicted with a disease, and therefore removed her jewellery and lay down. When the monks came to receive the eight ticket-foods, her female slaves, seeing them, informed their mistress. Since she was unable to take their bowls in her own hands, provide them with seats, and wait upon them, she gave orders to her slaves, saying, "Women, take the bowls and provide the noble monks with seats; give them broth to drink and hard food to eat. When it is time to present boiled rice, fill their bowls and give them to the monks."

"Very well, noble lady," replied the slaves. So they invited the monks within, gave them broth to drink and hard food to eat, and when it was time to present boiled rice, they filled their bowls and gave them to the monks. When they had done so, they went and informed their mistress. She said, "Take me and carry me with you, that I may pay my respects to the noble monks." So they took her and carried her with them; and when they brought her into the presence of the monks, she paid obeisance to them, her body all of a tremble.

When that monk looked upon her, he thought to himself, "Even in sickness this woman possesses wonderful beauty. What manner of beauty must she not possess when she is well and strong and adorned with all her adornments?" Thereupon human passion, accumulated during many millions of years, arose within him. He became indifferent to all about him and was unable to take food. He took his bowl and went back to the monastery; covering his bowl, he put it away, and spreading out a corner of his robe he lay down. A certain monk who was a companion of his tried to persuade him to eat, but without success, for he absolutely refused to take food.

On that very day in the evening Sirimā died. Thereupon the king sent word to the Teacher, "Reverend sir, Jīvaka's youngest sister, Sirimā, is dead." When the Teacher received that message, he sent back the following message to the king, "Sirimā's body should not be burned. Have her body laid in the burning-ground, and set a watch that crows and dogs may not devour it." The king did so. Three days passed, one after another. On the fourth day the body began to bloat, and from the nine openings of her body, which were just like sores, there oozed forth maggots. Her whole body looked like a cracked vessel of boiled rice.

The king caused a drum to go through the city and the following proclamation to be made: "Let all approach to behold Sirimā. Except watchmen of houses, all who refuse to do so shall be fined eight pieces of money." And he sent the following message to the Teacher: "Let the Order of Monks presided over by the Buddha approach to behold Sirimā." The Teacher made proclamation to the monks, "Let us go forth to behold Sirimā."

Now that young monk had lain for four days without touching food, paying no attention to anything anyone said to him; the rice in his bowl had rotted, and his bowl was covered with mildew. The rest of the monks who were his fellows approached him and said to him, "Brother,

²² So that the visiting monk could know that he could be the leader of the Sangha.

the Teacher is going forth to behold Sirimā.” When the young monk, lying thus, heard the name Sirimā, he leaped quickly to his feet. Someone said to him, “The Teacher is going forth to behold Sirimā; will you also go?” – “Indeed I will go,” he replied. And tossing the rice out of his bowl, he washed it and put it in his sling and then set out with the company of monks.

The Teacher, surrounded by the Order of Monks, stood on one side of the corpse; the Order of Nuns and the king’s retinue and the company of lay disciples, both male and female, stood on the other side of the corpse, each company in its proper place. The Teacher then asked the king, “Great king, who is this woman?” – “Reverend sir, it is Jīvaka’s sister, Sirimā.” – “Is this Sirimā?” – “Yes, reverend sir.” – “Well! Send a drum through the town and make proclamation: ‘Those who will pay a thousand pieces of money for Sirimā may have her.’” Not a man said “hem” or “hum.” The king informed the Teacher, “They will not take her, reverend sir.”

“Well then, great king, put the price down.” So the king had a drum beaten and the following proclamation made: “If they will give five hundred pieces of money, they may have her.” But nobody would take her at that price. The king then proclaimed to the beating of a drum that anyone might have her who would give two hundred and fifty pieces of money, or two hundred, or a hundred, or fifty, or twenty-five, or ten, or five. Finally he reduced the price to a penny, then to a halfpenny, then to a farthing, then to an eighth of a penny. At last he proclaimed to the beating of a drum, “They may have her for nothing.” Not a man said “hem” or “hum.”

Then said the king to the Teacher, “Reverend sir, no one will take her, even as a gift.” The Teacher replied, “Monks, you see the value of a woman in the eyes of the multitude. In this very city men used to pay a thousand pieces of money for the privilege of spending one night with this woman. Now there is no one who will take her as a gift. Such was her beauty who now has perished and gone. Behold, monks, this body diseased and corrupt.” So saying, he pronounced the following stanza:

147. Behold this ornamented image,
A mass of sores, a congeries,
Miserable, full of desires,
Where nothing is stable, nothing persists.

The bhikkhu, hearing this, attained the fruit of stream-entry.

41. A Certain Monk

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

We are told that while the Teacher was in residence at Sāvattthī, a certain treasurer’s son approached an elder who resorted to his house for alms and said to him, “Reverend sir, I desire to obtain release from suffering. Tell me some way by which I can obtain release from suffering.” The elder replied, “Good indeed, friend. If you desire release from suffering, give ticket-food, give fortnightly food, give lodgings during the season of the rains, give bowls and robes and the other requisites. Divide your possessions into three parts: with one portion carry on your business; with another portion support son and wife; dispense the third portion on alms to support the Teaching of the Buddha.”

“Very well, reverend sir,” said the treasurer’s son, and did all in the prescribed order. Having done all, he returned to the elder and asked him, “Reverend sir, is there anything else I ought to do?” – “Brother, take upon yourself the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts.” The treasurer’s son did so, and then asked whether there was anything else he ought to do. “Yes,” replied the elder, “take upon yourself the Ten Precepts.” – “Very well, reverend sir,” said the treasurer’s son, and took upon himself the Ten Precepts. Because the treasurer’s son had in this manner performed works of merit, one after another (*anupubbena*), he came to be called Anupubba. Again he asked the elder, “Reverend sir, is there anything else I ought to do?” The elder replied, “Yes, become a monk.” The treasurer’s son immediately went forth.

Now he had a teacher who was versed in the Abhidhamma and a preceptor who was versed in the Vinaya. After he had obtained acceptance as a monk, whenever he approached his teacher, the latter repeated questions found in the Abhidhamma, “In the dispensation of the Buddha it accords with Dhamma to do this; it does not accord with Dhamma to do that.” And whenever he approached his preceptor, the latter repeated questions found in the Vinaya, “In the dispensation of the Buddha it accords with Dhamma to do this; it does not accord with Dhamma to do that; this is proper; this is improper.” After a time he thought to himself, “Oh, what a wearisome task this is! I became a monk in order to obtain release from suffering, but here there is not even room for me to stretch out my hands. It is possible, however, to obtain release from suffering even if one lives the household life. I had best become a householder once more.”

From that time forth, discontented and dissatisfied, he no longer rehearsed the thirty-two constituent parts of the body and received instruction. He became emaciated; his skin shrivelled up; veins stood out all over his body; weariness oppressed him, and his body was covered with scabs. The young novices asked him, “Friend, how is it that wherever you stand, wherever you sit, you are sick with jaundice, emaciated, shrivelled up, your body covered with scabs? What have you done?” – “Friends, I am discontented.” – “Why?” He told them his story, and they told his teacher and his preceptor, and his teacher and his preceptor took him with them to the Teacher.

Said the Teacher, “Monks, why have you come?” – “Reverend sir, this monk is dissatisfied in your dispensation.” – “Monk, is what they say true?” – “Yes, reverend sir.” – “Why are you dissatisfied?” – “Reverend sir, I became a monk in order to obtain release from suffering. My teacher has recited passages from the Abhidhamma, and my preceptor has recited passages from the Vinaya. Reverend sir, I have come to the following conclusion: ‘Here there is not even room for me to stretch out my hands. It is possible for me to obtain release from suffering as a householder. I will therefore become a householder.’ ”

“Monk, if you can guard one thing, it will not be necessary for you to guard the rest.” – “What is that, reverend sir?” – “Can you guard your mind?” – “I can, reverend sir.” – “Well then, guard your mind alone.” Having given this admonition, the Teacher pronounced the following stanza:

36. The mind is very hard to see,
Subtle, falling on what it wants;
Let the wise man guard his mind,
A guarded mind brings happiness.

42. The Monk from the Vajji People

HARD IS THE GOING FORTH.... This instruction was given by the Teacher while he was in residence at Mahāvana near Vesālī with reference to a certain Vajjian prince who became a monk. The story concerning him is as follows:²³

A certain Vajjian prince who had become a monk took up his residence at Vesālī in a certain forest grove. It so happened that at that time there was a festival in progress at Vesālī which lasted through the night. When this monk heard the noise and tumult of the beating of drums and the playing of musical instruments at Vesālī, he wept and lamented, and uttered on that occasion the following stanza:

Alone we reside in the forest
Like a log thrown away in the wood.
On such a night as this is,
Who is worse off than we?

It appears that this monk had formerly been a prince in the kingdom of the Vajjians, and that when his turn came to rule, he renounced his kingdom and became a monk. On the night of the full moon of the month Kattikā, the entire city of Vesālī was decked with flags and banners, making it co-terminous with the realms of the Four Great Kings, and the festival began. As the festival continued through the night, he listened to the noise of the beating of drums and the striking of other musical instruments and the sound of the playing of lutes. When the seven thousand and seven hundred and seven princes of Vesālī, and a like number of young princes and commanders-in-chief, all dressed and adorned in festive array, entered the street for the purpose of taking part in the festivities, he himself walked through his great meditation walk sixty cubits long, beheld the moon poised in mid-heaven, stopped near the seat at the end of the meditation walk, and surveyed his own person, for lack of festive garments and adornments resembling a log of wood thrown away in the forest. And then and there he thought to himself, "Is there any one worse off than we?"

Under ordinary circumstances he possessed the merits and virtues of a forest dweller, but on this occasion was oppressed with discontent, and therefore spoke thus. Thereupon the forest spirit who inhabited that forest grove formed the resolution, "I will stir up this monk," and uttered in reply the following stanza:

Alone you reside in the forest
Like a log thrown away in the wood.
Many do envy you just as hell-dwellers
Envy those who go to heaven.

The discontented monk heard this stanza, and on the following day approached the Teacher, saluted him, and sat down respectfully on one side. Aware of what had happened, and desiring to make plain the hardships of the household life, the Teacher summed up the five kinds of suffering in the following stanza:²⁴

²³ This story is an expanded version of Saṃyutta Nikāya 9:9.

²⁴ (1) It is hard to give up one's wealth and go forth. (2) It is hard to delight in the going forth because of the difficulties of the alms round for instance, or because one lives in remote places. (3) The suffering of household life is familiar to all who have experienced it. (4) "Unequals" among laymen means those

302. Hard is the going forth, hard to delight in;
Hard and painful is household life;
Painful is association with unequals;
Painful is it to be a wanderer.
Therefore do not be a wanderer,
Do not be afflicted with pain.

The bhikkhu concerned was established in arahatship.

coming from different social backgrounds, etc.; among monks, those holding different views. (5)
Wandering in the round of birth and death (*saṃsāra*) is always painful.