

Buddha's Tales for Young and Old Volume 2 - Text Only

Interpreted by Ven. Kurunegoda Piyatissa
Stories told by Todd Anderson



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Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.

BUDDHIST TALES FOR YOUNG AND OLD

VOLUME 2, STORIES 51 – 100

KING FRUITFUL

AND QUEEN SIVALI

INTERPRETED BY KURUNEGODA PIYATISSA MAHA THERA

STORIES TOLD BY TODD ANDERSON

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN PATTERSON

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Interpreter's Introduction

The Jataka stories, over millennia, have been seminal to the development of many civilisations, the cultivation of moral conduct and good behaviour, the growth of a rich and varied literature in diverse parts of the world and the inspiration for painting, sculpture and architecture of enduring aesthetic value. The Buddha himself used jataka stories to explain concepts like kamma and rebirth and to emphasise the importance of certain moral values. A Jataka bhanaka (jataka storyteller) is mentioned to have been appointed even as early as the time of the Buddha. Such appointments were common in ancient Sri Lanka and among others, King Llanaga (1st century AD) is recorded in the mahavamsa, to have heard kapi jataka from a bhanaka bhikkhu. It is in continuation of this noble tradition that these stories are now re-told in print to an audience which had been denied access to them by language and other cultural barriers. These stories are ever more relevant in the fragmented societies of today, where especially children, in their most formative years, seek helplessly for guidance in steering their lives to success and fulfilment.

No other civilisation has been as much nourished by this rich source as that in Sri Lanka. Sinhala, the language of the people of Sri Lanka, in which script the teachings of the Buddha were written down for the first time ever, carrier unerring marks of that nourishment. Both the most hallowed literary works as well as the colloquial language of ordinary present day villagers are replete with allusions to the better-known Jataka stories. The latter would frequently refer to "king Vessantara" (who was generous to a fault), 'king Cetiya" (an inveterate liar), the blind jackal (a most grateful friend) to prince Mahaushadha (of unfathomable wisdom), to a tortoise who readily takes to water or to the occasion when the sky fell on the hare.

There is hardly any form of Sihala literature which has not been fed by the well springs of jataka stories. Works of poetry beginning from Sasadavata (12th century), Muvadevdavata (12th century), Kausilumina (13th century), Guttila kavyaya and Kavyashekharaya (14th century), Kusa jataka kavyaya and Asadisa da Kava (17th century) embody jataka stories. Poems of other genre are replete with allusions to incidents and personalities drawn from jataka stories.

Among prose works Sulu Kalingu da vata (12 century), Ummagga Jataka (13th century), Bhuridatta Jataka (13th century) and Vessantara Jataka are

jataka stories re-told in inimitable fashion. Other works such as Amavatura (12th century), Butsarana (12 century), Pajavalia (13th century),

Saddharmaratnavalia (13th century), and Saddharmalankaraya are deeply embellished with material form jataka stories. Until quite recently, the most widely read Sinhala prose work was Pansiya Panas Jataka Pota, number 6 in our list of sources.

Later works of drama such as the Sandakinduru Nadagama, Vessantara Nadagama, Pabavati, Kada Valalu, Kala gola and Pemato jayati soko are based on jataka stories.

Stories similar to jataka stories occur in the Vedas. Some of the Brahmanas and Puranas are simply narrative stories. In many places, the context, the style or the core stories are altered. The same story is often told by different authors in different places, for example, Kausilumina and Kasadavata as poetry and Kabavati as drama are based on Kusajataka.

In Mahayana literature Asvaghos's Sutralankara, Aryashura's Jatakamala and Khsemendra's Avadana Kalpalata are well known as jataka stories.

Indian Sanskrit works such as Katha sarit sagara, Dasa Kumara carita, Panca tantra and Hitopadesa contain similar stories. These stories contributed to the later incomparable works of Kalidasa and Ashvaghosa.

There are also Mahayana jataka stories such as Vyaghri, Dhammasondaka and Seta Gandha Hasti which do not appear in Pali at all. Some jataka stories can be found in Jain literature, such as the story of Isisinga in Suyakadanga, which is the Nalini Jataka. They are found in even the Mahabharata, for example Rsissringa upakhyana.

Jataka and similar other stories travelled far and wide by word of mouth along caravan routes and contributed to the literature in Persia, China, Arabia (Arabian Nights) Italy (Boccaccio's tales), Greece (Aesop's Fables), Britain (Chaucer's Canterbury Tales) and Japan (Zen stories).

For developing moral conduct and good behaviour, there are few more instructive foundation than jataka stories. All Jataka stories hold out advice on how to correct our ways. They played and continue to play in some societies an enormous role in the cultivation of peace and generosity. When Buddhist monks taught children in viharas, jataka stories took a prominent place in primary education. Young samaneras (novice monks) were required to read and preach effectively. In India these and similar other stories were a

principal instrument in the socialisation's of children, discouraging them from selfishness and laying foundations for family and community solidarity. Jataka stories speak eloquently of those human values, which contribute, to harmony, pleasure and progress.

Besides literature, painting, sculpture and architecture in many parts of the world carried the message of jataka stories. King Dutugemunu of Anuradhapura (2nd Century B.C.) had the inside shrine room of the Ruvanveliseya embellished with murals depicting scenes from Jataka stories. This practice is still carried on today in Buddhist viharas in Sri Lanka as well as in Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam. Fa Hin, who visited Sri Lanka in the fifth century A.D. recorded that festival times the city of Anuradhapura was festooned with paintings from jataka stories. This practice continues today in major cities in Sri Lanka during Buddhist days of celebration. Jataka stories are well depicted in Amaravati, Nalanda, Ajanta, Ellora, Bharut, Nagarjunikonda, Borobudur and Angkor Vat. The late historian Mackensy in *Buddhism in pre-Christian Britain* (1928) demonstrated that there were artistic works based on jataka stories in pre-Christian Britain.

At this point I wish to draw the reader's special attention to three stories in this collection. The first when the Enlightened One had been born as a quail. In the forest where he lived he befriended a monkey and an elephant. They raised a question among themselves: who was the most experienced and most worthy of respect?

After discussion, they came to a conclusion: whoever was the oldest would be the most experienced and the most knowledgeable. Then they had to decide which among them was the eldest and the most respected. Pointing to a very large and well-grown banyan tree the elephant said, "Can you remember that banyan tree in whose shade we used to rest sometimes? I used to scratch my tummy rubbing on it when I was very little." Then the monkey responded "Oh, I ate its tender leaves while sitting next to it when I was very young." Finally the quail chirped in, "When I was young, I ate a fruit from an old banyan tree. Afterwards I left droppings that held a seed that grew into this banyan tree." They concluded that the oldest of them was the smallest, the quail. So they began to respect each other according to their age — first the quail, second the monkey, and last the elephant.

This story teaches respect for elders. It is an essential part of the Buddhist tradition to respect seniority. Amongst Buddhist monks this is strictly

observed and it is an offence to violate this seemingly minor rule. It also points to the need to gain control over conceit, a minor defilement. This very same respect for seniority may have led to the development of historiography.

The second story, that of a half-blind fox teaches the value of being grateful. The half-blind fox was caught by a python in his coils and was fighting for his life. A poor peasant who was collecting wood in the forest helped the fox escape from his predator. After the same poor peasant was the victim of a python. The half-blind fox who heard the screams of the peasant ran in to a village field where a group of men were ploughing field and ran away with their clothing. The villagers chased after the fox, heard the screams of the helpless man and released him from the coils of the python.

The third story relates the fate of two parrots who were carried from their nest in a storm and one dropped in a hermitage and the other in a den of thieves. The one who fell among the hermits learned and eventually practised generosity and became quite gentle. The one who fell among thieves grew up like them — cruel, rough and wicked. This story teaches the ill of associating with bad people and helps to cultivate the mind in many ways. Generosity, the use of gentle language, the nobility of the ways of wise people, the value of morality and the evils of unwholesome associations are all thrown into high relief. In this any many other respects, jataka stories contributed to happiness and the development of the minds of young ones. The happiness they engendered went well beyond the mundane to reach the supra-mundane. They led mankind to all that is good in this world and to the ultimate happiness taught by the Buddha.

The sources used in this second volume are as follows:

1. Jataka Pali (Colombo: Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series (Publication Board, 1983) - original Pali stanzas.
2. Jataka Pali (Colombo: Simon Hewavitarane Bequest, 1926) original Pali Jataka stories in Sinhalese characters.
3. Sinhala Jataka Pot Vahanse (Colombo: Jinalankara Press, 1928 Sinhalese translation of Pali Jataka stories.
4. Sinhala Jataka Pot Vahanse, (Colombo: RatnakaraBookshop, 1961 - Sinhalese translation of Pali Jataka stories
5. The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Lives, ed. E.B. Cowell (London: Pali Text Society, 1981), 6 vols., index - English translation of Pali Jataka stories.
6. Pansiyapanas Jataka Pot Vahanse (Bandaragama: H. S. N. Prematilaka, 1987) - Sinhalese summaries of Pali jataka stories

The sequence numbers used for the stories are in the same order as the Jataka Pali and The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Lives (numbers 1 and 5 cited above).

The publishers of this and other volumes, The Buddha Educational Foundation of Taiwan, are making an inestimable contribution of Dhamma. I offer my thanks to the Director of the Board and to all donors as well as to the office staff. They are making an essential contribution that the world badly needs today.

Since its inception The Buddha Educational Foundation has contributed to a marked rise in the reading of the Dhamma. While many kinds of reading material are cheap and widely available, the precious and valuable works on DHAMMA that can instruct the minds of the people are scarce and costly. The Buddha Educational Foundation and its donors have eased the severity of these problems considerably. I wish to thank them all and say, "Much merit to them". May they all be well and happy and live long. May the merit they acquire through this noble Dhammadana cause them to attain the ultimate happiness of Nibbana!

I would also like to thank John Patterson for his talents, skills and insights to create the marvellous illustrations. I wish him the greatest of success in the future.

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May all beings be well and happy!

Kurunegoda Piyatissa

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From the Storyteller to the Reader

When you read or listen to these very old stories, if you wonder how much is really true, the Buddha gave some advice that might help. He said that when you listen to what a monk says you should test the meaning, weigh or consider it, and depend on your own insides to know the truth of it. Then follow and practice what you know to be true.

**Let us praise
the Exalted, Worthy, Fully Self-Enlightened One
and follow the Truth.**

Tale 51 — King Goodness the Great

[Perseverance]

Once upon a time, in Benares in northern India, the Enlightenment Being was born into the royal family. When he became king he was called Goodness the Great. He had earned this title by trying to do good all the time, even when the results might not benefit him. For example, he spent much of the royal treasury on the building and running of six houses of charity. In these houses good and aid were given freely to all the poor and needy who came along, even to unknown travellers. Soon king Goodness the Great became famous for his patience, loving-kindness and compassion. It was said that he loved all beings just like a father loves his young children.

Of course king Goodness observed the holy days by not eating. And naturally he practiced the ‘Five Training Steps’, giving up the five unwholesome actions. These are: destroying life, taking what is not given, doing wrong in sexual ways, speaking falsely, and losing one’s mind from alcohol. So his gentle kindness became more and more pure.

Since he wished to harm no one, King Goodness the Great even refused to imprison or injure wrongdoers. Knowing this, one of his highest ministers tried to take advantage of him. He cooked up a scheme to cheat some of the women in the royal harem. Afterwards it became known by all and was reported to the king.

He called the bad minister before him and said, “I have investigated and found that you have done a criminal act. Word of it has spread and you have dishonoured yourself here in Benares. So it would be better for you to go and live somewhere else. You may take all your wealth and your family. Go wherever you like and live happily there. Learn from this lesson.”

Then the minister took his family and all his belongings to the city of Kosala. Since he was very clever indeed, he worked his way up and became a minister of the king. In time he became the most trusted adviser to the King of Kosala. One day he said, “My lord, I came here from Benares. The city of Benares is like a beehive where the bees have no stingers! The ruling king is very tender and weak. With only a very small army you can easily conquer the city and make it yours.”

The king doubted this, so he said, “You are my minister, but you talk like a spy who is leading me into a trap!” He replied “No m’lord. If you don’t

believe me, send your best spies to examine what I say. I am not lying. When robbers are brought to the King of Benders, he gives them money, advises them not to take what is not given, and then lets them go free.”

The king decided to find out if this was true. So he sent some robbers to raid a remote border village belonging to Benares. The villagers caught the looters and brought them to King Goodness the Great. He asked them, “Why do you want to do this type of crime?”

The robbers answered, “Your worship, we are poor people. There is no way to live without money. As your kingdom has plenty of workers, there is no work for us to do. So we had to loot the country in order to survive.” Hearing this, the king gave them gifts of money, advised them to change their ways, and let them go free.

When the King of Kosala was told of this, he sent another gang of bandits to the streets of Benares itself. They too looted the shops and even killed some of the people. When they were captured and brought to king Goodness, he treated them just the same as the first robbers.

Learning of this, the King of Kosala began marching his troops and elephants towards Benares.

In those days the King of Benders had a mighty army which included very brave elephants. There were many ordinary soldiers, and also some that were as big as giants. It was known that they were capable of conquering all India.

The giant soldiers told King Goodness about the small invading army from Kosala. They asked permission to attack and kill them all.

But King Goodness the Great would not send them into battle. He said, “My children, do not fight just so I may remain king. If we destroy the lives of others we also destroy our own peace of mind. Why should we kill others? Let them have the kingdom if they want it so badly. I do not wish to fight.”

The royal ministers said, “Our Lord, we will fight them ourselves. Don’t worry yourself. Only give us the order.” But again he prevented them.

Meanwhile the King of Kosala sent him a warning, telling him to give up the kingdom or fight. King Goodness the Great sent this reply: “I do not want you to fight with me, and you do not want me to fight with you. If you

want the country, you can have it. Why should we kill people just to decide the name of the king? What does it matter even the name of the country itself?”

Hearing this, the ministers came forward and pleaded, “Our Lord, let us go out with our mighty army. We will beat them with our weapons and capture them all. We are much stronger than they are. We would not have to kill any of them. And besides, if we surrender the city, the enemy army would surely kill us all!”

But King Goodness would not be moved. He refused to cause harm to anyone. He replied, “Even if you do not wish to kill, by fighting many will be injured. By accident some may die. No one knows the future — whether our attackers will kill us or not. But we do know whether our present actions are right or wrong. Therefore I will not harm, or cause others to harm, any living being!”

Then King Goodness ordered the city gates be opened up for the invaders. He took his ministers to the top floor of the palace and advised them, “Say nothing and try to remain calm.”

The King of Kosala entered the city of Benares and saw that no one was against him. So he and his soldiers entered and went up to the top floor. They capture the innocent King Goodness the Great. The soldiers tied the hands of the defeated king and all of his ministers.

Then they were taken to the cemetery outside the city. They were buried up to their necks, standing straight up, with only their heads above ground. But even while the dirt was being trampled down around his neck, the Great Being remained without anger in his mind and said nothing.

Their discipline and obedience to King Goodness were so great that not a single minister spoke a word against anyone. But the King of Kosala had no mercy. He said roughly, “Come night time, let the jackals do as they please!”

And so it came to pass that, at midnight, a large band of jackals wandered into the cemetery. They could smell a feast of human flesh waiting for them.

Seeing them coming, King Goodness and his ministers shouted all at once and scared the jackals away. Twice more this happened. Then the clever jackals realised, “These men must have been put here for us to kill and eat.”

No longer afraid, they ignored the shouts. The jackal king walked right up to the face of King Goodness.

The king offered his throat to the beast. But before he could bite into him, the king grabbed the jackal's chin with his teeth. No harming him, King Goodness gripped him tightly so the jackal king howled in fear. This frightened his followers and they all ran away.

Meanwhile the jackal king thrashed back and forth, trying madly to free himself from the might jaws of the human king. In so doing, he loosened the dirt packed around the king's neck and shoulders. Then King Goodness released the screaming jackal. He was able to wiggle himself free from the loosened earth and pull himself up onto the ground. Then he freed all his frightened ministers.

Nearby there was a dead body. It just so happened that it was lying on the border of the territories claimed by two rival demons. They were arguing over the division of the body, insulting each other in ways that only demons can.

Then one demon said to the other, "Why should we continue quarrelling instead of eating? Right over there is King Goodness the Great of Benares. He is famous in all worlds for his righteousness. He will divide the dead body for us.

They dragged the body to the king and asked him to divide it between them fairly. He said, "My friends, I would be glad to divide this for you. But I am filthy and dirty. I must clean myself first."

The two demons used their magic powers to bring scented water, perfume, clothing, ornaments and flowers from the king's own palace in Benares. He bathed, perfumed himself, dressed, and covered himself with ornaments and flower garlands.

The demons asked King Goodness if there was anything else they could do. He replied that he was hungry. So, again by their magic powers, the demons brought the most delicious flavoured rice in a golden bowl and perfumed drinking water in a golden cup — also from the royal palace in Benders.

When he was satisfied, king Goodness asked them to bring him the sword of state from the pillow of the King of Kosala, who was sleeping in the palace in Benares. With magic that too was easily done. Then the king used

the sword to cut the dead boy into two halves, right down the spine. He washed the sword of state and strapped it to his side.

The hungry demons happily gobbled up the fairly divided dead body. Then they gratefully said to King Goodness, “Now that our bellies are full, is there anything else we can do to please you?”

He replied, “By your magic, set me in my own bedroom in the palace next to the King of Koala. In addition, put all these my ministers back in their homes.” Without a word, the demons did exactly as the king had asked.

At that moment the King of Koala was fast asleep in the royal bedchamber. King Goodness the Great gently touched the belly of the sleeping king with the sword of state. The king awoke in great surprise. In the dim lamplight he was frightened to see King Goodness leaning over him with sword in hand. He had to rub his eyes to make sure he was not having a nightmare!”

Then he asked the great king, “My lord how did you come here in spite of all my guards? You were buried up to your neck in the cemetery — how is it you are spotlessly clean, sweet smelling, dressed in your own royal robes, and decorated with fine jewellery and the loveliest flowers?”

King Goodness told him the story of his escape from the band of jackals. He told of the two demons that came to him to settle their quarrel. And he told how they gratefully helped him with their magic powers.

On hearing this, the king of Kasala was overcome by his own shame. He bowed his head to King Goodness the Great and cried, “Oh great king, the stupid ferocious demons, who live by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of dead bodies — they recognised your supreme goodness. But I, who was lucky enough to be born as an intelligent and civilised human being — I have been too foolish to see how wonderful your pure goodness is.

“I promise never again to plot against you, my lord — you who have gained such perfect harmlessness. And I promise to serve you forever as the truest of friends. Please forgive me, great king.” Then, as if he were a servant, the King of Kosala laid King Goodness the Great down on the royal bed, while he himself lay on a small couch.

The next day the King of Kosala called all his soldiers into the palace courtyard. There he publicly praised the king of Benares and asked his forgiveness once again. He gave back the kingdom and promised that he

would always protect King Goodness. Then he punished his adviser, the criminal minister, and returned to Kosala with all his troops and elephants.

King Goodness the Great was sitting majestically on his golden throne, with its legs like those of a gazelle. He was shaded from the sun by the pure white royal umbrella. He taught his loyal subjects saying, “People of Benares wholesomeness begins with giving up the five unwholesome actions once and for all. The highest qualities of the good person, whether ruler or subject, are loving-kindness and compassion. Filled with these qualities, one cannot harm another — no matter what the reason or the cost. No matter how dangerous the threat, one must persevere until the greatness of the good heart wins in the end.”

Throughout the rest of his reign, the people of Benares lived peacefully and happily. King Goodness the Great continued performing wholesome works. Eventually he died and was reborn as he deserved.

The moral is: Refusing to harm others, the good heart wins over all.

Tale 52, 539 — King Fruitful and Queen Sivali

Chapter 1. Rebirth of the Bodhisatta

Once upon a time in the city of Mathila, there was a king who had two sons. The older one was named Badfruit, and his younger brother was called Poorfruit.

While they were still fairly young, the king made his older son the crown prince. He was second in command and next in line to the throne. Prince Poorfruit became commander of the army.

Eventually the old king died and Prince Badfruit became the new king. Then his brother became crown prince.

Before long, a certain servant took a disliking to Crown Prince Poorfruit. He went to King Badfruit and told a lie — that his brother was planning to kill him. At first the king did not believe him. But after the servant kept repeating the lie, the king became frightened. So he had Prince Poorfruit put in chains and locked up in the palace dungeon.

The prince thought, “I am a righteous man who does not deserve these chains. I never wanted to kill my brother. I wasn’t even angry at him. So now I call on the power of Truth. If what I say is true, may these chains fall off and the dungeon doors be opened!” Miraculously the chains broke in pieces, the door opened, and the prince fled to an outlying village. The people there recognised him. Since they respected him they helped him, and the king was unable to capture him.

Even though he lived in hiding, the crown prince became the master of the entire remote region. In time he raised a large army. He thought, “Although I was not an enemy to my brother at first, I must be an enemy to him now.” So he took his army and surrounded the city of Mithila.

He sent a message to king Badfruit — “I was not your enemy, but you have made me so. Therefore I have come to wage war against you. I give you a choice — either give me your crown and kingdom, or come out and fight.” Hearing of this, most of the city people went out and joined the prince.

King Badfruit decided to wage war. He would do anything to keep his power. Before going out with his army, he went to say goodbye to his number one queen. She was expecting a baby very soon. He said to her “My love, no one knows who will win this war. Therefore, if I die you must

protect the child inside you.” Then he bravely went off to war and was quickly killed by the soldiers of his enemy brother.

The news of the king’s death spread through the city. The queen disguised herself as a poor dirty homeless person. She put on old rags for clothes and smeared dirt on herself. She put some of the king’s gold and her own most precious jewellery into a basket. She covered these with dirty rice that no one would want to steal. Then she left the city by the northern gate. Since she had always lived inside the city, the queen had no idea where to go from there. She had heard of a city called Campa. She sat down at the side of the road and began asking if anyone was going to Campa.

It just so happened that the one who was about to be born was no ordinary baby. This was not his first life or his first birth. Millions of years before, he had been a follower of a long-forgotten teaching “Buddha” — a fully “Enlightened One”. He had wished with all his heart to become a Buddha just like his beloved master.

He was reborn in many lives — sometimes as poor animals, sometimes as long-living gods and sometimes as human beings. He always tried to learn from his mistakes and develop the “Ten Perfections”. This was so he could purify his mind and remove the three root causes of unwholesomeness — the poisons of craving, anger and the delusion of a separate self. By using the perfections, he would some day be able to replace the poisons with the three purities — non-attachment, loving-kindness and wisdom.

This “Great Being” had been a humble follower of the forgotten Buddha. His goal was to gain the same enlightenment of a Buddha — the experience of complete Truth. So people call him “Bodhisatta”, which means “Enlightenment Being”. No one really knows about the millions of lives lived by this great hero. But many stories have been told — including this one about a pregnant queen who was about to give birth to him. After many more rebirths, he became the Buddha who is remembered and loved in all the world today.

At the time of our story, the Enlightenment Being had already achieved the Ten Perfections. So the glory of his coming birth caused a trembling in all the heaven worlds, including the Heaven of 33 ruled by King Sakka. When he felt the trembling, being a god he knows it was caused by the unborn babe inside the disguised Queen of Mithila. And he knew this must be a being of great merit, so he decided to go and help out.

King Sakka made a covered carriage with a bed in it, and appeared at the roadside in front of the pregnant queen. He looked just like an ordinary old man. He called out, "Does anyone need a ride to Campa?" The homeless queen answered, "I wish to go there, kind sir." "Come with me then,": the old man said.

Since the birth was not far off, the pregnant queen was quite large. She said, "I cannot climb up into your carriage. Simply carry my basket and I will walk behind." The old man, the king of the gods, replied, "Never mind! Never Mind! I am the cleverest driver around. So don't worry. Just step into my cart!"

Lo and behold, as she lifted her foot, King Sakka magically caused the ground under her to rise up! So she easily stepped down into the carriage. Immediately she knew this must be a god, and fell fast asleep.

Sakka drove the cart until he came to a river. Then he awakened the lady and said, "Wake up, daughter, and bathe in this river. Dress yourself in this fine clothing I have brought you. Then eat a packet of rice." She obeyed him, and then lay down and slept some more.

In the evening she awoke and saw tall houses and walls. She asked, "What is this city, father?" He said, "This is Campa." King Sakka replied, "I took a short cut. Now that we are at the southern gate of the city, you may safely enter in. I must go on to my own far-off village." So they parted and Sakka disappeared in the distance, returning to his heaven world.

The queen entered the city and sat down at an inn. There happened to be a wise man living in Campa. He recited spells and gave advice to help people who were sick or unfortunate. While on his way to bathe in the river with 500 followers, he was the beautiful queen from a distance. The great goodness of the unborn one within gave her a soft warm glow, which only the wise man noticed. At once he felt a kind and gentle liking for her, just as if where were his own youngest sister. So he left his followers outside and went into the inn.

He asked her, "Sister, what village are you from?" She replied, "I am the number one queen of King Badfruit of Mithila."

He asked, "Then why did you come here?" "My husband was killed by the army of his brother, Prince Poorfruit," she said. "I was afraid, so I ran away to protect the unborn one within me." The wise man asked, "Do you have

any relatives in this city?" She said, "No sir." Then he said, "Don't worry at all. I was born in a rich family and I myself am rich. I will care for you just as I would for my own young sister. Now you must call me brother and grab hold of my feet and cry out."

When she did this, the followers came inside. The wise man explained to them that she was his long lost youngest sister. He told his closest followers to take her to his home in a covered cart. He told them to tell his wife that this was his sister, who was to be cared for.

They did exactly as he had said. The wife welcomed her, gave her a hot bath, and made her rest in bed.

After bathing in the river the wise man returned home. At dinnertime he asked his sister to join them. After dinner he invited her to stay in his home.

In only a few days the queen gave birth to a wonderful little baby boy. She named him fruitful. She told the wise man this was the name of the boy's grandfather, who had one been King of Mithila.

Chapter 2. Gaining Power

The baby grew into a little boy. His friends took to making fun of him for not being of high-class birth like they were. So he went and asked his mother who his father was. She told him to pay no attention to what the other children said. She told him his father was the dead King Badfruit of Mithila, and how his brother, Prince Poorfruit, had stolen the throne. After that, it didn't bother him when the others called him "son of a widow."

Before he was 16, the bright young Fruitful learned all there was to know about religion, literature and the skills of a warrior. He grew into a very handsome young man.

He decided it was time to regain his rightful crown, which had been stolen by his uncle. So he went and asked his mother, "Do you have any of the wealth that belonged to my father?" She said, "Of course! I did not escape empty-handed. Thinking of you, I brought pearls, jewels and diamonds. So there is n need for you to work for pay. Go directly and take back your kingdom."

But he said, "No mother, I will take only half. I will sail to Burma, the land of gold, and make my fortune there." His mother said, "No my son, it is too dangerous to sail abroad. There is plenty of fortune here!" He said, "I must leave half with you, my mother, so you can live in comfort as a queen should." So saying, he departed by ship for Burma.

On the same day that Prince Fruitful set sail, his Uncle King Poorfruit became very ill. He was so sick that he could no longer leave his bed.

Meanwhile, on the ship bound for Burma there were some 350 people. It sailed for seven days. Then there was a violent storm that damaged and weakened the ship. All except the prince cried out in fear and prayed for help to their various gods. But the Bodhisatta did not cry out in fear; the Enlightenment Being did not pray to any god for help. Instead he helped himself.

He filled his belly with concentrated butter mixed with sugar, since he didn't know how long it would be before his next meal. He soaked his clothes in oil to protect himself from the cold ocean water and help him stay afloat. Then when the ship began to sink, he went and held on to the mast, for it was the tallest part of the ship. As the deck sank underwater, he pulled himself up the mast.

Meanwhile his trembling praying shipmates were sucked underwater and gobbled up by hungry fish and huge turtles. Soon the water all around turned red from blood.

As the ship sank, Prince Fruitful reached the top of the mast. To avoid being devoured in the sea of blood, he jumped mightily from the tip of the mast — in the direction of the kingdom of Mithila. And at the same time as he saved himself from the snapping jaws of the fish and turtles, King Poorfruit died in his bed.

After his mighty leap from the top of the mast, the prince fell into the emerald-coloured sea. His body shined like gold as he swam for seven days and seven nights. Then he saw it was the fasting day of the full moon. So he purified his mouth by washing it out with salt water and observed the “Eight Training Steps”.

Once upon a time in the very distant past, the gods of the four directions had appointed a goddess to be the protector of the oceans. They had told her that her duty was to protect especially all those who honour and respect their mothers and other elders. All such, who did not deserve to fall into the sea, were to be protected by her.

It just so happened that Prince Fruitful was one who deserved the protection of the ocean goddess. But for the seven days and seven nights that he had been swimming through the sea, the goddess had not been paying attention and doing her duty! She had been too busy enjoying heavenly pleasures to remember to keep watch on the oceans.

Finally she remembered her duty and looked over the oceans. Then she was the golden prince struggling in the emerald sea after seven days and seven nights of swimming. She thought, “If I let this Prince Fruitful die in the ocean, I will no longer be welcome in the company of the gods. For truly, he is the Enlightenment Being!”

So she took on a form of splendour and beauty, and floated in the air near him. Wishing to learn Truth from him, she asked, “Without seeing the shore of the ocean, why are you trying to reach the ocean’s end?”

Hearing those words the prince thought, “For the seven days I’ve been swimming, I have met no one who can this be?” When he saw the goddess above him he said, “Oh lovely goddess, I know that effort is the way of the

world. So as long as I am in this world, I will try and try, even in mid-ocean with no shore to be seen.”

Wishing to learn more from him, she tested him by saying, “This vast ocean stretches much farther than you can see, without reaching a shore. Your effort is useless — for here you must die!”

The prince replied “Dear goddess, how can effort be useless? For he who never gives up trying cannot be blamed, either by his relatives here below or by the gods above. So he has no regrets. No matter how impossible it seems, if he stops trying he causes his own downfall!”

Pleased with his answers, the protecting goddess tested him one last time. She asked, “Why do you continue, when there really is no reward to be gained except pain and death?”

He answered her again, like a teacher to a pupil, “It is the way of the world that people make plans and try to reach their goals. The plans may succeed or fail — only time will tell — but the value is in the effort itself in the present moment.

“And besides, oh goddess, can’t you see that my actions have already brought results? My shipmates only prayed and they are dead! But I have been swimming for seven days and seven nights — and lo and behold

here you are, floating above me! So I will swim with all my might, even across the whole ocean, to reach the shore. While I have an ounce of strength I’ll try and try again.”

Completely satisfied, the ocean goddess who protects the good said, “You who bravely fight the mighty ocean against hopeless odds, you who refuse to run from the task before you, go wherever your heart desires! For you have my protection and no one can stop you. Just tell me where I may carry you to.”

The prince told her he wished to go to Mithila. The goddess gently lifted him like a bouquet of flowers and laid him on her chest, Like a loving mother with a newborn babe. Then she flew through the air, while the Enlightenment Being slept, cradled against her heavenly body.

Arriving at Mithila, she laid him on a sacred stone in a garden of mangoes, and told the garden goddesses to watch over him. Then the protector goddess of the oceans returned to her heaven world home.

The dead King Poorfruit had left behind only a daughter, no sons. She was well educated and wise, and her name was Princess Sivali.

When the king was dying, the ministers asked him, “Who will be the next king?” King Poorfruit said, “Whoever can satisfy my daughter Sivali; whoever recognises the head of the royal square bed; whoever can string the bow that only a thousand men can string; or whoever can find the 16 hidden treasures.”

After the funeral of the king, the ministers began searching for a new king. First they looked for one who could satisfy the princess. They called for the General of the Army.

Princess Sivali wished to test him, so Mithila could be ruled by a strong leader. She told him to come to her. Immediately he ran up the royal staircase. She said, “To prove your strength, run back and forth in the palace.” Thinking only of pleasing her, the general ran back and forth until she motioned for him to stop. Then she said, “Now jump up and down.” Again the general did as he was told without thinking. Finally the princess told him, “Come here and massage my feet.” He sat in front of her and began rubbing her feet.

Suddenly she put her foot against his chest and kicked him down the royal staircase. She turned to her ladies in waiting and said, “This fool has no common sense. He thinks the only strength is in running around and jumping up and down and following orders without thinking. He has no strength of character. He lacks the will power needed to rule a kingdom. So throw him out of here at once!”

Later the general was asked about his meeting with Princess Sivali. He said, “I don’t want to talk about it. She is not human!”

The same thing happened with the treasurer, the cashier, the keeper of the royal seal and the royal swordsman. The princess found them all to be unworthy fools.

So the ministers decided to give up on the princess and find someone who could string the bow that only a thousand men can string. But again they could find no one. Similarly, they could find no one who knew the head of the royal square bed, or who could find the 16 treasures.

The ministers became more and more worried that they could not find a suitable king. So they consulted the royal family priest. He said to them,

“Calm down, my friends. We will send out the royal festival carriage. The one it stops for will be able to rule over all India.”

So they decorated the carriage and yoked the four most beautiful royal horses to it. The high priest sprinkled the carriage with holy water from a sacred golden pitcher. He proclaimed, “Now go forth, riderless carriage, and find the worthy one with enough merit to rule the kingdom.”

The horses pulled the carriage around the palace and then down the main avenue of Mithila. They were followed by the four armies — the elephants, chariots, cavalry and foot soldiers.

The most powerful politicians of the city expected the procession to stop in front of their houses. But instead it left the city by the eastern gate and went straight to the mango garden. Then it stopped in front of the sacred stone where Prince Fruitful was sleeping.

The chief priest said, “Let us test this sleeping man to see if he is worthy to be king. If he is the one, he will not be frightened by the noise of the drums and instruments of all four armies.” So they made a great clanging noise, but the prince just turned over on his other side, remaining asleep. Then they made the noise again, even louder. Again the prince simply rolled over from side to side.

The head priest examined the soles of the feet of the sleeping one. He said, “This man can rule not only Mithila, but the whole world in all four directions.” So he awakened the prince and said, “My lord, arise, we beg you to be our king.”

Prince Fruitful replied, “What happened to your king?” “He died,” said the priest. “Did he have any children?” asked the prince. “Only a daughter, Princess Sivali,” answered the priest. Then Prince Fruitful agreed to be the new king.

The chief priest spread jewels on the sacred stone. After bathing, the prince sat among the jewels. He was sprinkled with perfumed water from the gold anointing bowl. Then he was crowned King Fruitful. The new king rode in the royal chariot, followed by a magnificent procession, back to the city of Mithila and the palace.

Princess Sivali still wished to test the king. So she sent a man to tell him she wished him to come at once. But King Fruitful ignored him, simply continuing to inspect the palace with its furnishings and works of art.

The messenger told this to the princess and she sent him back two more times with the same results. He reported back to her, “This is a man who knows his own mind, not easily swayed. He paid as little attention to your words as we pay to the grass when we step on it!”

Soon the king arrived at the throne room, where the princess was waiting. He walked steadily up the royal staircase — not hurrying, not slowing down, but dignified like a strong young lion. The princess was so impressed by his attitude that she went to him, respectfully gave him her hand, and led him to the throne. He gracefully sat on the throne.

Then he asked the royal ministers, “Did the previous king leave behind any advice for testing the next king?” “Yes lord,” they said, “Whoever can satisfy my daughter Sivali.” The king responded, “You have seen the princess give me her hand. Was there another test?”

They said, “Whoever recognises the head of the royal square bed.” The king took a golden hairpin from his head and gave it to Princess Sivali, saying, “Put this away for me.” Without thinking, she put it on the head of the bed. As if he had not heard it the first time, King Fruitful asked the ministers to repeat the question. When they did, he pointed to the golden hairpin.

“Was there another test?” asked the king. “Yes lord,” replied the ministers, “Whoever can string the bow that only a thousand men can string.” When they brought the bow, the king strung it without even rising from the throne. He did it as easily as a woman bends the rod that untangles cotton for spinning.

“Are there any more tests?” the king asked. The ministers said, “Whoever can find the 16 hidden treasures.” These are the last tests.”

“What is the first on the list?” he asked. They said, “The first is the treasure of the rising sun.” King Fruitful realised that there must be some trick to finding each treasure. He knew that a Silent Buddha is often compared to the glory of the sun. So he asked, “Where did the king go to meet and feed Silent Buddhas?” When they showed him the place, he had them dig up the first treasure.

The second was the treasure of the setting sun. King Fruitful realised this must be where the old king had said good-bye to Silent Buddhas. In the same manner he found all the hidden treasures.

The people were happy that he had passed all the tests. As his first official act, he had houses of charity built in the center of the city and at each of the four gates. He donated the entire 16 treasures to be given to the poor and needy.

Then he sent for his mother, queen of the dead King Badfruit, and also for the kind wise man of Campa. He gave them both the honour they deserved.

All the people of the kingdom came to Mithila to celebrate the restoration of the royal line. They decorated the city with fragrant flower garlands and incense. They provided cushioned seats for visitors. There were fruits, sweets, drinks and cooked foods everywhere. The ministers and the wealthy brought musicians and dancing girls to entertain the king. There were beautiful poems recited by wise men, and blessings chanted by holy men.

The Enlightenment Being, King Fruitful, sat on the throne under the royal white umbrella. In the midst of the great celebration he seemed as majestic as the heavenly god, King Sakka. He remembered his great effort struggling in the ocean against all odds, when even the ocean goddess had abandoned him. Only because of that almost hopeless effort, he himself was now as magnificent as a god. This filled him with such joy that he spoke this rhyme

“Things happen unexpectedly, and prayers may not come true: But effort brings results that neither thoughts nor prayers can do.”

After the wonderful celebration, King Fruitful ruled in Mithila with perfect righteousness. And he humbly gave honour and almsfood to Silent Buddhas — enlightened ones living in a time when their teachings could not be understood.

In the fullness of time Queen Sivali gave birth to a son. Because the wise men of the court saw signs of a long and glorious life ahead of him, he was named Prince Longlife. When he grew up, the king made him second in command.

Chapter 3. Giving Up Power

This story happened very long ago, at a time when people lived much longer lives, even 10,000 years! After King Fruitful had ruled for about 7,000 years, it just so happened that the royal gardener brought him an especially wonderful collection of fruits and flowers. He liked them so much that he wanted to see the garden. So the gardener arranged and decorated the garden, and invited him to visit.

The king set out on a royal elephant, followed by the entire court and many of the ordinary people of Mithila. When he entered through the garden gate he saw two beautiful mango trees. One was full of perfectly ripe mangoes, while the other was completely without fruit. He took one of the fruits and enjoyed its delicious sweet taste. He decided to eat more of them on his return trip.

When the people saw that the king had eaten the first fruit, they knew it was all right for them to eat. In no time at all the mangoes had been eaten. When the fruits were gone, some even broke the twigs and stripped the leaves looking for more.

When King Fruitful returned he saw that the tree was stripped bare and nearly destroyed. At the same time the fruitless tree remained as beautiful as before, its bright green leaves shining in the sunlight.

The king asked his ministers, “What has happened here?” They explained, “Since your majesty ate the first fruit, the people felt free to devour the rest. Searching for more fruits they even destroyed the leaves and twigs. The fruitless tree was spared and remains beautiful, since it has no fruit.”

This saddened the king. He thought, “This fruitful tree was destroyed, but the fruitless one was spared. My kingship is like the fruitful tree — the more the power and possessions, the greater the fear of losing them. The holy life of a simple monk is like the fruitless tree — giving up power and possessions leads to freedom from fear.”

So the Great Being decided to give up his wealth and power, to leave the glory of kingship behind, to abandon the constant task of protecting his position. Instead he decided to put all his effort into living the pure life of a simple monk. Only then could he discover lasting deep happiness, which would spread to others as well.

He returned to the city. Standing next to the palace gate, he called for the commander of the army. He said, “From now on, no one is to see my face except a servant bringing food and a servant bringing water and toothbrush. You and the ministers will rule according to the old law. I will live as a simple monk on the top floor of the palace.”

After he had lived for a while in this way, the people began to wonder about the change in him. One day a crowd gathered in the palace courtyard. They said, “Our king is not as he was before. He no longer wants to see dancing or listen to singing or watch bull fights and elephant fights or go to his pleasure garden and see the swans on the ponds. Why does he not speak to us?” They asked the servants who brought the king his food and water, “Does he tell you anything?”

They said, “He is trying to keep his mind from thinking about desirable things, so it will be peaceful and wholesome like the minds of his old friends, the Silent Buddhas. He is trying to develop the purity of the ones who own nothing but good qualities. Once we even heard him say out loud, “I can think only of the Silent Buddhas, free from chasing ordinary pleasures. Their freedom makes them truly happy — who will take me to where they live?”

King Fruitful had been living on the top floor of the palace trying to be a simple monk for only about four months. At that point he realised there were too many distractions in the beautiful kingdom of Mithila. He saw them as only an outer show keeping him from finding inner peace and Truth. So he decided, once and for all, to give up everything and become a forest monk and go live in the Himalaya Mountains.

He had the yellow robes and begging bowl of a monk brought to him. He ordered the royal barber to shave his head and beard. Then early the next morning, he began walking down the royal staircase.

Meanwhile Queen Sivali had heard about his plans. She gathered together the 700 most beautiful queens of the royal harem and took them up the staircase. They passed King Fruitful coming down, but didn't recognise him dressed as a monk. When they got to the top floor, Queen Sivali found it empty, with only the king's shaven hair and beard still there. Instantly she realised the unknown monk must be her husband.

All 701 queens ran down the stairs to the palace courtyard. There they followed the king-turned-monk. As Queen Sivali had instructed them, they

all let down their hair and tried to entice the king to stay. They cried and cried, pleading with him, “Why are you doing this?” Then all the people of the city became very upset and began following him. They were weeping as they cried out, “We have heard that our king has become a simple monk. How can we ever find such a good and fair ruler again?”

The 700 harem queens, wearing all their lovely veils and rich jewellery, crying and begging, did not change the mind of the Enlightenment Being. For he had made his decision and was determined to stick to it. He had given up the gold anointing bowl of state, which had passed the power of the royal family to him. Instead he now carried only the plain clay-begging bowl of a humble monk, a seeker of Truth.

Finally Queen Sivali stopped crying. She saw that the beautiful queens from the harem had not stopped her husband. So she went to the commander of the army. She told him to set a fire among the slum houses and abandoned buildings that were in the king’s path. She told him to set fires of brush and wet leaves in different areas of the city, to make a lot of smoke.

When this was done she fell to the ground at the king’s feet and cried, “All Mithila is burning, my lord! The beautiful buildings with their valuable art works, precious metals and jewels, and treasures are all being destroyed. Return, oh king, and save your riches before it is too late.”

But the Enlightenment Being replied, “All these things belong to others. I own nothing. So I’m not afraid of losing anything. And losing things can’t make me sad. My mind is at peace.”

Then he left the city through the northern gate, still followed by all 701 queens. According to Queen Sivali’s instructions, they showed him villages being robbed and destroyed. There were armed men attacking, while others seemed wounded and dead. But what looked like blood was really just red dye, and the dead were only pretending. The king knew it was a trick, since there were no actual robbers and plunderers in the kingdom in the first place.

After walking still farther, the king stopped and asked his ministers, “Whose kingdom is this?” “Yours, oh lord,” they said. “Then punish any who cross this line,” he ordered, as he drew a line across the road. No one, including Queen Sivali, dared to cross the line. But when she saw the king continuing on down the road, with his back to her, she was grief-stricken. Beating her breast she fell across the line. Once the line was crossed, the whole crowd lost its fear and followed her.

Queen Sivali kept the army with her as the entire crowd kept following King Fruitful. He continued for many miles, heading for the Himalayas in the north.

Meanwhile, there was a very advanced monk named Narada, who lived in a golden cave in the Himalayas. He was a very wise man. By great mental effort he had gained supernatural powers that only the highest holy men are said to have. After meditating in a wonderful trance for a full week he suddenly shouted, “What happiness! Oh what happiness!”

Then, using his special powers, he looked out over all India to see if there was anyone who was sincerely seeking that same happiness, free of all the distractions of the world. He saw only King Fruitful, the Bodhisatta who would some day become the Buddha. He saw that he had given up all his earthly power. And yet he was still blocked, still hindered by the obstacle of the crowd following him from his previous worldly life. In order to help and encourage him, he magically flew through the air and floated in front of the king.

He asked King Fruitful, “Oh monk, why is this crowd with all its noise following you?” The king replied, “I have given up the power of kingship and left the world for good. This is why my former subjects follow me, even though I leave them happily.”

The holy monk said, “Don’t be too confident, oh monk. You haven’t succeeded in leaving the world quite yet. For there are still obstacles inside of you. These are the “Five Hindrances” — the desire for ordinary pleasures of sight, sound and so forth; the desire to harm others; laziness; nervous worrying; and unreasonable doubts. Therefore, practice the Perfections, be patient, and don’t think either too much or too little of yourself.”

He finished by saying, “I give you my blessing — may goodness, knowledge and Truth protect you on your way.” Then he disappeared and reappeared back in his golden cave.

Due to this wise advice, King Fruitful became even less concerned with the crowd outside, realising that the greatest obstacles, or hindrances, are the ones inside.

Meanwhile Queen Sivali fell at his feet once again. She pleaded, “Oh king, hear the wails of your subjects. Before leaving them for good, comfort them by crowning your son to rule in your place.”

He replied, "I have already left my subjects, friends, relatives and my country behind. Have no fear, the nobles of Mithila have trained Prince Longlife well, and they will protect and support you both."

She continued, "Oh king, by becoming a monk you are leaving me without a husband. What a shame! What am I to do?"

He said, "Only be careful to teach the prince no unwholesome thoughts, words or deeds. Otherwise you would bring painful results to yourself."

As the sun set, the queen made camp while the king went into the forest to sleep at the foot of a tree. The next day she continued to follow him, bringing the army with her. They approached a small city.

It just so happened that a man in the city had bought a fine piece of meat from a butcher. After cooking it he placed it on a table to cool, when a stray dog grabbed it and ran off. The man followed the dog as far as the southern gate of the city. There he gave up because he was too tired to continue.

The escaping dog crossed the path of King Fruitful and Queen Sivali. Frightened by them, he dropped the meat on the road. The king saw that it was a good piece of meat and that the real owner was unknown. So he cleaned the meat, put it in his begging bowl, and ate it.

Queen Sivali, who was used to eating the delicacies of the palace, was disgusted. She said to him, "Even at the point of death a high class person would not eat the leavings of a dog! Eating such disgusting food shows you are completely unworthy!" But he replied, "It is your own vanity that keeps you from seeing the value of this meat. If rightfully obtained, all food is pure and wholesome!"

As they continued to approach the city, King Fruitful thought, "Queen Sivali keeps following me. This is a bad thing for a monk. People say, 'He has given up his kingdom, but he can't get rid of his wife!' I must find a way to teach her she must go."

Just then they came upon some playing children. Among them was a girl with one bracelet on one wrist and two on the other. Thinking she was a wise child, the king asked her, "My child, why does your one arm make noise with every movement, while the other does not?"

The little girl replied, "Oh monk, it's because on one arm there are two bracelets, while on the other there is only one. Where there are two, it's the

second that clangs against the first and makes noise. The arm with only one bracelet remains silent. So if you would be happy, you must learn to be contented when alone.”

The Bodhisatta said to the queen, “Do you hear the wisdom of this child? As a monk I would be ashamed to let you stay with me in front of her. So you go your way and I’ll go mine. We are husband and wife no more — good-bye!”

The queen agreed and they took separate paths. But she became grief-stricken again and returned to follow the king. They entered the city together, so he could collect alms food.

They came to the house of an arrow maker. They watched him wet the red-hot arrow, and straighten it while sighting down the shaft with only one eye open. The king asked him, “Friend, to make the arrow perfectly straight, why do you view it with one eye open and the other shut?”

The arrow maker answered, “With both eyes open, the wide view of the second eye is distracting. Only by concentrating my view in one eye can I truly see the straightness of the arrow. So if you would be happy, you must learn to be contented when alone.”

The king collected alms food and then they left the city. He said to the queen, “Did you hear the same wisdom again from that craftsman? As a monk I would be ashamed to let you stay with me in front of him. So you go your way and I’ll go mine. We are husband and wife no more — good-bye!” But still she followed him.

Then the Great Being cut a stalk of tall grass. He said to Queen Sivali, “Just as the two pieces of this stalk of grass cannot be joined again, so I will not join you again in the marriage bed! We two can never be joined together again. Like a full stalk of uncut grass, live on alone, my ex-wife Sivali.”

On hearing this the queen went crazy with shock and grief. She beat herself with both hands until she fell to the ground — completely unconscious. Realising this, the Bodhisatta quickly left the roadway. He erased his footsteps and disappeared into the jungle.

First he had given up the power and wealth of a king. Now he had given up the power and desire of a husband. At last he was free to follow the path of a Truth-seeking wandering monk. He made his way to the Himalayas and in

only one week he was able to develop special mental powers. Never again did he return to the ordinary world.

Meanwhile the royal ministers, who had been following at a distance, reached the fainted queen. They sprinkled water on her and revived her. She asked, "Where is my husband the king?" They said, "We don't know. Don't you know?" In a panic she ordered, "Search for him!" They looked and looked, but of course he was gone.

When Queen Sivali recovered from her fear and grief, she realised she felt no anger, jealousy or vengeance towards the monk Fruitful. Instead she admired him more than at any time since the day they met, when she gave him her hand and led him to the throne.

She had monuments erected to honour the courageous King Fruitful on four sites: where he had spoken with the floating holy man Narada, where he had eaten the good meat left by the dog, where he had questioned the little girl, and also the arrow maker.

Beside the two mango trees in the royal garden, she had Prince Longlife crowned as the new king. Together with the army and crowds of followers, they returned to the city of Mithila.

In spite of herself, Queen Sivali had learned something by following, and finally losing, her husband King Fruitful. She too had tasted freedom!

The wise lady gave up her royal duties. She retired to meditate in the garden by the mango trees. With great effort, she gained a high mental state leading to rebirth in a heaven world.

The moral is: It's easier to gain power than to give it up.

Tale 53 — A Gang of Drunkards

[Sobriety]

Once upon a time, when Brahmadata was king, the Enlightenment Being was born in a wealthy family. He became the richest man in Benares.

There also happened to be a gang of drunkards who roamed the streets. All they ever thought about was finding ways to get alcohol, the drug they thought they couldn't live without.

One day, when they had run out of money as usual, they came up with a scheme to rob the richest man in Benares. But they didn't realise that he was the reborn Bodhisatta, so he wouldn't be so easy to fool!

They decided to make a "Mickey Finn", which is a drink of liquor with a sleeping drug secretly added to it. Their plan was to get the rich man to drink the Mickey Finn. Then when he fell asleep they would rob all his money, jewellery, and even the rich clothes he wore. So they set up a temporary little roadside bar. They put their last remaining liquor into a bottle, and mixed in some strong sleeping pills.

Later the rich man came by on his way to the palace. One of the alcoholics called out to him, "Honourable sir, why not start your day right — by having a drink with us? And the first one is on the house!" Then he poured a glass of the dishonest liquor.

But the Enlightenment Being did not drink any form of alcohol. Nevertheless, he wondered why these drunkards were being so generous with their favourite drug. It just wasn't like them.

He realised it must be some kind of trick. So he decided to teach them a lesson. He said, "It would be an insult to appear before the king in a drunken state, or with even the slightest smell of liquor on my breath. But please be so kind as to wait for me here. I'll see you again when I return from the palace."

The drunkards were disappointed. They would not be able to drink again as soon as they wanted. But they decided to be patient and wait.

Later that day the rich man came back to the little roadside bar. The alcoholics were getting desperate for a drink. They called him over and said,

“Honourable sir, why not celebrate your visit to the king? Have a drink of this fine liquor. Remember, the first one is free!”

But the rich man just kept looking at the liquor bottle and glass. He said, “I don’t trust you. That bottle and glass of liquor are exactly as they were this morning. If it were as good as you say it is, you would have tasted some yourselves by now. In fact, you couldn’t help but drink it all! I’m no fool. You must have added another drug to the alcohol.”

The richest man in Benares went on his way, and the gang of drunkards went back to their plotting and scheming.

The moral is: Keep sober — and keep your common sense.

Tale 54, 85 — The Whatnot Tree

[Prudence]

Once upon a time there was a caravan leader. He went from country to country selling various goods. His caravans usually had at least 500 bullock carts.

On one of these trips his path led through a very thick forest. Before entering it, he called together all the members of the caravan. He warned them, “My friends, when you go through this forest be careful to avoid the poisonous trees, poisonous fruits, poisonous leaves, poisonous flowers and even poisonous honeycombs.

“Therefore, whatever you have not eaten before — whether a fruit, leaf, flower or anything else — must not be eaten without asking me first.” They all said respectfully, “Yes, sir.”

There was a village in the forest. Just outside the village stood a tree called a “whatnot tree”. Its trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits look very similar to a mango tree. Even the colour, shape, smell and taste are almost exactly the same as a mango tree. But unlike a mango, the whatnot fruit is a deadly poison!

Some went ahead of the caravan and came upon the whatnot tree. They were all hungry, and the whatnot fruits looked like delicious ripe mangoes. Some started eating the fruits immediately, without thinking at all. They devoured them before anyone could say a word.

Others remembered the leader’s warning, but they thought this was just a different variety of mango tree. They thought they were lucky to find ripe mangoes right next to a village. So they decided to eat some of the fruits before they were all gone.

There were also some who were wiser than the rest. They decided it would be safer to obey the warning of the caravan leader. Although they didn’t know it, he just happened to be the Enlightenment Being.

When the leader arrived at the tree, the ones who had been careful and not eaten asked, “Sir, what is this tree? Is it safe to eat these fruits?”

After investigating thoughtfully he replied, “No, no. This may look like a mango tree, but it isn’t. It is a poisonous whatnot tree. Don’t even touch it!”

The ones who had already eaten the whatnot fruit were terrified. The caravan leader told them to make themselves vomit as soon as possible. They did this, and then were given four sweet foods to eat — raisins, cane sugar paste, sweet yogurt and bee's honey. In this way their taste buds were refreshed after throwing up the poisonous whatnot fruit.

Unfortunately, the greediest and most foolish ones could not be saved. They were the ones who had started eating the poisonous fruits immediately, without thinking at all. It was too late for them. The poison had already started doing its work, and it killed them.

In the past, when caravans had come to the whatnot tree, the people had eaten its poisonous fruits and died in their sleep during the night. The next morning the local villagers had come to the campsite. They had grabbed the dead bodies by the legs, dragged them to a secret hiding place, and buried them. Then they had taken for themselves all the merchandise and bullock carts of the caravan.

They expected to do the same thing this time. At dawn the next morning the villagers ran towards the whatnot tree. They said to each other, "The bullocks will be mine!" "I want the carts and wagons!" "I will take the loads of merchandise!"

But when they got to the whatnot tree they saw that most of the people in the caravan were alive and well. In surprise, they asked them, "How did you know this was not a mango tree?" They answered, "We did not know, but our leader had warned us ahead of time, and when he saw it he knew."

Then the villagers asked the caravan leader, "Oh wise one, how did you know this was not a mango tree?"

He replied, "I knew it for two reasons. First, this tree is easy to climb. And second, it is right next to a village. If the fruits on such a tree remain unpicked, they cannot be safe to eat!"

Everyone was amazed that such lifesaving wisdom was based on such simple common sense. The caravan continued on its way safely.

The moral is: The wise are led by common sense; fools follow only hunger.

Tale 55 — Prince Five-Weapons and Sticky-Hair

[The Diamond Weapon]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born as the son of the King and Queen of Benares. On the day of his naming, 800 fortune tellers were invited to the palace. As presents, they were given whatever they desired to make them happy for the moment. Then they were asked to tell the fortune of the newborn prince. This was so they could find a good name for him.

One of the fortune tellers was an expert in reading the marks on the body. He said, “My lord, this is a being of great merit. He will be king after you.”

The fortune tellers were very clever. They told the king and queen whatever they wanted to hear. They said, “Your son will be skilled in five weapons. He will become famous as the greatest master of all five weapons throughout India.” Based on this, the king and queen named their son “Prince Five-Weapons”.

When the prince turned 16, the king decided to send him to college. He said, “Go, my son, to the city of Takkasila. There you will find a world famous teacher. Learn all you can from him. Give him this money as payment.” He gave him a thousand gold coins and sent him on his way.

The prince went to the world famous teacher of Takkasila. He studied very hard and became his best pupil. When the teacher had taught him all he knew, he gave the prince a special graduation award. He gave him five weapons. Then he sent him back to Benares.

On his way home he came to a forest which was haunted by a monster. The local people warned Prince Five-Weapons, “Young man, don’t go through the forest. There is a monstrous demon called Sticky-Hair living there. He kills everyone he sees!”

But the prince was self-confident and fearless like a young lion. So he pushed on into the forest, until he came to the dreadful monster. He was as tall as a tree, with a head as big as the roof of a house and eyes as big as dishes. He had two big yellow tusks sticking out of his gaping white mouth filled with ugly brown teeth. He had a huge belly covered with white spots, and his hands and feet were blue.

The monster roared and growled at the prince, “Where are you going in my forest, little man? You look like a tasty morsel to me. I’m going to gobble you up!”

The prince had just graduated from college and had won the highest award from his teacher. So he thought he knew just about everything, and that he could do just about anything. He replied, “Oh fierce demon, I am Prince Five-Weapons, and I have come on purpose to find you. I dare you to attack me! I will kill you easily with my first two weapons — my bow and poison-tipped arrows.”

Then he put a poison arrow in his bow and shot it straight at the monster. But the arrow just stuck fast to his hair, like glue, without hurting him at all. Then the prince shot, one after another, all the rest of his 50 poison-tipped arrows. But they also stuck fast to the hair of the one called Sticky-Hair.

Then the beast shook his body, from ugly rooftop-sized head to blue coloured feet. And all the arrows fell harmlessly to the ground.

Prince Five-Weapons drew his third weapon, a 33-inch-long sword. He plunged it into his enemy. But it just stuck fast in the thick coat of sticky hair. He threw his fourth weapon, his spear, at the monster. But this too just stuck to his hair.

Next he attacked with the last of his five weapons, his club. This also stuck fast onto Sticky-Hair.

Then the prince yelled at him, “Hey you, monster — haven’t you ever heard of me, Prince Five-Weapons? I have more than just my five weapons. I have the strength of my young man’s body. I will break you in pieces!”

He hit Sticky-Hair with his right fist, just like a boxer. But his hand just stuck to the hairy coat, and he couldn’t remove it. He hit him with his left fist, but this too just stuck fast to the gooey mess of hair. He kicked him with his right foot and then his left, just like a martial arts master. But they both stuck onto him like his fists. Finally he butted him as hard as he could with his head, just like a wrestler. But, lo and behold, his head got stuck as well.

Even while sticking to the hairy monster in five places, hanging down from his coat, the prince had no fear.

Sticky-Hair thought, “This is very strange indeed. He is more like a lion than a man. Even while in the grasp of a ferocious monster like me, he does not tremble with fear. In all the time I’ve been killing people in this forest, I’ve never met anyone as great as this prince. Why isn’t he afraid of me?”

Since Prince Five-Weapons was not like ordinary men, Sticky-Hair was afraid to eat him right away. Instead he asked him, “Young man, why aren’t you afraid of death?”

The prince replied, “Why should I be afraid of death? There is no doubt that anyone who is born will definitely die!”

Then the Enlightenment Being thought, “The five weapons given to me by the world famous teacher have been useless. Even the lion-like strength of my young man’s body has been useless. I must go beyond my teacher, beyond my body, to the weapon inside my mind — the only weapon I need.”

The prince continued speaking to Sticky-Hair, “There’s one small detail, oh monstrous one, I haven’t told you about yet. In my belly is my secret weapon, a diamond weapon you cannot digest. It will cut your intestines into pieces if you are foolish enough to swallow me. So if I die — you die! That’s why I’m not afraid of you.”

In this way the prince used his greatest inner strength in a way Sticky-Hair could easily understand. He knew this greatest of all weapons, the one inside his mind, was the precious diamond gem of his own intelligence.

Sticky-Hair thought, “No doubt this fearless man is telling the truth. Even if I eat as much as a pea-sized tidbit of such a hero, I won’t be able to digest it. So I will let him go.” Fearing his own death, he set Prince Five-Weapons free.

He said, “You are a great man. I will not eat your flesh. I let you go free, just like the moon that reappears after an eclipse, so you may shine pleasantly on all your friends and relatives.”

The Enlightenment Being had learned from his battle with the monster Sticky-Hair. He had learned the only worthwhile weapon is the intelligence inside, not the weapons of the world outside. And with this diamond weapon he also knew that destroying life brings only suffering to the killer.

In gratitude, he taught the unfortunate demon. He said, “Oh Sticky-Hair, you have been born as a murderous blood sucking flesh eating demon because of unwholesome deeds in your past. If you continue killing in this way, it will lead only to suffering for you — both in this life and beyond. You can only go from darkness to darkness.

“Now that you have spared me, you won’t be able to kill so easily. Hear this — destroying life leads to misery in this world, and then rebirth in a hell world, or as an animal or a hungry ghost. Even if you were lucky enough to be reborn as a human being, you would have only a short life!”

Prince Five-Weapons continued to teach Sticky-Hair. Eventually the monster agreed to follow the Five Training Steps. In his way he transformed him from a monster into a friendly forest fairy. And when he left the forest, the prince told the local people about the change in the one-time demon. From then on they fed him regularly and lived in peace.

Prince Five-Weapons returned to Benares. Later he became king. Finally he died and was reborn as he deserved.

The moral is: The only weapon you need is hidden inside you.

Tale 56 — A Huge Lump of Gold

[Moderation]

Once upon a time there was a rich village. The wealthiest of the villagers decided to hide a huge lump of gold to protect it from bandits and robbers. So he buried it in a nearby rice field.

Many years later, the village was no longer rich, and the rice field was abandoned and unused. A poor farmer decided to plow the field. After some time plowing, it just so happened that his plow struck the long forgotten buried treasure.

At first he thought it must be a very hard tree root. But when he uncovered it, he saw that it was beautiful shining gold. Since it was daytime he was afraid to try and take it with him. So he covered it up again and waited for nightfall.

The poor farmer returned in the middle of the night. Again he uncovered the golden treasure. He tried to lift it, but it was far too heavy. He tied ropes around it and tried to drag it. But it was so huge he couldn't budge it an inch. He became frustrated, thinking he was lucky to find a treasure, and unlucky to not be able to take it with him. He even tried kicking the huge lump of gold. But again it wouldn't budge an inch!

Then he sat down and began to consider the situation. He decided the only thing to do was to break the lump of gold into four smaller lumps. Then he could carry home one piece at a time.

He thought, "One lump I will use for ordinary day-to-day living. The second lump I will save for a rainy day. The third lump I will invest in my farming business. And I will gain merit with the fourth lump by giving it to the poor and needy and for other good works."

With a calm mind he divided the huge lump of gold into these four smaller lumps. Then it was easy to carry them home on four separate trips.

Afterwards he lived happily.

The moral is: "Don't bite off more than you can chew."

Tale 57, 224 — Mr Monkey and Sir Crocodile

[Good Manners]

Once upon a time, Mr. Monkey was living by himself near a riverbank. He was very strong, and he was a great jumper.

In the middle of the river there was a beautiful island covered with mango, jackfruit and other fruit trees. There happened to be a rock sticking out of the water halfway between the bank and the island. Although it looked impossible, Mr. Monkey was used to jumping from the riverbank to the rock, and from the rock to the island. He would eat fruits all day and then return home by the same route each evening.

A high-class couple was living next to the same river — Sir Crocodile and Lady Crocodile. They were expecting their first brood of baby crocks. Because she was pregnant Lady Crocodile sometimes wished for strange things to eat. So she made unusual demands on her faithful husband.

Lady Crocodile had been amazed, just like the other animals, by the way Mr. Monkey jumped back and forth to the island. One day she developed a sudden craving to eat the heart of Mr. Monkey! She told Sir Crocodile about her desire. To please her, he promised to get Mr. Monkey's heart for her in time for dinner.

Sir Crocodile went and laid himself down on the rock between the riverbank and the island. He waited for Mr. Monkey to return that evening, planning to catch him.

As usual, Mr. Monkey spent the rest of the day on the island. When it was time to return to his home on the riverbank, he noticed that the rock seemed to have grown. It was higher above water than he remembered it. He investigated and saw that the river level was the same as in the morning, yet the rock was definitely higher. Immediately he suspected the cunning Sir Crocodile.

To find out for sure, he called out in the direction of the rock, "Hi there, Mr. Rock! How are you?" He yelled this three times. Then he shouted, "You used to answer me when I spoke to you. But today you say nothing. What's wrong with you, Mr. Rock?"

Sir Crocodile thought, "No doubt on other days this rock used to talk to the monkey. I can't wait any longer for this dumb rock to speak! I will just have

to speak for the rock, and trick the monkey.” So he shouted, “I’m fine, Mr. Monkey. What do you want?”

Mr. Monkey asked, “Who are you?”

Without thinking, the crocodile replied, “I’m Sir Crocodile.”

“Why are you lying there?” asked the monkey.

Sir Crocodile said, “I’m expecting to take your heart! There’s no escape for you, Mr. Monkey.”

The clever monkey thought, “Aha! He’s right — there’s no other way back to the riverbank. So I will have to trick him.”

Then he yelled, “Sir Crocodile my friend, it looks like you’ve got me. So I’ll give you my heart. Open your mouth and take it when I come your way.”

When Sir Crocodile opened his mouth, he opened it so wide that his eyes were squeezed shut. When Mr. Monkey saw this, he immediately jumped onto the top of Sir Crocodile’s head, and then instantly to the riverbank.

When Sir Crocodile realised he’d been outsmarted, he admired Mr. Monkey’s victory. Like a good sport in a contest, he praised the winner. He said, “Mr. Monkey, my intention towards you was unwholesome — I wanted to kill you and take your heart just to please my wife. But you wanted only to save yourself and harm no one. I congratulate you!”

Then Sir Crocodile returned to Lady Crocodile. At first she was displeased with him, but when the little ones came they forgot their troubles for a time.

The moral is: A good loser is a true gentleman.

Tale 58 — A Prince of Monkeys

[Carefulness]

Once upon a time there was a cruel monkey king who ruled in the Himalayas. All the monkeys in his band were his own wives and children. He was afraid that one of his sons might grow up and take over as king. So it was his policy to bite each son just after he was born. This altered him so he would be too weak to ever challenge his father.

A certain wife of the monkey king was pregnant. Just in case the unborn one was a son, she wanted to protect him from the cruel policy of her husband. So she ran away to a forest at the foot of a distant mountain. There she soon gave birth to a bright little baby boy monkey.

Before long this baby grew up to be big and strong. One day he asked his mother, “Where is my father?” She told him, “He is king of a band of monkeys living at the foot of a far-off mountain. That makes you a prince!”

The prince of monkeys said, “Kindly take me to my father.” His mother said, “No my son, I am afraid to do so. Your father bites all his sons in order to weaken them for life. He is afraid one of his sons will replace him as king.” The prince said, “Don’t be afraid for me, mother. I can take care of myself.” This gave her confidence, so she agreed and took him to his father.

When the cruel old king saw his strong young son, he thought. “I have no doubt that when this my son grows stronger he will steal my kingdom from me. Therefore I must kill him while I still can! I will hug him, pretending it is out of love for him. But really I will squeeze him to death!”

The king welcomed his son, saying, “Ah, my long lost son! Where have you been all this time? I have missed you dearly.” Then he took him in his arms and hugged him. He kept squeezing harder and harder, trying to squeeze the life out of him! But the prince of monkeys was as strong as an elephant. He hugged his father right back. He squeezed him tighter and tighter, until he could feel the old king’s rib bones starting to crack!

After this terrible greeting, the monkey king was even more terrified that one day his son would kill him. He thought, “Nearby there is a pond possessed by a water demon. It would be easy to get him to eat my son. Then my problems would be over!”

The monkey king said, “Oh my dear son, now is the perfect time for you to come home. For I am old and I would like to hand over my band of monkeys to you. But I need flowers for the coronation ceremony. Go to the nearby pond and bring back two kinds of white water lilies, three kinds of blue water lilies and five types of lotuses.”

The prince of monkeys said, “Yes my father, I will go and get them.”

When he arrived at the pond, he saw that there were many kinds of water lilies and lotuses growing all over it. But instead of jumping right in and picking them, he investigated carefully. He walked slowly along the bank. He noticed there were footprints going into the pond, but none coming out! After considering, he realised this was a sure sign the pond was possessed by a water demon. He also realised his father must have sent him there to be killed.

He investigated further, until he found a narrow part of the pond. There, with great effort, he was able to jump from one side clear across to the other. In the midst of his leap he reached down and picked flowers, without actually getting into the water. Then he jumped back again, picking more flowers. He continued jumping back and forth, collecting lots of flowers.

Suddenly the water demon stuck his head up above the water. He exclaimed, “In all the time I’ve lived here I have never seen anyone, man or beast, as wise as this monkey! He has picked all the flowers he wanted, without ever coming within the grasp of my power, here in my kingdom of water.”

Then the ferocious demon made a path for himself through the water and came up onto the bank. He said, “My lord, king of monkeys, there are three qualities that make a person unbeatable by his enemies. It appears that you have all three — skill, courage and wisdom. You must be truly invincible! Tell me, mighty one, why have you collected all those flowers?”

The prince of monkeys replied, “My father wants to make me king in his place. He sent me to gather these flowers for the coronation ceremony.”

The water demon said, “You are too noble to be burdened by carrying these flowers. Let me carry them for you.” He picked up all the flowers and followed him.

From a distance, the monkey king saw the water demon carrying the flowers and following the prince. He thought, “I sent him to get flowers, thinking he

would be eaten by the demon. But instead he has made the water demon his servant. I am lost!”

The monkey king was afraid all his unwholesome deeds had caught up with him. He went into a sudden panic, which caused his heart to break into seven pieces. Of course this killed him on the spot!

The monkey band voted to make the strong young prince the new king.

The moral is: It pays to be careful.

Tale 59, 60 — Two Ways of Beating a Drum

[Excess]

Once upon a time there was a drummer living in a small country village. He heard there was going to be a fair in the city of Benares. So he decided to go there and earn some money by playing his drums. He took his son along to accompany him when playing music written for two sets of drums.

The two drummers, father and son, went to Benares Fair. They were very successful. Everyone liked their drum playing and gave generously to them. When the fair was over they began the trip home to their little village.

On the way they had to go through a dark forest. It was very dangerous because of muggers who robbed the travellers.

The drummer boy wanted to protect his father and himself from the muggers. So he beat his drums as loudly as he could, without stopping. “The more noise, the better!” he thought.

The drummer man took his son aside. He explained to him that when large groups passed by, especially royal processions, they were in the habit of beating drums. They did this at regular intervals, in a very dignified manner, as if they feared no one. They would beat a drum roll, remain silent, then beat again with a flourish, and so on. He told his son to do likewise, to fool the muggers into thinking there was a powerful lord passing by.

But the boy ignored his father’s advice. He thought he knew best. “The more noise, the better!” he thought.

Meanwhile, a gang of muggers heard the boy’s drumming. At first they thought it must be a powerful rich man approaching, with heavy security. But then they heard the drumming continue in a wild fashion without stopping. They realised that it sounded frantic, like a frightened little dog barking at a calm big dog.

So they went to investigate and found only the father and son. They beat them up, robbed all their hard-earned money, and escaped into the forest.

The moral is: Overdoing leads to a downfall.

Tale 61 — Two Mothers

[Renunciation]

Once upon a time there was a very well known teacher in the city of Takkasila, in northern India. He taught religion, as well as all other subjects. His knowledge was enormous and his teaching ability made him world famous.

At that time a son was born to a rich family in Benares. The family kept a holy fire burning constantly from that day on. When the son turned 16, they gave him a choice. They said, “This holy fire has been burning since your birth. If you wish to be reborn in a high heaven world, take it into the forest and worship the fire god.

“However, if you wish to live the home life of a family man, you must learn how to manage the wealth of our family in the affairs of the world. If that is the life you choose, go and study under the world famous teacher of Takkasila.”

The young man said, “I don’t want to be a holy man. I would much rather be a family man. Then I will be happy for the rest of my life.” So his parents sent him to the world famous teacher. They gave him a thousand gold coins to pay for his lessons.

After several years the man graduated with honours and returned home to Benares.

Meanwhile, his parents had come to wish more and more that he would become a holy man in the forest. This was just as they had wished on the day he was born. His mother wanted the best life possible for her son. She thought, “My son wants to marry and raise a family. He does not realise how dangerous a wicked woman can be to a man. I must find a way to get his teacher to teach him this.”

So the wise woman asked her son, “Did you earn only the Ordinary Degree without also obtaining the higher Unhappiness Degree?” Her son replied, “I have earned only the Ordinary Degree.”

His mother said, “How can you be called educated in the ways of the world if you have learned nothing about unhappiness? Return to the great teacher and ask for the Unhappiness Degree.” The son dutifully followed his good mother’s advice and returned to Takkasila.

It just so happened that the world famous teacher had a mother who was 120 years old. She was blind and very weak. The teacher bathed and fed and cared for her with his own hands. Since it took more and more of his time, he was forced to give up teaching. He and his mother moved into a forest hut, where he looked after her, night and day.

When the young student arrived from Benares he found that his old teacher was no longer at the college. Hearing that he had retired to the forest, he went and found him there.

After greeting each other, the teacher asked him, "Why have you come back so soon?" He replied, "Honourable professor, you did not give me the Unhappiness Degree." "Who told you about that degree?" asked the teacher. "My mother, sir," he said.

The teacher thought, "I've never heard of such a degree! No doubt his wise mother wanted me to teach him how wicked some women can be. For they bring great unhappiness to men."

He said, "All right, I will teach you so you can earn this high degree. The course is a work-study program. Your lessons will consist of taking care of my old mother for me. You will bathe, feed and care for her tenderly with your own hands.

"While you are washing and massaging her body, you must say, "Dear lady, even in your old age your skin remains fair and beautiful." You must constantly exaggerate her beauty in this way, saying, "When you were young, you must have been even more beautiful!" And if she says anything to you, you must tell me without shame, whatever it is, hiding nothing.

"If you do these things correctly, you will earn the Unhappiness Degree. Then your mother will be proud of you."

The student agreed and began tending to the 120-year-old lady. He bathed and fed her with his own hands. He massaged her arms, legs, back and head. While doing this he said, "Madam, it is marvellous indeed! Even in such great old age, your arms and legs are so very beautiful! I can guess how beautiful you were in your youth!" In this way he exaggerated her beauty again and again, for many days.

Gradually, desire began to arise in the old lady's mind. Even though she knew she was blind and her body was rotten from old age, she thought, "No

doubt this young man would like to live with me like a husband.” So she asked him, “Do you want to be with me, just like a husband and wife?”

The man replied, “Oh yes of course, madam. I want to very much. But how can I? Your son is my teacher and he is very respectable. It would cause such a scandal! I will not dishonour my teacher.”

Then the teacher’s mother said, “Well in that case, if you really want to be with me, then kill my son!”

The student said, “How can I kill him when I have been studying with him for so long? How can I kill him just because of this desire for you?” Then she said, “If you will stay with me and not desert me, I will kill him myself!”

As he had agreed, the student went to the world famous teacher and told him all that had taken place. Amazingly, the teacher did not seem surprised. He said, “You have done well to tell me this, my pupil. I appreciate your good work.”

Then he examined his mother’s horoscope and discovered that this was to be the day of her death. He said, “I will arrange a test for her.”

The teacher carved a statue from the softwood of a tree limb. He made it look exactly like himself, life-size. He laid it in his own bed and pulled the sheet up over it. He attached a long string to it and gave it to his pupil. He told him, “Now take this string and axe to my mother. Tell her it is time to do the killing.”

Obediently the student returned to the blind old lady. He said, “Madam, my master is sleeping in his bed. If you follow this string it will lead you to him. Then kill him with this axe, if you really can do such a thing!”

She replied, “If you do not abandon me, I will do it.” He said, “Why should I abandon you?”

Then she took the axe in her hands. She trembled as she stood up. Slowly she followed the string to her son’s bed. She felt the statue and thought she recognised her son. She pulled down the sheet from the head and raised the axe. Thinking to kill him with one blow she struck the neck as hard as she could with the axe. But it made a thumping sound, so she knew it had struck wood.

The teacher asked, “What are you doing, my mother?” Suddenly she realised she had been deceived and discovered. The shock was so overwhelming that she dropped dead on the spot! This time the horoscope had been correct.

The world famous teacher respectfully burned his mother’s body and offered flowers on her ashes.

Then he said to his pupil, “My son, there really is no such thing as the “Unhappiness Degree”. Wicked women cause unhappiness. You are fortunate to have such a good and wise mother. By sending you here to earn the Unhappiness Degree, she wanted you to learn how evil some women can be.

“You have seen with your own eyes how my mother was filled with craving and vanity. She has taught you this lesson. Now return to your wise mother, who cares so much for your well-being.”

When he arrived home his mother asked, “My dear son, have you finally earned the high degree in the subject of Unhappiness?” He replied, “Yes mother.”

Then she said, “I ask you again, my son, do you wish to leave the worldly life and go into the forest to worship the fire god? Or do you wish to marry and lead the family life?”

Her son replied, “I do not wish to lead the family life. I have seen with my own eyes how evil some women can be. There is no limit to their craving and vanity. Therefore I want nothing to do with family life. I will seek peace as a forest monk.”

He respectfully took leave of his parents. After many years of peaceful meditation in the forest, he eventually died and was reborn in a high heaven world.

The moral is: Wickedness between women and men brings unhappiness to both.

Tale 62 — The Priest Who Gambled With a Life

[Misguided Morality]

Once upon a time, there was a king who loved to gamble with his royal priest. When he threw the dice, he always recited this lucky charm:

“If tempted any woman will, for sure, give up her faithfulness and act impure.”

Amazing as it may seem, by using this charm the king always won! Before long, the royal priest lost almost every penny he owned.

He thought, “I have lost almost all my wealth to the king. It must be because of his lucky charm. I need to find a way to break the spell and win back my money. I must find a pure woman who has never had anything to do with a man. Then I will lock her up in my mansion and force her to remain faithful to me!”

This seemed like a good plan to him. But then he started having doubts. He thought, “It would be nearly impossible to keep a woman pure after she had already become accustomed to men. Therefore I must find the purest woman possible — one who has never even seen a man!”

Just then he happened to see a poor woman passing by. She was pregnant. The royal priest was an expert in reading the meaning of marks on the body. So he could tell that the unborn baby was a girl. And the thought occurred to him, “Aha! Only an unborn baby girl has never seen a man!”

The royal priest was willing to do anything to beat the king at dice. So he paid the poor woman to stay in his house and have her baby there. When the wonderful little girl was born, the priest bought her from her mother. Then he made sure she was raised only by women. She never saw a man — except of course the royal priest himself. When she grew up, he still kept her completely under his control. It was just as if he owned the poor girl!

The cruel priest did all this only because of his gambling habit. While the girl was growing up, he had avoided playing dice with the king. Now that she was of age, and still his prisoner, he challenged the king to a game of dice once again.

The king agreed. After they had made their bets, the king shook the dice and repeated his favourite lucky charm:

“If tempted any woman will, for sure,
give up her faithfulness and act impure.”

But just before he threw down the dice, the priest added:

“Except my woman — faithful evermore!”

Lo and behold, the king’s charm didn’t work. He lost that bet, and from then on the priest won every throw of the dice.

The king was puzzled by this turn of events. After considering, he thought, “This priest must have a pure woman locked up at home, one who is forced to be faithful to him alone. That’s why my lucky charm doesn’t work anymore.”

He investigated and discovered what the cruel priest had done. So he sent for a well-known playboy character. He asked him if he could cause the lady’s downfall. He replied, “No problem, my lord!” The king paid him handsomely and told him to do the job quickly.

The man bought a supply of the finest perfumes and cosmetics. He set up a shop just outside the royal priest’s mansion. This mansion was seven stories high, with seven entrance gates — one on each floor. Women guarded each gate, and no man except the priest was allowed to enter.

Only one servant waited on the priest’s lady. She carried everything in and out, including perfumes and cosmetics. The priest gave her money for her purchases.

The playboy saw the servant going in and out of the priest’s mansion. Soon he realised she was the one who could get him inside. So he devised a plan and hired some cronies to help him.

The next morning, when the serving lady went out to do her shopping, the playboy dramatically fell to the ground before her. Grabbing her knees he tearfully cried, “Oh my dear mother, it’s so wonderful to see you again after such a long time!”

Then his cronies chimed in, “Yes, this must be she! She looks the same — her hands and feet and face and type of dress. Yes, this must be she!” They all kept saying how amazing it was that her looks had changed so little in all that time.

The poor woman must have had a long lost son, for soon she was convinced this must be he. She hugged the king's clever playboy, and both sobbed tears of joy over their miraculous reunion.

In between bouts of sobbing, the man was able to ask her, "Oh dear mother, where are you living now?" "I live next door," she said, "in the royal priest's mansion. Night and day I serve his young woman. Her beauty is without equal, like the mermaids sailors love to praise."

He asked, "Where are you going now, mother?" "I'm going shopping for her perfumes and cosmetics, my son." "There's no need, mother," he said, "from now on I will give you the best perfumes and cosmetics free of charge!" So he gave them to her, along with a bouquet of lovely flowers.

When the priest's lady saw all these, much better quality than usual, she asked why the priest was so happy with her. "No," said the serving woman, "these are not from the priest. I got them at my son's shop." From then on she got perfumes and cosmetics from the playboy's shop, and kept the priest's money.

After a while the playboy began the next part of his plan. He pretended to be sick and stayed in bed.

When the servant came to the shop she asked, "Where is my son?" She was told he was too sick to work, and was taken to see him. She began massaging his back and asked, "What happened to you, my son?" He replied, "Even if I were about to die, I couldn't tell you, my mother."

She continued, "If you can't tell me, whom can you tell?" Then, according to his plan, he broke down and admitted to her, "I was fine until you told me about your beautiful mistress — "like the mermaids sailors love to praise". Because of your description, I have fallen in love with her. I must have her. I can't live without her. I'm so depressed, without her I'll surely die!"

Then the woman said, "Don't worry, my son, leave it up to me." She took even more perfumes and cosmetics to the priest's lady. She said to her, "My lady, after my son heard from me about your beauty, he fell madly in love with you! I don't know what to do next!"

Since the priest was the only man she had ever seen, the lady was curious. And of course she resented being locked up by force. So she said, "If you sneak him into my room, it's all right with me!"

The woman guards at the seven gates searched everything the servant took in and out. So she had to have a plan. She swept up all the dust and dirt she could find in the whole mansion. Then she began taking some of it out each day in a large covered flower basket. Whenever she was searched, she made sure some of the dust and dirt got on the guard women's faces. This made them sneeze and cough. Pretty soon they stopped searching her when she went in and out.

Finally one day she hid the playboy in her covered flower basket. He was trim and fit, not heavy at all. She was able to sneak him past all seven guarded gates, and into the priest's lady's private chamber. The two lovers stayed together for several days and nights. So the playboy was able to destroy her perfect faithfulness, which had been forced on her by the cold-hearted priest.

Eventually she told him it was time to go. He said, "I will go. But first, since the old priest has been so mean to you, let me give him one good blow to the head!" She agreed and hid him in a closet. This too was part of his secret plan.

When the priest arrived, his lady said, "My lord and master, I'm so happy today! I'd like to dance while you play the guitar."

The priest said, "Of course, my beauty." "But I'm too shy to dance in front of you," she added, "so please wear this blindfold while I dance." Again he agreed to her request and she put a blindfold over his eyes.

The priest played a pretty tune on his complicated Indian guitar, while his lady danced. After a bit she said, "As part of my dance, won't you let me give you a tap on the head?" "As you wish, my dear," he said.

Then she motioned to the playboy, who came out of the closet, snuck up from behind, and hit the old priest on the head! His eyes nearly popped out, and a bump began rising from the blow. He cried out and the lady put her hand in his. He said, "Such a soft hand sure can deliver a wallop, my dear!"

The playboy returned to the closet. The lady removed the priest's blindfold and put some ointment on his bump. When he had left, the serving woman hid the playboy in her flower basket and smuggled him out of the mansion. He went immediately to the king and told him the whole story, in a very boastful way of course.

The next day the royal priest went to the palace as usual. The king said, “Shall we gamble on the throw of the dice?” The priest, expecting to win once more, agreed. Just as before, the king recited his lucky charm:

“If tempted any woman will, for sure,
give up her faithfulness and act impure.”

As usual the priest added:

“Except my woman — faithful evermore!”

But lo and behold the dice fell in the king’s favour and he took the priest’s money.

The king said, “Oh priest, your woman is no exception! True faithfulness cannot be forced! Your plan was to snatch a newborn baby girl, lock her up behind seven gates guarded by seven guards, and force her to be good. But you have failed. Any prisoner’s greatest wish is freedom!

“She blindfolded you and then her playboy lover gave you that bump on your old bald head — which proves your gates and guards were useless!

The priest returned home and accused his lady. But in the meantime, she had come up with a plan of her own. She said, “No, my lord, I have been completely faithful to you. No man has ever touched me except you! And I will prove it in a trial by fire. I will walk on fire without being burned to prove I speak the truth.”

She ordered the old servant woman to fetch her son, the playboy. She was to tell him to take the lady by the hand and prevent her from stepping in the flames. This the woman did.

On the day of the trial by fire, the priest’s lady said to the crowd of onlookers, “I have never been touched by any man except this priest, my master. By this truth, may the fire have no power over me.”

Then, just as she was about to step into the fire, the playboy leaped from the crowd and grabbed her hand. He shouted, “Stop! Stop! How can this priest be so cruel as to force this tender young lady into a raging fire!”

She shook her hand free and said to the priest, “My lord, since this man has touched my hand, the trial by fire is useless. But you can see my good intention!”

The priest realised he had been tricked. He beat her as he drove her away forever. At last she was free of him and mistress of her own fate.

The moral is: You can't force someone to be good.

Tale 63 — The Wicked Lady and Buttermilk Wise Man

[Seduction]

Once upon a time, a very rich man was living in Benares, in northern India. He had a daughter who was one of the most beautiful women in the city. Her skin was as soft as rose petals, her complexion was like lotus blossoms, and her hair was as black as midnight. But unfortunately her beauty was only skin deep. For, on the inside, she was very cruel. She insulted her servants and even enjoyed beating them. She became known as the “Wicked Lady”.

One day she went down to the river for her bath. While she bathed, her servant girls played and splashed in the water. Suddenly it became dark and a heavy rainstorm came upon them. Most of the attendants and guards ran away. The servant girls said to each other, “This would be a perfect time to get rid of the Wicked Lady once and for all! So they deserted her there, still bathing in midstream. The storm became more and more terrible as the sun set.

When the servant girls arrived home without the Wicked Lady, the rich man asked them, “Where is my precious daughter?” They replied, “We saw her coming out of the river, but since then we haven’t seen her. We don’t know where she went.” The rich man sent out relatives to search for her, but she was nowhere to be found. Meanwhile the Wicked Lady had been swept downstream by the ferocious flooded river.

There just so happened to be a holy man living in the forest next to the river. In this peaceful area he had been meditating for a long time, until he had come to enjoy the inner happiness of a high mental state. Because of this happiness, he was quite sure he had left the ordinary desires of the world behind.

At about midnight the Wicked Lady was carried past the holy man’s hut by the raging river. She was crying out and screaming for help. When he heard her, the holy man realised a woman was in danger. So he took a torch down to the river and saw her being swept along. He dived in and saved her. He comforted her, saying, “Don’t worry, I’ll look after you.”

He carried her into his hut and made a fire to dry her off and warm her up. He gave her fruits to eat. When she had eaten her fill, he asked, “Where do

you live? How did you fall in the river?” She told him about the storm and how her servants deserted her. He took pity on her and let her sleep in his hut for the next couple of nights. He himself slept under the stars.

When she had recovered her strength, he told her it was time to return home. But she knew that he was the type of holy man who promised never to live with a woman, as husband and wife. That was why he had slept outside while she slept in the hut.

Just to prove her own power and superiority over him, she decided to seduce him into breaking his religious promise. She refused to leave until she had tricked him into falling in love with her.

The Wicked Lady used the poses and tricks and flatteries that women learn. The holy man was not yet strong enough to resist her tempting ways. After a few days she succeeded in seducing him into breaking his promise. They began living together in the quiet forest as if they were husband and wife. He lost the inner happiness he had gained by years of meditating.

But soon the Wicked Lady grew bored with forest life. She missed the noise and excitement of crowded city life. So she cooed and coaxed until she got her way, and they moved to a nearby village.

In the beginning, the holy man supported her by selling buttermilk. Later on, the villagers came and asked him for advice. They soon realised that listening to him brought good fortune. So they started calling him “the Buttermilk Wise Man”, and gave him a hut to live in.

Then one day a gang of bandits attacked the village. They robbed all the valuables and kidnapped some of the villagers, including the Wicked Lady. When they got to their forest hide-out they divided up the loot. When they began dividing up the prisoners, the bandit chief was attracted by the Wicked Lady’s great beauty. So he took her for himself as a wife.

All the other prisoners were soon released. When they returned to the village, the Buttermilk Wise Man asked what happened to his wife. They told him she had been kept as wife by the bandit chief. He thought, “She will never be able to live without me. She will find a way to escape and come back to me.” Deciding the village was now unlucky, all the others left it. But the Buttermilk Wise Man remained in his hut, convinced that his wife would return.

Lo and behold, the Wicked Lady enjoyed the exciting life of bandits. But she worried that her husband would come and take her back. She thought, “Then I would lose all my newfound luxuries. I would be safer if I got rid of him. Therefore, I will send him a letter, pretending to be deeply in love with him. Just as before I will use my power of seduction to cause his downfall. But this time he will meet his death, and I will remain the bandit queen!”

When the Buttermilk Wise Man received the letter he believed every word. He rushed into the forest and ran to the gang’s hide-out. When he called out to her, the Wicked Lady came out and said, “Oh my lord and master, I’m so happy to see you. I can hardly wait to escape with you. But now is not a good time. The bandit chief could easily follow us and kill us both. So let us wait until nightfall.” She took him inside, fed him, and hid him in a closet.

When the chief returned in the evening he was drunk. The Wicked Lady asked him, “My lord and chief, if you saw my former husband now, what would you do?” “I would beat him up and kick him from one side of the room to the other!” he bragged, “Where is he now?” “He is much closer than you think,” she said, “In fact, he is right here in this closet!”

He opened the door and dragged out the Buttermilk Wise Man. He proceeded to beat him up and kick him around the room, just as he had boasted. His poor victim did not cry out. He only muttered —

“Ungrateful hater,
Lying traitor.”

That was all he said. It seemed he was finally learning a lesson — but so painfully!

Eventually the drunken bandit got tired of beating him. He tied him up, ate dinner, and passed out into drunken sleep.

The next morning, after sleeping off his drunkenness, the bandit chief woke up sober. He began beating and kicking his tied up victim again. Still the Buttermilk Wise Man did not cry out, but kept on muttering —

“Ungrateful hater,
Lying traitor.”

The bandit thought, “While I keep punishing this man, why does he keep saying the same thing over and over?” Seeing that his wife was still fast asleep, he asked him what he meant.

The Buttermilk Wise Man replied, “Listen and I will tell. I was a forest holy man, peacefully enjoying a high state of mind. One night I heard this woman crying out as she was being swept down river in a storm. I saved her life and brought her back to health. Meanwhile she seduced me and I lost all my inner calm and happiness. We went to live in a village and I led a very ordinary life. Then you kidnapped her. She sent me a letter saying she suffered living with you, and begged me to rescue her. So you see — she enticed me into this disaster. She put me at your mercy. That is why I say —

“Ungrateful hater,
Lying traitor.”

The bandit chief was not stupid. He thought, “This man was such a good provider, and yet she has put him in this plight. What would she be capable of doing to me? It would be better to finish her off!”

He untied the Buttermilk Wise Man and comforted him, saying, “Don’t worry, I’ll look after you.” He awakened the Wicked Lady and said, “My darling, let us kill this man right next to his own village.” He took them to the boundary of the deserted village. He told her to hold her former husband. Then he raised his mighty sword and came down with it. But at the last instant he sliced the Wicked Lady in half!

Even someone as wicked as this murderous bandit can change his ways. He began by nursing his former rival back to health. After a few days of rest he asked, “What are you going to do now?”

The wise man replied, “I don’t want to live as householder anymore. I want to return to my old forest and meditate.”

The bandit said, “I too would like to be ordained and learn to meditate in the forest.” After giving up all his stolen goods, he went and lived in the forest with the Buttermilk Wise Man as his teacher. After much effort, they both attained a high state of inner happiness.

The moral is: Seduction can be dangerous to men and women both.

Tale 64, 65 — Country Man and City Wife

[Adultery]

Once upon a time, there was a well-known teacher who taught in and around Benares. He had over 500 students. One of these was from the distant countryside. Knowing little about the ways of city folks, he fell in love with a Benares girl and married her. After the marriage he resumed his studies with the famous teacher. But he started missing classes, sometimes staying away for two or three days at a time.

His wife was used to doing whatever she wanted. Even though she was married to the student, she was not loyal and faithful. She still had secret boy friends.

It just so happened that after she had been with a boy friend, she acted very humble with her husband. She spoke softly and tried very hard to please him. But on other days, when she had done nothing wrong, she was rude and domineering. She yelled at her husband and nagged him. This drove the man crazy. He was completely confused by how differently she acted from one day to the next.

The countryman was so disturbed that he stayed away from classes. And while he remained home he discovered that his city wife was unfaithful. He was upset that he missed school for seven or eight days.

When he finally showed up, the famous teacher asked, “Young man, you have been away so long. What was the matter?” He replied, “Sir, my wife is cheating on me very much, and acts as humble as a servant. But on other days she is arrogant and domineering, rough and rude. I can’t figure her out. I don’t know what to do or where to go for help. That’s why I couldn’t attend your classes.”

The teacher said, “Young man, don’t worry. Rivers can be bathed in by anyone, rich or poor. Highways too are open to all. Generous people build roadside rest houses to gain merit, and anyone can sleep there. Likewise, all are welcome to take water from the village well.

“So too, there are some women who won’t be faithful to one man. They love to keep their secret boy friends. That’s just the way some people are. It’s hard to understand why they act the way they do. But why get angry about what you cannot change?”

“On the days when your wife has been with a boy friend, those are the days she acts meek and mild. But on the days when she has done nothing wrong, those are the days she acts rough and rude. That’s just the way some people are. So why get angry about what you cannot change?

“Accept her the way she is. Treat her in the same understanding way, whether she is kind or mean to you. Why get angry about what you cannot change?”

“The student from the countryside followed the famous teacher’s advice. His city wife’s behaviour no longer upset him. And when she realised that her actions were no longer secret, she gave up her boyfriends and changed her ways.

The moral is: Understanding relieves anger.

Tale 66, 251 — The Wisdom of Queen Tenderhearted

[Lust]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born into a rich high-class family in Kasi, in northern India. He grew to young manhood and completed education. Then he gave up ordinary desires and left the everyday world. He became a holy man and went to live by himself in the Himalayan forests. He meditated for a long time, developed high mental powers, and was filled with inner happiness.

Having run out of salt, one day he came down to the city of Benares. He spent the night in the royal garden. In the morning he washed himself, tied his tangled hair knot on top of his head, and dressed in a black antelope skin. He folded up the robe made of red bark, which he usually wore. Then he went to the city to collect almsfood.

When he arrived at the palace gate, King Brahmadata was walking back and forth on his terrace. When he saw the humble looking holy man he thought there is such a thing as perfect calm, this man must have found it!" He had his servants bring him into the palace.

The holy man was seated on a luxurious couch and was fed the very best foods. He thanked the king. The king said, "You are welcome to live in my royal garden permanently. I will provide the "Four Necessities" — food, clothing, shelter and medicine. In so doing I may gain merit leading to rebirth in a heaven world."

The holy man accepted this kind offer. He spent the next 16 years living in the royal garden of Benares. During that time he taught all in the king's family, and received the Four Necessities from the king.

One day King Brahmadata decided he must go to a frontier area and put down a revolt. Before leaving he ordered his queen to care for the needs of the holy man. Her name was Queen Tenderhearted.

She prepared food every day for the holy man. Then one day he was late in arriving for his meal. While waiting, Queen Tenderhearted refreshed herself in a perfumed bath, dressed in fine clothes and jewellery, and lay down on the couch.

Meanwhile the Enlightenment Being had been meditating in a particularly joyful mental state. When he realised what time it was, he used the power of his mental purity to fly through the air to the palace.

When Queen Tenderhearted heard the rustling sound made by his bark robe, she rose up suddenly from her couch. In so doing, her blouse accidentally slipped down for a moment — and the holy man glimpsed her from the window as he entered. He was surprised by the unusual sight of the queen's great beauty.

Desire, which had been subdued but not erased, rose within him. It was just like a cobra rises, spreading his hood, from the basket in which it is kept. His desire lost its purity. He was wounded, like a crow with a broken wing.

The holy man could not eat his food. He took it back to his temple dwelling in the royal garden, and put it under his bed. His mind was enslaved by the sight of beauty of Queen Tenderhearted. His heart was burning with desire. He remained on his bed, without eating or drinking, for the next seven days.

Finally the king arrived home again. He circled the city and then went directly to see the holy man in the garden temple. Seeing him lying in bed, he thought he was sick. He cleaned out the temple and sat down next to him. He began massaging his feet, and asked, "Reverend sir, what happened to you? Are you sick?"

The holy man replied, "Oh great king, my sickness is that I am caught in the chains of desire." "What is it you desire?" asked the king. "Queen Tenderhearted, my lord." "Your reverence," said the king, "I will give Tenderhearted to you. Come with me."

When they arrived at the palace, King Brahmadata had his queen dressed in her finest clothing and jewellery. Then he secretly told her to help the unfortunate holy man regain his purity. She replied. "I know what to do, my lord, I will save him." Then the king gave her away and she left the palace with the holy man.

After they passed through the main gate she said, "Because it's filthy! Go back to the king and get a shovel and basket." He obeyed and when he returned she ordered him to do all the cleaning. He even had to plaster the walls and floor with fresh cow dung!

Then she commanded him to go to the palace and get her a bed. Then a chair. Then a lamp, bed linen, a cooking pot, a water pot. She ordered him

to get all these things one at a time, and he obeyed dutifully. She sent him to get water for her bath and many other things. He set out the water for her bath and then made up the bed. Finally they sat down next to each other on the bed. Suddenly she grabbed him by the whiskers, shook him back and forth, pulled him towards her and said, “Don’t you remember that you are a holy man and a priest?”

Only then was he shocked out of his mad infatuation and made to realise who he was. Having regained his self-awareness, he thought, “Oh what a pitiful state I have fallen into. I have been blinded by my desire into becoming a slave. Beginning with only the sight of a woman, this mad craving could lead me into a hell world. My body was burning, as if I’d been shot in the heart with an arrow of desire. But there was no bleeding wound! Not seeing her body as it really was, my own foolishness caused all my suffering!”

Then he spoke out loudly, “On this very day I will return the wise Queen Tenderhearted to the noble King Brahmadata. Then I will fly back to my forest home!”

After taking her back, he said to the king, “I don’t want your queen anymore. Before I had her, she was my one desire. After I got her, one desire led to another endlessly, leading only to hell.”

The wise Queen Tenderhearted, by using her intelligence and knowledge of life, had given a great gift to the holy man. Rather than taking advantage of his weakness, she had restored his purity.

In perfect calm the Enlightenment Being rose into the air, preached to the king, and then magically flew to the Himalayan forests. He never again returned to the ordinary world. After meditating for years in peace and joy, he died and was reborn in a high heaven world.

The moral is: Desire enslaves, wisdom liberates.

Tale 67 — A Wife & Mother Who Was a Sister First

[An Intelligent Woman]

Once upon a time some bandits robbed a village. Then they escaped into a thick forest. Some men from the village chased them. They surrounded the forest and searched it for the robbers, but they could not find them.

When they came out of the forest they saw three farmers plowing in their field. They immediately captured them and said, “Aha! You bandits are pretending to be innocent farmers interested only in plowing! Come with us to the king, you thieves!” They tied them up and took them as prisoners to the king. He locked them in the palace dungeon.

Then a woman began coming to the palace courtyard. For several days she came and cried, as if in mourning.

One day the king heard her cries and asked her to come inside. He asked why she was crying. She said, “I have heard that my husband, son and brother are all your prisoners, my lord.”

The king had the three men brought up from the dungeon. Being a generous ruler, he said to the woman, “I will give you one of these three. Which one do you choose?”

The woman asked, “Can’t you give me all three, my lord?” The king replied, “No, I cannot.”

After carefully considering, she said, “If you will not give me all three, then give me my brother, oh lord king.”

The king was surprised by her choice. He said, “You should choose your husband or son. Why would you want your brother instead?”

The smart woman replied, “Oh my lord, when I go out onto the roadway, a new husband would be easy to find. And then I could easily have another son. A husband or a son is easy to come by in this world. But since my parents are dead, I could never get another brother!”

The king was impressed by the intelligence and thinking ability shown by this simple woman. Some of his own ministers were not nearly as smart! So he decided to reward her. He said, “I return all three to you — your brother, husband and son.”

The moral is: It's a fortunate brother who has an intelligent sister.

Tale 68, 237 — 3,000 Births

[Rebirth]

Once upon a time the Bodhisatta the Enlightenment Being — was born into an ordinary family. It just so happened that he had the same father in his next 500 rebirths. The father was then reborn as the uncle in the next 500 rebirths, and the grandfather in the next 500.

In the next 500 rebirths he had the same mother, who was reborn as the aunt in the next 500, and finally the grandmother in the next 500.

Amazing as it may seem, after 3,000 rebirths, the man of 1,500 and the woman of 1,500 rebirths were reborn and became husband and wife. But the Bodhisatta was reborn with a different mother and father! However, he wisely respected everyone, not just the mother and father of his present rebirth.

The moral is: One way or another, we're all related.

Tale 69 — The Strong-minded Snake

[Determination]

Once upon a time there was a doctor who was an expert at treating snakebites. One day he was called for by the relatives of a man who had been bitten by a deadly poisonous snake.

The doctor told them, “There are two ways of treating this snake bite. One is by giving medicine. The other is by capturing the snake who bit him, and forcing him to suck out his own poison.” The family said, “We would like to find the snake and make him suck the poison out.”

After the snake was caught, the doctor asked him, “Did you bite this man?” “Yes I did,” said the snake. “Well then,” said the doctor, “You must suck your own poison out of the wound.” But the strong-willed snake replied, “Take back my own poison? Never! I have never done such a thing and I never will!”

Then the doctor started a wood fire and said to the snake, “If you don’t suck that poison out, I’ll throw you in this fire and burn you up!”

But the snake had made up his mind. He said, “I’d rather die!” And he began moving towards the fire.

In all his years, the snake bite expert doctor had never seen anything like this! He took pity on the courageous snake, and kept him from entering the flames. He used his medicines and magic spells to remove the poison from the suffering man.

The doctor admired the snake’s single-minded determination. He knew that if he used his determination in a wholesome way he could improve himself. So he taught him the Five Training Steps to avoid unwholesome actions. Then he set him free and said, “Go in peace and harm no one.”

The moral is: Determination wins respect.

Tale 70 — The Shovel Wise Man

[Renunciation]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born into a family of vegetable gardeners. After he grew up he cleared a patch of land with his shovel. He grew herbs, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers and other vegetables. These he sold to earn a humble living.

The shovel was his one and only possession in the whole world. He carried it in the same way a forest monk carries his walking staff. So he became known as the “Shovel Wise Man”.

One day he thought, “What good does it do me to live the ordinary everyday life of a gardener? I will give up this life and go meditate in the forest. Then I will be peaceful and happy.” So the Shovel Wise Man hid his one possession, his shovel, and became a forest meditator.

Before too long, he started thinking about his only possession, his shovel. He was so attached to this shovel that he couldn't get it out of his mind, no matter how hard he tried! Trying to meditate seemed useless, so he gave it up. He returned to his shovel and his ordinary life as a vegetable gardener.

Lo and behold, in a little while the Shovel Wise Man again gave up the everyday life, hid his shovel and became a forest meditator. Again he could not get his shovel out of his mind, and returned to being a gardener. All in all, this happened six times!

The next time the Shovel Wise Man gave up his forest meditation, he finally realised it was because of his old worn out shovel that he had gone back and forth seven times! So he decided to throw it away, once and for all, in a deep river. Then he would return to the forest for good.

He took his shovel down to the riverbank. He thought, “Let me not see where this shovel enters the water. Otherwise it may tempt me again to give up my quest.” So he closed his eyes, swung the shovel in a circle over his head three times, and let it fly into the midst of the river. Realising that he would never be able to find the shovel again, he shouted, just like a lion roars, “I have conquered! I have conquered! I have conquered!”

It just so happened that the King of Benares was riding by at that very moment. He was returning from putting down a revolt in a border village.

He had bathed in the river, and had just seated himself on his magnificent royal elephant. He was riding back to Benares in a victory procession.

When he heard the triumphant shouts of the Enlightenment Being, he said to his ministers, “Listen. Who is shouting, just like a lion roars, “I have conquered”? Whom has he conquered? Bring that man to me!”

When they brought the Shovel Wise Man to him, the king said, “I am a conqueror because I have won a battle. You say that you have conquered. Whom did you conquer?”

The Enlightenment Being replied, “Your lordship, even if you conquer a hundred thousand armies, they are meaningless victories if you still have unwholesome thoughts and desires in your own mind! By conquering the craving in my mind, I know I have won the battle against unwholesome thoughts.”

As he spoke he concentrated his mind on the water in the river, then on the idea of water itself, and reached a high mental state. In a sitting position he rose into the air. He preached these words of Truth to the king: “Defeating an enemy who returns to fight you again and again is no real victory. But if you defeat the unwholesomeness in your own mind, no one can take that true victory from you!”

While the king was listening to these words, all unwholesome thoughts left his mind. It occurred to him to give up the ordinary world and seek real peace and happiness. He asked, “Where are you going now, wise one?” He answered, “I am going to the Himalayas, oh king, to practise meditation.” The king said, “Please take me with you. I too wish to give up the common worldly life.” Lo and behold, as the king turned northward with the Shovel Wise Man, so did the entire army and all the royal ministers and attendants.

Soon the news reached the people of Benares that the king and all those with him were leaving the ordinary world and following the Shovel Wise Man to the Himalayas. Then all the people in the entire city of Benares followed them towards the northern mountains. Benares was empty!

This great migration of people came to the attention of the god Sakka, King of the Heaven of 33. Never had he seen so many giving up worldly power. He ordered the architect of the gods to build a dwelling place in the Himalayan forests for all these people.

When they arrived in the Himalayas, the Shovel Wise Man was the first to announce that he had given up the ordinary world for good. Then all those with him did the same. Never was so much worldly power given up, or renounced, at the same time.

The Shovel Wise Man developed what holy men call the “Four Heavenly States of Mind”. First is loving-kindness, tender affection for all. Second is feeling sympathy and pity for all those who suffer. Third is feeling happiness for all those who are joyful. And the fourth state is balance and calm, even in the face of difficulties or troubles.

He taught the others advanced meditation. With great effort they all gained high mental states, leading to rebirth in heaven worlds.

The moral is: Only one possession is enough to keep the mind from finding freedom.

Tale 71 — The Green Wood Gatherer

[Laziness]

Once upon a time there was a world famous teacher and holy man in the city of Takkasila. He had 500 students training under him.

One day these 500 young men went into the forest to gather firewood. One of them came upon a tree with no leaves. He thought, “How lucky I am! This tree must be dead and dry, perfect for firewood. So what’s the hurry? I’ll take a nap while the others are busy searching in the woods. When it’s time to return, it will be easy to climb this tree and break off branches for firewood. So what’s the hurry?” He spread his jacket on the ground, lay down on it, and fell fast asleep — snoring loudly.

After a while all the other students began carrying their bundles of firewood back to Takkasila. On their way they passed the snoring sleeper. They kicked him to wake him up and said, “Wake up! Wake up! It’s time to return to our teacher.”

The lazy student woke up suddenly and rubbed his eyes. Still not fully awake, he climbed up the tree. He began breaking off branches and discovered that they were actually still green, not dry at all. While he was breaking one of them, it snapped back and poked him in the eye. From then on he had to hold his eye with one hand while he finished gathering his bundle of green wood. Then he carried it back to Takkasila, running to catch up. He was the last one back, and threw his bundle on top of the rest.

Meanwhile an invitation arrived to a religious ceremony. It was to be held the next day at a remote village. The holy man told his 500 pupils, “This will be good training for you. You will have to eat an early breakfast tomorrow morning. Then go to the village for the religious service. When you return, bring back my share of the offerings as well as your own.”

The students awoke early the next morning. They awakened the college cook and asked her to prepare their breakfast porridge. She went out in the dark to the woodpile. She picked up the top bundle of the lazy man’s green wood. She brought it inside and tried to start her cooking fire. But even though she blew and blew on it, she couldn’t get the fire going. The wood was too green and damp.

When the sun came up there was still no fire for cooking breakfast. The students said, “It’s getting to be too late to go to the village.” So off they went to their teacher.

The teacher asked them, “Why are you still here? Why haven’t you left yet?” They told him, “A lazy good-for-nothing slept while we all worked. He climbed a tree and poked himself in the eye. He gathered only green wood and threw it on top of the woodpile. This was picked up by the college cook. Because it was green and damp, she couldn’t get the breakfast fire started. And now it’s too late to go to the village.”

The world famous teacher said, “A fool who is lazy causes trouble for everyone. When what should be done early is put off until later, it is soon regretted.”

The moral is: “Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today.”

Tale 72 — The Elephant King Goodness

[Generosity and Ingratitude]

Once upon a time the Enlightenment Being was born as an elephant. He was wonderfully white in colour, glowing like polished silver. His feet were as smooth and bright as the finest lacquer. His mouth was as red as the most elegant red carpet. And his marvellous eyes were like precious jewels, sparkling in five colours — blue, yellow, red, white and crimson.

The splendid beauty of this magnificent elephant was the outer form of the Enlightenment Being. But this was only a pale reflection of his inner beauty — because during many previous lives he had filled himself with the Ten Perfections: energy, determination, truthfulness, wholesomeness, giving up attachment to the ordinary world, evenmindedness, wisdom, patience, generosity, and of course — loving-kindness.

When he became an adult, all the other elephants in the Himalayan forests came to follow and serve him. Before long his kingdom contained a population of 80,000 elephants. Such a large nation was crowded and filled with distractions. In order to live more quietly, he separated himself from the rest and went to live alone in a secluded part of the forest. Because of his wholesomeness and purity, which were easily seen by everyone, he was known as the Elephant King Goodness.

In the meantime, a forester from Benares travelled into these Himalayan foothills. He was searching for things of value he could sell back in Benares. After a while he lost his sense of direction. He ran back and forth trying to find his way. Soon he became exhausted and scared to death! He began trembling and crying out loud from fear.

The Elephant King Goodness heard the sound of the poor lost man's frightened weeping. Immediately he was filled with pity and compassion. Wishing to help him in any way he could, he began walking through the forest towards him.

But the man was in such a big panic that, when he saw the gigantic elephant coming towards him, he started running away. When the wise elephant king saw this, he stopped moving. Seeing this, the forester also stopped. Then King Goodness began walking towards him again, the man started running, and once again stopped when the elephant stopped.

At that point the man thought, “This noble elephant! When I run, he stops. And when I stop, he walks towards me. No doubt he intends me no harm — he must want to help me instead!” Realising this gave him the courage to stop and wait.

As the Elephant King Goodness slowly approached, he said, “My human friend, why are you wandering about crying in panic?”

“Lord elephant,” said the man, “I lost all sense of direction, became hopelessly lost, and was afraid I would die!”

Then the Enlightenment Being took the forester to his own secluded dwelling place. He comforted and soothed him by treating him to the finest fruits and nuts in all the Himalayas. After several days he said, “My friend, don’t be afraid. I will take you to the land where people live. Sit on my back.” Then he began carrying him towards the land of men.

While riding comfortably on this glorious being, the man thought, “Suppose people ask me where I was. I must be able to tell everything.” So he made notes of all the landmarks, while being carried to safety by the kind elephant king.

When he came out of the thick forest near the highway to Benares, the Elephant King Goodness said, “My good friend, take this road to Benares. Please don’t tell anyone where I live, whether they ask you or not.” With these parting words, the gentle elephant turned around and went back to his safe and secret home.

The man had no trouble finding his way to Benares. Then one day, while walking in the bazaar, he came to the shops of the ivory carvers. They carved ivory into delicate and beautiful statues, scenes and shapes. The forester asked them, “Would you buy tusks that come from living elephants?”

The ivory carvers replied, “What a question! Everyone knows the tusks from a live elephant are much more valuable than from a dead one.” “Then I will bring you some live elephant tusks,” said the forester.

Caring only for money, ignoring the safety of the elephant king, and without any gratitude towards the one who had saved his life – the man put a sharp saw in with his other provisions, and set out towards the home of King Goodness.

When he arrived the elephant king asked him, “Oh my dear human friend, what brings you back again?” Making up a story, the greedy man said, “My lord elephant, I am a poor man, living very humbly. As these times are very difficult for me, I have come to beg from you just a little piece of tusk. If you can give it to me, I will take it home and sell it. Then I will be able to provide for myself, and survive for a while longer.”

Pitying the man, the Elephant King Goodness said, “Of course my friend, I will give you a big piece of tusk! Did you happen to bring a saw with you?” “Yes lord,” said the forester, “I did bring a saw.” “All right then,” said the generous King Goodness, “cut from both my tusks!”

As he said this, the elephant bent down on his knees and offered up his spectacular silvery-white tusks. Without the slightest regret, the man sawed off big pieces of ivory from both tusks.

The Enlightenment Being picked up both pieces with his trunk. He said, “Good friend, I am not giving you my lovely tusks because I dislike them and want to get rid of them. Nor is it because they are not valuable to me. But a thousand times, even a hundred thousand times more lovely and valuable are the tusks of all knowable wisdom, which leads to the realisation of all Truth.”

Giving the wonderful tusks to the man, it was the elephant’s wish that his perfect generosity would eventually lead him to the greatest wisdom.

The man went home and sold both pieces of ivory. But it didn’t take long for him to spend all the money. So again he returned to the Elephant King Goodness. He begged him, “My lord, the money I got by selling your ivory was only enough to pay off my debts. I am still a poor man, living very humbly. Times are still hard in Benares, so please give me the rest of your tusks, oh generous one!”

Without hesitation, the elephant king offered what was left of his tusks. The man cut off all that he could see of them, right down to the sockets in the elephant’s skull! He left without a word of thanks. The wonderful kind elephant meant no more to him than a bank account! He took the ivory back to Benares, sold it, and squandered the money as before.

Once again the forester returned to the Himalayan home of the Elephant King Goodness. And again he begged him, “Oh noble elephant king, it is so

very hard to make a living in Benares. Have pity on me and let me have the rest of your ivory – the roots of your tusks.”

Perfect generosity holds nothing back. So once again the elephant king bent down on his knees and offered his remaining stumps of ivory. The ungrateful betrayer did not care at all for the elephant. He stepped onto the magnificent trunk – like a thick silver chain. He climbed up and sat between the pure white temples, on top of the great head – like a snowy Himalayan dome. Then he roughly dug in with his heels, rubbing and tearing away the tender flesh from the stumps of the once-beautiful tusks. He used his dull worn-down saw to cut and hack the ivory roots out of the noble skull!

It is said there are many worlds – the hell world of torture, the worlds of hungry ghosts, of animals and of mankind, as well as many heaven worlds – from the lowest to the highest. In all these worlds there are millions of beings who, at one time or another, have been born and lived as elephants. And some who tell this story say, that although they knew not why, all those one-time elephants felt the pain of the Great Being – the Elephant King Goodness.

The forester departed carrying the bloody ivory stumps. Thinking there was no reason to see the elephant again, he didn't bother to show any sign of gratitude or respect.

The vast solid earth, which is strong enough to easily support great mountains, and is able to bear the worst filth and stench, could not bear and support this cruel man's enormous unwholesomeness. So, when he could no longer be seen by the suffering elephant, the mighty earth cracked open beneath him. Fire from the lowest hell world leaped up, engulfed him in bright red flames, and pulled him down to his doom!

The moral is: The ungrateful stops at nothing, and digs his own grave.

Tale 73 — Four on a Log

[Gratitude]

Once upon a time, King Brahmadata of Benares had a son. He grew up to be a mean and cruel he-man — the type that’s always trying to prove he’s tougher than everyone else. He was a bully who constantly pushed people around and picked fights. Whenever he spoke to people it was with a stream of obscenities — right out of the gutter. And he was always quick to anger — just like a hissing snake that’s just been stepped on.

People inside and outside the palace ran from him as they would from a starving man-eating demon. They avoided him as they would a speck of dirt in the eye. Behind his back everyone called him the ‘Evil Prince’. In short — he was not a nice man!

One day the prince decided to go swimming. So he went down to the river with his servants and attendants. Suddenly it became almost as dark as night. A huge storm came up. Being so rough and tough, the prince was always trying to show he wasn’t scared of anything. So he yelled at his servants, “Take me into the middle of the river and bathe me. Then bring me back to shore.”

Following his orders, they took him out to midstream. Then they said, “Now is our chance! Whatever we do here, the king will never find out. So let’s kill the Evil Prince. Into the flood you go, good-for-nothing!” With that they threw him into the stormy raging river.

When they returned to the bank, the others asked where the prince was. They replied, “We don’t know. As the rain came up, he must have swum faster than us and gone back to Benares.”

When they returned to the palace, the king asked, “Where is my son?” They said, “We don’t know, your majesty. When the storm came up, we thought he went back ahead of us.” King Brahmadata collected a search party and began looking for the prince. They searched carefully, all the way to the riverside, but couldn’t find him.

What had happened was this. In the darkness and wind and rain the prince had been swept down the flooding river. Luckily he was able to grab onto a floating dead tree trunk. Frantically he held on for dear life. As he was being

swept along, the tough he-man was so afraid of drowning that he cried like a terrified helpless baby!

It just so happened that, not long before, a very rich man had died in Benares. He had buried his treasure hoard in the riverbank, along the same stretch of river. His fortune amounted to 40 million gold coins. Because of his miserly craving for riches, he was reborn as a lowly snake, slithering on his belly while still guarding his treasure.

At a nearby spot on the riverbank another rich miser had buried a treasure of 30 million gold coins. Likewise, due to his stingy clawing after wealth, he had been reborn as a water rat. He too remained to guard his buried treasure.

Lo and behold. when the storm came up, both the snake and the water rat were flooded out of their holes and washed into the raging river. In fear of drowning, they both happened to grab onto the same dead log carrying the frightened wailing prince. The snake climbed up on one end and the water rat on the other.

There also happened to be a tall cotton tree growing nearby. There was a young parrot roosting in it. When the storm-flooded river rose up, the cotton tree's roots were washed away and it fell into the water. When he tried to fly away, the wind and rain swept the little parrot onto the same dead log with the snake, the water rat and the Evil Prince.

Now there were four on the log, floating towards a bend in the river. Nearby a holy man was living humbly in a little hut. He just happened to be the Bodhisatta — the Enlightenment Being. He had been born into a rich high class family in Kasi. When he had grown up, he had given up all his wealth and position, and had come to live by himself next to the river.

It was the middle of the night when the holy man heard the cries of panic coming from the Evil Prince. He thought, "That sounds like a frightened human being. My loving-kindness will not let me ignore him. I must save him."

He ran down to the river and shouted. "Don't be afraid! I will save you!" Then he jumped into the rushing torrent, grabbed the log, and used his great strength to pull it to shore.

He helped the prince step safely onto the riverbank. Noticing the snake, water rat and parrot, he took them and the man to his cozy little hut. He started up his cooking fire. Thinking of the weakness of the animals, he

gently warmed them by the fire. When they were warm and dry he set them aside. Then he let the prince warm himself. The holy man brought out some fruits and nuts. Again he fed the more helpless animals first, followed by the waiting prince.

Not surprisingly this made the Evil Prince furious! He thought, “This stupid holy man doesn’t care at all for me, a great royal prince. Instead he gives higher place to these three dumb animals!” Thinking this way, he built up a vengeful hatred against the gentle Bodhisatta.

The next day the holy man dried the deadwood log in the sun. Then he chopped it up and burned it, to cook their food and keep them warm. In a few days the four who had been rescued by that same log were strong and healthy.

The snake came to the holy man to say good-bye. He coiled his body on the ground, arched himself up, and bowed his head respectfully. He said, “Venerable one, you have done a great thing for me! I am grateful to you, and I am not a poor snake. In a certain place I have a buried treasure of 40 million gold coins. And I will gladly give it to you — for all life is priceless! Whenever you are in need of money, just come down to the riverbank and call out. “Snake! Snake!”

The water rat, too, came to the holy man to say good-bye. He stood up on his hind legs and bowed his head respectfully. He said, “Venerable one, you have done a great thing for me! I am grateful to you, and I am not a poor water rat. In a certain place I have a buried treasure of 30 million gold coins. And I will gladly give it to you — for all life is priceless! Whenever you are in need of money, just come down to the riverbank and call out, “Rat! Rat!”

Such grateful generosity from a snake and a water rat! A far cry from their previous stingy human lives!

Then came the parrot to say his good-bye to the holy man. He bowed his head respectfully and said, “Venerable one, you have done a great thing for me! I am grateful to you, but I possess no silver or gold. However, I am not a poor parrot. For if you are ever in need of the finest rice, just come down to the riverbank and call out. ‘Parrot! Parrot!’ Then I will gather together all my relatives from all the forests of the Himalayas and we will bring you many cart loads of the most precious scented red rice. For all life is priceless!”

Finally the Evil Prince came to the holy man. Because his mind was filled with the poison of vengeance, he thought only about killing him if he ever saw him again. However, what he said was, “Venerable one, when I become king, please come to me and I will provide you with the Four Necessities.” He returned to Benares and soon became the new king.

In a while the holy man decided to see if the gratitude of these four was for real. First he went down to the riverbank and called out, “Snake! Snake!” At the sound of the first word, the snake came out of his home under the ground. He bowed respectfully and said, “Holy one, under this very spot are buried 40 million gold coins. Dig them up and take them with you!” “Very well,” said the holy man, “When I am in need I will come again.”

Taking leave of the snake, he walked along the riverbank and called out, “Rat! Rat!” The water rat appeared and all went just as it had with the snake.

Next, he called out, “Parrot! Parrot!” The parrot flew down from his treetop home, bowed respectfully and said, “Holy one, do you need red rice? I will summon my relatives and we will bring you the best rice in all the Himalayas.” The holy man replied, “Very well, when I am in need I will come again.”

Finally he set out to see the king. He walked to the royal pleasure garden and slept there overnight. In the morning, in a very humble and dignified manner, he went to collect alms food in the city of Benares.

On that same morning the ungrateful king, seated on a magnificently adorned royal elephant, was leading a vast procession around the city. When he saw the Enlightenment Being coming from a distance he thought, “Aha! This lazy homeless bum is coming to sponge off me. Before he can brag to everyone how much he did for me, I must have him beheaded!”

Then he said to his servants, “This worthless beggar must be coming to ask for something. Don’t let the good-for-nothing get near me. Arrest him immediately, tie his hands behind his back, and whip him at every street corner. Take him out of the city to the execution block and cut off his head. Then raise up his body on a sharpened stake and leave it for all to see. So much for lazy beggars!”

The king’s men followed his cruel orders. They tied up the blameless Great Being like a common criminal. They whipped him mercilessly at every

street corner on the way to the execution block. But no matter how hard they whipped him, cutting into his flesh, he remained dignified. After each whipping he simply announced, for all to hear: “This proves the old saying is still true — ‘There’s more reward in pulling deadwood from a river, than in helping an ungrateful man!’”

Some of the bystanders began to wonder why he said only this at each street corner. They said to each other, “This poor man’s pain must be caused by an ungrateful man.” So they asked him, “Oh holy man, have you done some service to an ungrateful man?”

Then he told them the whole story. And in conclusion he said, “I rescued this king from a terrible flood, and in so doing I brought this pain upon myself I did not follow the saying of the wise of old, that’s why I said what I said.”

Hearing this story, the people of Benares became enraged and said to each other, “This good man saved the king’s life. But he is so cruel that he has no gratitude in him at all. How could such a king possibly benefit us? He can only be dangerous to us. Let’s get him!”

Their rage turned the citizens of Benares into a mob. They pelted the king with arrows, knives, clubs and stones. He died while still sitting on the royal elephant. Then they threw the dead body of the one-time Evil Prince into a ditch by the side of the road.

Afterwards they made the holy man their new king. He ruled Benares well. Then one day he decided to go see his old friends. So he rode in a large procession down to the riverbank.

He called out, “Snake! Snake!” The snake came out, offered his respect and said, “My lord, if you wish it. You are welcome to my treasure.” The king ordered his servants to dig up the 40 million gold coins.

He went to the water rat’s home and called out, “Rat! Rat!” He too appeared, offered his respect and said, “My lord, if you wish it, you are welcome to my treasure.” This time the king’s servants dug up 30 million gold coins.

Then the king called out “Parrot! Parrot!” The parrot flew to the king, bowed respectfully and said, “If you wish, my lord, I will collect the most excellent red rice for you.” But the holy man king said, “Not now my friend.

When rice is needed I will request it of you. Now let us all return to the city.”

After they arrived at the royal palace in Benares, the king had the 70 million gold coins put under guard in a safe place. He had a golden bowl made for the grateful snake’s new home. He had a maze made of the finest crystals for the generous rat to live in. And the kind parrot moved into a golden cage, with a gate he could latch and unlatch from the inside.

Every day the king gave rice puffs and the sweetest bee’s honey on golden plates to the snake and the parrot. And on another golden plate he gave the most aromatic scented rice to the water rat.

The king became famous for his generosity to the poor. He and his three animal friends lived together in perfect harmony for many years. When they died, they were all reborn as they deserved.

The moral is: Gratitude is a reward, which is itself rewarded.

Tale 74 — New Homes for the Tree Spirits

[Wise Advice]

Once upon a time, as happens to all beings, the King of the Tree Spirits died. King Sakka, ruler of the Heaven of 33, appointed a new King of the Tree Spirits. As his first official act, the new king sent out a proclamation that every tree spirit should choose a tree to live in. Likewise it was stated that every tree was to be pleased with its resident spirit.

There just so happened to be a very wise tree spirit who was the leader of a large clan. He advised his clan members not to live in free-standing trees. Instead it would be safer to live in the forest trees near him. The wise tree spirits settled down in the forest trees with their leader.

But there were also some foolish and arrogant tree spirits. They said to each other, “Why should we live in this crowd? Let us go to the villages, towns and cities inhabited by human beings. Tree spirits who live there receive the best offerings. And they are even worshipped by the superstitious people living in those places. What a life we will have!”

So they went to the villages, towns and cities, and moved into the big free-standing trees, looked after by people. Then one day a big storm came up. The wind blew strong and hard. The big heavy trees with old stiff branches did not do well in the storm. Branches fell down, trunks broke in two, and some were even uprooted. But the trees in the forest, which were intertwined with each other, were able to bend and support each other in the mighty wind. They did not break or fall!

The tree spirits in the villages, towns and cities had their tree homes destroyed. They gathered up their children and returned to the forest. They, complained to the wise leader about their misfortune in the big lonely trees in the land of men. He said, “This is what happens to arrogant ones who ignore wise advice and go off by themselves.”

The moral is: Fools are deaf to wise words.

Tale 75 — The Fish Who Worked a Miracle

[The Power of Truthfulness]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born as a fish in a pond in northern India. There were many kinds of fish, big and small, living in the pond with the Bodhisatta.

There came to be a time of severe draught. The rainy season did not come as usual. The crops of men died, and many ponds, lakes and rivers dried up.

The fish and turtles dug down and buried themselves in the mud, frantically trying to keep wet and save themselves. The crows were pleased by all this. They stuck their beaks down into the mud, pulled up the frightened little fish, and feasted on them.

The suffering of pain and death by the other fish touched the Enlightenment Being with sadness, and filled him with pity and compassion. He realized that he was the only one who could save them. But it would take a miracle.

The truth was that he had remained innocent. by never taking the life of anyone. He was determined to use the power of this wholesome truth to make rain fall from the sky, and release his relatives from their misery and death.

He pulled himself up from under the black mud. He was a big fish, and as black from the mud as, polished ebony. He opened his eyes, which sparkled like rubies, looked up to the sky, and called on the rain god Pajjunna. He exclaimed, “Oh my friend Pajjunna, god of rain, I am suffering for the sake of my relatives. Why do you withhold rain from me, who am perfectly wholesome, and make me suffer in sympathy with all these fish?”

“I was born among fish, for whom it is customary to eat other fish - even our own kind, like cannibals! But since I was born, I myself have never eaten any fish, even one as tiny as a rice grain. In fact, I have never taken life from anyone. The truthfulness of this my innocence gives me the right to say to you: Make the rains fall! Relieve the suffering of my relatives!”

He said this the way one gives orders to a servant.

And he continued, commanding the mighty rain god Pajjunna: “Make rain fall from the thunderclouds! Do not allow the crows their hidden treasures! Let the crows feel the sorrow of their unwholesome actions. At the same

time release me from my sorrow, who have lived in perfect wholesomeness.”

After only a short pause, the sky opened up with a heavy downpour of rain, relieving many from the fear of death — fish, turtles and even humans. And when the great fish who had worked this miracle eventually died, he was reborn as he deserved.

The moral is: True innocence relieves the suffering of many.

Tale 76 — The Meditating Security Guard

[Fearlessness]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born into a rich and powerful family. When he grew up he became dissatisfied with going after the ordinary pleasures of the world. So he gave up his former lifestyle, including his wealth and position. He went to the foothills of the Himalayas and became a holy man.

It just so happened that one day he ran out of salt. So he decided to go and collect alms. He came upon a caravan and went with it part way on its journey. In the evening they stopped and made camp.

The holy man began walking at the foot of a big nearby tree. He concentrated until he entered a high mental state. He remained in that state throughout the night, while continuing to walk.

Meanwhile, 500 bandits surrounded the campsite. They waited until after supper, when all had settled down for the night. But before they could attack, they noticed the holy man. They said to each other, “That man must be on guard, for security. If he sees us, he’ll warn the rest. So let’s wait until he falls asleep, and then do our robbing and looting!”

What the bandits didn’t know was that the holy man was so deep in meditation that he didn’t notice them at all — or anything else for that matter! So they kept waiting for him to fall asleep. And he just kept walking and walking and walking — until the light of dawn finally began to appear. Only then was he finished meditating.

Having had no chance to rob the caravan, the bandits threw down their weapons in frustration. They shouted, “Hey you in the caravan! If your security guard hadn’t stayed up all night, walking under that tree, we would have robbed you all! You should reward him well!” With that they left in search of someone else to rob.

When it became light the people in the caravan saw the clubs and stones left behind by the bandits. Trembling with fear, they went over to the holy man. They greeted him respectfully and asked if he had seen the bandits. “Yes, this morning I did,” he said.

“Weren’t you scared?” they asked. “No,” said the Enlightenment Being, “the sight of bandits is only frightening to the rich. But I’m not a rich man. I

own nothing of any value to robbers. So why should I be afraid of them? I have no anxiety in a village, and no fear in the forest. Possessing only loving-kindness and compassion, I follow the straight path leading to Truth.”

In this manner he preached the way of fearlessness to the lucky people of the caravan. His words made them feel peaceful, and they honored him.

After a long life developing the Four Heavenly States of Mind, he died and was reborn in a high heaven world.

The moral is: It pays to have a holy man around.

Tale 77 — Sixteen Dreams

Chapter 1. Panic

Once upon a time there was a king called Brahmadata who was ruling in Benares, in northern India. One night he had 16 frightening nightmare dreams. He awoke in the morning in a cold sweat, with his heart thumping loudly in his chest. The 16 dreams had scared him to death. He was sure they meant that something terrible was about to happen. In a panic, he called for his official priests, to ask their advice.

When the priests arrived at the royal bed chamber, they asked the king if he had slept well. He told them that it had been the worst night of his life, that he had been scared to death by 16 dreams, and that he was desperate to find out their meanings.

At this the priests' eyes lit up. They asked him, "What were these dreams, your majesty?" King Brahmadata told them all 16 dreams. The priests pounded their foreheads and exclaimed, "Oh what horrors! It couldn't be worse, your majesty. Such dreams as these can mean only one thing - danger!"

The king asked them, "What danger, oh priests? You must tell me the meaning at once!" They replied, "It is certain, your majesty, these dreams show that one of three disasters will take place - terrible harm to the kingdom, to your life, or to the royal wealth."

The king had feared as much. He wrung his hands as the sweat kept pouring from his body. He was shaking all over with terror and panic. He asked, "Tell me, oh worthy royal priests, is there any way to avoid this disaster?" "Indeed, it is very dangerous," they said. "If you do nothing, the end is certain. But we can prevent it. If we couldn't, then all our training and learning would be useless. Trust us, lord."

The panic-stricken king cried out, "Just tell me what to do, priests. I'll do anything! What can you do to save me, my kingdom and my wealth?" "We must offer the greatest animal sacrifice that has ever been seen," they said. "We must kill, as sacrificial offerings, four of every type of animal that lives!"

Although he was usually a gentle, kind and merciful ruler. King Brahmadata was so frightened that he couldn't think straight at all.

Paralyzed with fear, he put all his hope and faith in his priests. He gave them permission to prepare the gigantic slaughter.

The priests said, “Have no fear, your majesty, we will take care of everything. We will prevent the coming doom!” They knew they would be paid well to perform the sacrifice. And the meat from the killed animals would be theirs as well. Their secret thoughts were, “This is a great way for us to get piles of money, and the best food and drink too!”

The priests got to work organizing the biggest sacrifice Benares had ever seen. Just outside of town they dug a huge pit. Into it they put the most perfect ones they could find of all the animals - land animals, birds and fish. From each kind they selected four to be killed in the ceremony.. It became known as the ‘Four-from-all’ sacrifice.

Meanwhile, the king’s senior teaching priest had a promising young pupil. He was gentle and compassionate, and very well-educated. He wondered about all that was happening. So he asked the teacher priest, “Oh master, you have taught me well the wise teachings of old. Can you show me anywhere it says the killing of one will save the life of another?”

The priest answered, “What kind of question is that? Open your eyes and be realistic, my boy. Don’t you see that this great sacrifice, the Four-from-all, will make us rich? You must be trying to help the king hold onto his riches!”

The idealistic and sincere pupil said, “You have not answered my question, master. If this sacrifice is to be your work, it shall be mine no longer!” With these words he departed and went to the royal pleasure garden to consider what he would do.

It just so happened that the Enlightenment Being had been born into a rich high class family. For many generations the men in that family had been priests, just like the ones who were now preparing the Four-from-all sacrifice. But when the Bodhisatta grew up he abandoned the life of a rich priest. Instead he went to the Himalayas and lived as a humble forest monk. He concentrated his mind in meditation and entered high mental states. He gained the sweetest inner happiness, and even miraculous supernatural powers.

This forest monk loved all the animals. When he heard about what was happening in Benares he was filled with tenderness and compassion. He

decided, “I must teach the ignorant people and release them from the chains of superstition. I will go to the city at once!” Then he used his supernatural power to fly through the air to Benares. In an instant he was seated on a rock in the king’s pleasure garden. His gentle nature made him glow like a golden sunrise.

The idealistic young student approached and recognized him as a great holy man. He bowed respectfully and sat on the ground. The forest monk asked him, “Young man, do you have a good and just king reigning here in Benares?”

“Yes. “ said the student, “our king is kind and good. But he is being misled by the royal priests. He had 16 dreams which left him completely panic-stricken. The priests took advantage of this when he told them his dreams. They have convinced him to have a huge sacrifice and kill many animals. Oh holy one, please tell the king the true meanings of his dreams. Free the many helpless beings from fear and death.”

The holy man said, “If he comes and asks me, I will tell him.” “I will bring him, sir,” said the young man. “Kindly wait here a short while until I return.”

The student went to the king and told him there was a marvelous holy man seated on a rock in the royal pleasure garden. He told him he had said he could interpret the king’s dreams. Hearing this, the king went with him to the garden. A crowd followed behind.

Chapter 2. Roaring Bulls With No Fight

King Brahmadata knelt down before the holy man and then sat next to him. He asked, “Your reverence, can you tell me the meanings of my 16 dreams?”

“Of course I can,” said the forest monk. “Tell them to me, beginning with the first eight.”

The king replied, “These were the first eight dreams:

roaring bulls with no fight, midget trees bearing fruit, cows sucking milk from calves, calves pulling carts with bulls trailing behind, a horse eating with two mouths, a jackal urinating in a golden bowl, a she-jackal eating a rope maker’s rope, one overflowing pot with all the rest empty.”

“Tell me more about your first dream,” said the monk.

“Your reverence, I saw four pure black bulls who came from the four directions to fight in the palace courtyard. People came from miles around to see the bulls fight. But they only pretended to fight, roared at each other, and went back where they came from.”

“Oh king,” said the holy man, “this dream tells of things that will not happen in your lifetime or in mine. In the far-off future, kings will be unwholesome and stingy. The people too will be unwholesome. Goodness will be decreasing while evil increases. The seasons will be out of whack, with sunstroke on winter days and snow storms on summer days. The skies will be dry, with poor clouds and little water. Harvests will be small and people will starve. Then dark clouds will come from the four directions, but even after much thunder and lightning, they will depart without letting rain fall - just like the roaring bulls who leave without fighting.

“But have no fear, there will be no harm to the people of today. The priests say this dream requires sacrifice, only because that is how they earn their money. Now tell me your second dream.”

“Your reverence. I had a dream where tiny midget plants grew no more than one foot tall, and then flowered and gave fruit.”

“Oh king,” said the holy man, the soil will be poor for growing crops, and humans will live short lives. The young will have strong desires, and even young girls will have babies - just like midget trees bearing fruit.

“But this will not happen until the distant future when the world is declining. What was your third dream, oh king?”

“Your reverence. I saw cows sucking milk from their own calves. born the same day,” said the king, shuddering with fear.

“Be calm,” said the monk, “this too will not happen in our lifetimes. But someday people will no longer respect their mothers, fathers, mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law. People will give everything to their own children, taking over the savings of their elder parents and in-laws. Then, by whim alone, they may or may not feed and clothe their elders. So the elderly will be at the mercy of their own children - just like cows sucking milk from their day-old calves.

“But clearly it is not like that today, oh king, so you have nothing to fear. Now tell me your fourth dream.”

Somewhat relieved, the king continued, “Your reverence, I dreamed I saw big strong full-grown bulls following behind bullock carts. They were being pulled by frail awkward calves. The calves stopped and stood still, unable to pull the heavily loaded carts. Caravans could no longer travel and goods could not be taken to market.”

“There will be a time,” said the holy man, “when unwholesome stingy kings will no longer respect wise experienced judges. Instead they will appoint young foolish judges, granting them the highest privileges. But they will not be able to make difficult decisions. They will become judges in name only, doing no real work - just like the calves who can’t pull the carts. Meanwhile, the older wiser ones will offer no help, thinking it is no longer their concern - just like the bulls trailing behind.

“Again you have nothing to fear, oh king, from those far-off times when all the nations will be poorly run by the young and foolish. What was your fifth dream?”

“Your reverence, my fifth dream was very strange indeed. I saw a horse eating with two mouths, one on each side of his head!” Again the king trembled as he spoke.

The forest monk said, “This will happen in another far-off future time, when unwholesome foolish kings appoint unwholesome greedy judges. Not caring in the least about right and wrong, they will take bribes from both sides in the same case - just like a horse eating greedily with two mouths.

“Now tell me your sixth dream.”

“Your reverence, I dreamed I saw a golden plate worth a hundred thousand pieces of money. People were holding it and coaxing an old skinny jackal to urinate in it. And that’s just what he did!” said the king, making a face.

“Oh king, this too will come to pass in a far-off time when the kings will be outsiders, not born in the ruling families of the countries they rule. So they will not trust the experienced ministers from the native noble class. They will replace them with low class ministers they can control more easily. Meanwhile the old nobles will depend on the new ruling class. So they will offer their high class daughters in marriage to the low class ministers - just like golden bowls urinated in by jackals.

“But this will not happen in your time, oh king. What was your seventh dream?”

“Your reverence, I dreamed I saw a man making a rope and letting it pile up under his chair. There a hungry female jackal was eating the rope as it fell, without the man knowing it.”

“There will come a time,” said the monk, “when women’s cravings will increase. They will desire men, strong liquor, jewelry and all sorts of useless possessions. They will spend a lot of time window shopping. Paying more attention to their lovers than to their husbands. they will ignore even the most important household activities. And they will waste all the money earned by their husbands - just like the jackal devouring the rope that is produced by the rope maker.

“But as you can see, oh king, these times are not upon us. Tell me about your eighth dream.”

“Your reverence,” said the king, “I saw one big pot full of water, and many small empty pots, in front of the palace gate. All the warriors, priests, merchants and farmers were bringing water from all directions. But they were pouring it only into the big pot. That one was overflowing and wasting the water, while all the little pots remained empty!” Again the king shook in fear as he spoke.

“Have no fear, oh king,” said the holy man. “Way off in the future the world will be declining. The land will be less fertile, so crops will be harder to grow. The richest will have no more than 100,000 pieces of money - there will be no more millionaires! Even the kings will be poor and stingy.

“The kings and the wealthy will make all the rest work for them only. The poor will be forced to bring all their products, grains, vegetables and fruits to the warehouses of the rich and powerful. And the barns of the hard working poor will remain empty - it will be like the big pot filled to overflowing, with all the little ones empty.

“So now you know the meanings of your first eight dreams. They have foretold:

thunderclouds with no rain,
young girls having babies,
the elderly at the mercy of their children,
young foolish judges with no help from the wise,
greedy judges taking bribes from both sides,
low class ministers with high class wives,
wives wasting the earnings of their husbands,
the rich taking from the poor leaving them nothing.

“So your mind may be at peace, oh king, regarding these first eight dreams. Clearly such times are not upon us, and these dangers are not to be feared in the present day.”

Chapter 3. The Frightening Sound of ‘Munch, Munch, Munch’

“Indeed,” said King Brahmadata to the humble forest monk, “you have set my mind to rest concerning my first eight dreams. But my last eight dreams are even more frightening. I must do something to prevent the doom they predict.” Again the king began shaking uncontrollably with fear and panic.

“Calm down,” said the holy man, “and tell me these dreams also, that I may relieve your distress.”

The king replied, “These were my last eight dreams, the ninth to the 16th: a pond that’s muddy in the middle and clear by the shore, rice cooking unevenly in a pot, fine sandalwood traded for spoiled buttermilk, empty pumpkins sinking in water, solid rocks floating on water. giant snakes gobbled up by tiny she-frogs, royal golden swans waiting on a bad village crow, the frightening sound of ‘munch, munch, munch’.”

“Please tell me the details of your ninth dream,” said the monk.

“Your reverence, I dreamed I saw a pond which was deep in the middle and shallow by the shore. It was filled with all five kinds of lotuses, and there were all kinds of animals - two-footed and four-footed - drinking near the shore. And yet the water remained clear by the shore, and got muddy only in the middle. How could this be? What does this mean?”

“Oh king,” said the forest monk, “in the distant future there will be only unwholesome kings. They will rule based on their will power, along with their anger and fear. They will not care at all about wholesomeness and justice. They will be much more interested in becoming rich from all kinds of bribes, than in the well-being of the citizens. No longer will rulers have patience, loving-kindness and compassion towards the people they rule. Instead they will be rough and cruel, crushing the people to squeeze the last penny from them in taxes - just as the sweet juice is squeezed from sugar cane.

“Therefore the citizens, unable to pay the taxes and bribes, will flee to the borderlands. Soon there will be less people living in the corrupt central capitals, and the borderlands will be heavily populated by the humble just like the pond that is muddy in the middle and clear by the shore.

“But obviously there is nothing in this for you to fear, oh good and wholesome king. What was your tenth dream?”

“Your reverence, I dreamed I saw rice cooking unevenly in a pot. Some was overcooked, some well-cooked. and some still raw.”

“Don’t worry about this either,” said the holy man. “This dream foretells a time when all will be unwholesome, not like today! Kings will be unwholesome, and so will officials and ministers, priests and homemakers, city and country folks. Amazing as it may seem, this dream indicates a time when holy men will be unwholesome too! In addition. even the gods, tree spirits and fairies will be unwholesome and wicked!

“The winds will change quickly, sometimes blowing too hard and sometimes not at all. These winds will shake the heavenly homes of the sky gods. Therefore, in some places rains will cause floods, it will rain just right in some areas, and there will be terrible droughts in other places. It will be like rice in the cooking pot - some overcooked, some well-cooked, and some raw.

“Now tell me your 11th dream, oh king.”

“Your reverence, I dreamed I saw the finest sandalwood, worth 100,000 pieces of money, being traded for spoiled buttermilk. What is the meaning of this?”

“This too indicates a far-off future time, when knowledge of Truth is disappearing. There will be many greedy shameless preachers who distort the Four Necessities: food, clothing, shelter and medicine. They will make these into luxuries, far richer than they really need.

“They will teach the worthlessness of luxuries and the unwholesomeness of greed, by preaching the Truth of nonattachment. But in return for preaching, they will require money and luxuries. So they will cause an increase in craving, rather than showing the way towards Liberation from craving. They will preach Truth only so they can obtain worthless things - just like priceless sandalwood traded for spoiled buttermilk.

“Now let me hear your 12th dream.”

“Your reverence, I saw, in a dream, empty pumpkins sinking to the bottom of the water.”

“Oh king, this foretells a distant future when the world will be upside down. So once again, you have nothing to fear in this life. Unwholesome kings will grant high positions to the low class rather than the high class. The low class will quickly become rich and the high class poor. In all departments and functions, the ignorant words of the uneducated low class officials will be greatly respected - just like empty pumpkins sinking to the depths of the water.

“Even among the religious, humble wholesome monks will lose respect, while the unwholesome teachings of shameless monks will be followed and adored -just like empty pumpkins sinking to the bottom.

‘What was your 13th dream?’

“Your reverence, I dreamed I saw solid rocks floating on top of the water. How strange this seems. What does it mean, wise one?”

‘This too indicates the future era when the world will be upside down. In all departments and functions, the wise words of the well-educated nobles will be ignored, due to their birth alone.

“Likewise among the religious, the words of Truth spoken by humble wholesome monks will be ignored

just like solid rocks floating away on the surface of the water.

“What was your 14th dream?”

“Your reverence, it was a frightening dream in which I saw tiny female frogs chasing big long black snakes. When they caught up to them they cut them and broke them in pieces like water lily stumps, and then gobbled them up!”

“There is nothing for you to fear in this dream either, oh king. This represents a future time when the world will be declining. The wholesomeness in people’s natures will decrease. Desires will increase in their minds until they are enslaved by their cravings. Because of this, men will be under the orders of their youngest prettiest wives. The servants, bulls, buffaloes and all other household wealth will be managed by the youngest wives - due to the uncontrolled desires of their husbands.

“These wives will treat their husbands like slaves. keeping them under their thumbs. If the men ask about family affairs, their wives will say, ‘There’s no

need for you to ask. Everything in my home belongs to me, not you!’ It will be like big long snakes gobbled up by tiny she-frogs.

“Now tell me your 15th dream.”

“Your reverence, I saw a crow, the kind that lives near villages. I knew he was filled with the ‘Ten Bad Qualities’. He was being followed and served by golden swans. the kind seen as kings by other birds.”

“This too indicates a distant time when all kings will be weaklings. They will be no good at riding elephants or horses, or fighting battles. So you can easily see there is nothing for you to fear, mighty king.

“Those weakling kings will be so afraid of being overthrown that they will be afraid to give powerful positions to worthy well-educated nobles. Instead they will appoint foot servants, bath attendants, barbers and so forth. And the nobles will have to become the lowest servants of the untrained new officials - just like royal golden swans waiting on a bad village crow.

“At last we have reached your 16th dream, oh king. Describe it to me.?”

“Your reverence, I will tell you my last dream, the only one that still frightens me. Ordinarily, leopards chase and eat goats. But in my 16th dream, I saw goats chasing leopards! And when they caught them they ate them up, making the sound, ‘munch, munch, munch!’ All the other animals who heard this frightening sound and saw the meat-eating goats approaching, ran and hid in the forest. The memory of this dream still frightens me, holy one.”

“Alas, even this dream applies only to the far-off time when the world will be ruled by unwholesome kings.

The lowly, who are unaccustomed to power, will become closest to the kings. They will gain power while the nobles become poor and unknown.

“In the law courts, the newcomers will confiscate the inherited wealth from the nobles - all their lands, homes and possessions. And when the nobles go to the courts to protest, they will be told, ‘How dare you argue with us! You do not understand the situation you are in. We will tell the king and have your hands and feet cut off!’ The nobles will run away and hide in fear.

‘likewise, bad monks will injure good monks as much as they please. With no one to support and defend them, the good monks will leave the cities and

villages. They will live in the jungle in fear of the bad monks. It will be like all those who hear the sound of ‘munch. munch, munch’, and live in fear of meat-eating goats.

“Oh king, now you know the meanings of all 16 dreams. The last eight have foretold:

overtaxed people fleeing to the borderlands, an unwholesome world with uneven rains, Truth being taught by preachers greedy for money, ignorant and unwholesome words gaining respect, wise words and Truth losing respect, husbands enslaved by desires for their youngest wives, educated nobles in the service of untrained newcomers, noble and good living in fear of powerful and bad.”

Chapter 4. Teaching

King Brahmadata bowed to the ground before the holy man and said, “Your wisdom has taken my fear and panic from me. Your compassion has kept me from doing terrible unwholesome things to many helpless beings. My gratitude is endless, oh holy monk.”

The Enlightenment Being said to the king, “Now you must realize why your royal priests wanted to have a sacrifice ceremony. It was not because they understood the Truth. and it was not because they cared for you and your well-being. Instead it was due to greediness. They wanted only to get rich, eat fine food, and keep their jobs at your court.

“Your 16 dreams have indicated disasters in the distant future. What you do now will have no effect on them. Those things will happen when the world is declining, when the unreal is seen as real, when the unreasonable is thought to be reasonable, and when the non-existent seems to exist. It will be a time when many will be unwholesome without shame,, and few will be ashamed of their own wrongdoing.

‘Therefore, to prevent these things by performing a sacrifice today is impossible!’”

Remaining seated, the Bodhisatta miraculously rose into the air. Then he continued his teaching: “Oh king, it was fear that unbalanced your mind and brought you close to killing so many helpless ones. Real freedom from fear comes from a pure mind. And the way to begin purifying your mind is to climb the five steps of training. You will benefit greatly from giving up the five unwholesome actions. These are:

destroying life, for this is not compassion; taking what is not given, for this is not generosity; doing wrong in sexual ways, for this is not lovingkindness; speaking falsely, for this is not Truth; losing your mind from alcohol, for this leads to falling down the first four steps.

“Oh king, from now on do not join with the priests in killing animals for sacrifice.”

In this way the Great Being taught the Truth, freed many people from bondage to false beliefs, and released many animals from fear and death.

In an instant he returned through the air to his home in the Himalayas.

King Brahmadata practiced the Five Training Steps. He gave alms and did many other good things. At the end of a long life he died and was reborn as he deserved.

The moral is: Beware of the panic-stricken man. What he can do is more dangerous than what scared him in the first place.

Tale 78 — Illisa the Cheap

[Miserliness]

Once upon a time, there was a billionaire in northern India. He was an adviser to a king. Although he was very rich, he was not at all good looking. He was lame due to crooked feet, and his hands were also deformed into crooked positions. His eyes were crooked too, that is to say, he was cross-eyed. And some would say he had a crooked mind as well, for he was without any religion whatsoever! You might think people would call him, 'Illisa the Crooked', but that was not the case.

Illisa also happened to be a miser, one who will not give anything to anybody. He would not even spend any of his wealth on his own enjoyment. Therefore, it was said that his home was like a pond possessed by demons, where no one could quench his thirst.

However, Illisa's ancestors, going back seven generations, were the most generous of gift givers. They gave away the very best of their possessions. But when Illisa inherited the family fortune, he abandoned that great family tradition.

The family had always maintained a charity dining hall, where anyone could come for a free hot meal. Illisa burned this free food kitchen to the ground, since he wanted to be rid of the expense. Then he pushed the poor and hungry from his door, hitting them as they went. He quickly earned a reputation for hoarding all his wealth and possessions. Soon people began calling him, 'Illisa the Cheap'.

One day when he was returning home from advising the king, Illisa saw a tired worn out villager by the side of the road. He had obviously walked a great distance. He was sitting on the ground pouring cheap wine into a cup. He was drinking it, along with some smelly dried fish.

Seeing this made Illisa thirsty for a drink of liquor. Then he thought, "I would love to have a drink! But if I do, others may want to drink with me, and that could cost me money!" For that reason alone, he suppressed his craving for alcohol.

As time passed, his craving did not disappear. Instead, fighting it and worrying constantly made him look sick. His skin turned yellow, and he became thinner and thinner until the veins stuck out from his flesh. He

fought a constant battle against his thirst for liquor. He slept face down, holding onto the bed tightly while he slept.

His wife began to notice the changes in him. One day, while massaging his back to comfort him, she asked, "Are you sick, my husband?" "No," said Illisa. "Mid the king get angry at you?" she asked. "No," said he. "Have our children or the servants done anything to upset you?" asked his wife. Again he said "No." "Do you have a strong craving for something?" she continued.

Illisa the Cheap kept silent. He was afraid that if he told her it might end up costing him money! But his wife began pleading, "Tell me, please tell me." Finally, swallowing hard and clearing his throat, he answered, "Yes, I do have a strong craving." "A craving for what?" she asked. "For a drink of alcoholic liquor," he admitted at last.

"Oh, is that all!" said his wife. "Why didn't you tell me this at first? You are not poor. You can easily afford to buy a drink for yourself and the whole city as well! Shall I brew a big batch of liquor for us all?"

Of course this was not what Illisa the Cheap wanted to hear. He blurted out, "Why should we give liquor to others? Let them earn their own!" Then his wife asked, "Well then, what about just for us and our neighbors?" "I didn't know you had become so rich all of a sudden!" he shot back at her. "Mow about just our household?" she asked. "Mow generous you are with my money!" he replied. "All right then," she said, "I will brew just enough liquor for you and me, my husband." "Why should you be included? Women should not drink liquor!"

"Now I understand you perfectly well!" said Illisa's wife. "I will make only enough liquor for you alone." But Illisa the Cheap always thought of even the slightest chance of spending money. He said, "If you prepare liquor here, people will notice and come ask for some. Even if I buy some in a liquor store and bring it here to drink, others will find out and want some. There will be no liquor given away in this house!"

So Illisa decided to give the smallest coin he had to a servant boy, and sent him to the liquor store. When he returned, Illisa took him down to the riverside. He took the small bottle of liquor from the boy, and set him to stand watch nearby. Then Illisa the Cheap hid in the underbrush, poured some liquor into a cup, and secretly began drinking.

It just so happened that when Illisa's father had died, he had been reborn as Sakka, King of the Heaven of 33. This was because of his lifelong generosity.

At this particular moment, Sakka was curious about whether his free food kitchen was still giving out food to all who wished it. He discovered that it no longer existed, that his son had given up the family tradition and had even kicked the hungry out onto the street! He saw his miserly son drinking by himself, hiding in the bushes, afraid he might have to share with others.

Sakka. decided to change Illisa's mind and teach him a lesson about the results of both good and bad actions. He decided to make him become generous, rather than cheap, so that he too might be reborn in a heaven world.

The King of the Heaven of 33 disguised himself so that he looked exactly like Illisa the Cheap. He too had crooked feet, crooked hands and crooked eyes. He entered the city, went to the palace, and asked for an audience with the king. The king said, "Let my adviser Illisa come in."

He asked, "Why have you come at this untimely moment?" "My lord," said Sakka, "I have come to give my billionaire's wealth to you to fill up the treasury." The king replied, "No, no. I have enough, much more than that." The disguised Sakka said, "Then if you do not want it my lord. kindly permit me to give it away as I wish." "Do as you say," said the king.

Sakka went to Illisa's house. The servants greeted him as if he were indeed their master. He entered the house and sat down. He summoned the gate keeper and said, "If anybody comes here who looks like me and says, 'This house is mine', don't let him in. Instead beat him on the back and kick him out!" Then he went upstairs and called for Illisa's wife. Smiling at her he said, "My love, let us be generous!"

At first, Illisa's wife, children and servants were surprised. They said to each other, "It was never in his mind to give anything to anybody before today. This must be because he's been drinking alcohol and has gotten a little soft in the head!"

Illisa's wife said, "As you wish, my lord, give away as much as you like." Tall for the drummer," said Sakka, "and order him to go and beat his drum in the city. Have him announce that all who desire gold, silver, pearls,

jewels, lapis lazuli, diamonds and coral, are to come to the home of Illisa the billionaire.” She did as he said.

Soon a big crowd began to arrive, carrying baskets, buckets and bags. Sakka opened up the store rooms of Illisa’s wealth. He said, “I give you all these riches. Take as much as you want and go.” The people took it all outside and piled it up. They filled up their containers and carried them away.

One clever man from the countryside harnessed Illisa the Cheap’s bullocks to Illisa the Cheap’s bullock cart. Then he filled it to the brim with Illisa the Cheap’s seven treasures, and rode out of the city by the main road.

Without knowing it, he passed by the bushes where the real Illisa was still drinking liquor. He was so happy to be suddenly rich, that he shouted out as he went, “May Lord Illisa the billionaire live a hundred years! Because of you I have struck the jackpot. I won’t have to work another day in my life! These were your bullocks, your cart and your seven treasures. They were not given to me by my father and mother — but by you, Illisa the generous!”

The hidden Illisa was shocked to hear this. He thought, “This man is talking about me! Has the king taken my wealth and given it away?” Then: he jumped out from the bushes and shouted, “Hey you, what are you doing with my bullock cart?” He grabbed the reins and stopped the cart.

The villager got down and said, “What’s wrong with you? The billionaire Lord Illisa is giving his wealth to all the people of the city. What do you think you’re doing?”

As he said this he struck Illisa on the head as hard as a thunderclap and rode away on the cart filled with treasure.

Illisa the Cheap bounced to his feet and chased after the cart. He grabbed the reins again. This time the villager held onto Illisa by the hair, pulled his head down, and struck it hard with his elbow. He grabbed him by the neck, threw him to the ground, and then continued on his way.

All this rough treatment sobered up Illisa. He ran home as fast as he could. He saw the crowds of people carrying off his precious riches. He grabbed hold of them to stop them, but they just pushed him out of the way and knocked him down. Nearly fainting from his bruises, he tried to get into his

home. But the gate keeper said, “Where do you think you’re going?” Beating him with a cane, he grabbed him by the neck and threw him out.

Illisa thought, “Now no one can help me but the king.” So he ran to the palace and went straight inside. He said, “My lord, why do you want my house to be looted?” The king said, “This is not my doing. I myself heard you say that if I would not accept your wealth, you would give it to all the citizens. I applaud your generosity! And did you not send a drummer into the streets to announce you were giving your wealth to any and all?”

“My lord king must be joking!” said Illisa. “I didn’t do any such thing. People don’t call me ‘Illisa the Cheap’ for nothing! I don’t give anything to anybody if I can help it! Please, lord king, summon whoever is giving my treasures away, and clear up this matter.”

After being summoned by the king, Sakka came to the palace. Illisa asked, “Who is the real billionaire, my lord king?” Neither the king nor his ministers could tell the difference between them.

The king said, “We cannot recognize which one it is. Do you know someone who can recognize you for sure?” “Yes, my lord, my wife can recognize me,” said Illisa. But when she was called for and asked to decide, she stood next to Sakka and said, “This is my husband.” When Illisa’s children and servants were summoned, they too picked Sakka.

Illisa thought, “I have a wart on my head, covered up by my hair. Only my barber knows this.” So he said to the king, “Please summon my barber. He knows me very well.”

The barber was called for and the king asked him, “Can you tell us which of these two men is Illisa the billionaire?” “I must examine their heads,” he said, “then I will determine who the real Illisa is.” “Do so,” said the king.

Immediately Sakka, King of the Heaven of 33, made a wart appear on his head. When the barber examined them he found warts on both their heads. He said, “Oh lord king, I cannot recognize which of these is Illisa. Both have crooked feet, both have crooked hands, both have crooked eyes, and both have warts on the same spots on their heads. I can’t tell the difference!”

Hearing these words, Illisa began trembling. His mind became so unbalanced from losing his last hope of regaining his wealth, that he fainted on the spot.

At that very moment, Sakka said, “I am not Illisa. I am Sakka, King of the Gods of the Heaven of 33.” As he said this, he used his super powers to rise into the air and remain suspended there.

Attendants splashed cold water on Illisa’s face and woke him from his fainting spell. He knelt down in respect before Sakka, King of Gods.

Then Sakka spoke: “This wealth came from me, Illisa, not from you. I myself, when I was your father, did many meritorious deeds. I was glad to give to the poor and needy. That is why, when I died, I was reborn as Sakka, King of Gods.

“However, you have violated our family tradition. Being a non-giver, living the life of a miser, burning my charity dining hall to the ground, and chasing the homeless beggars from your door — you have kept all the family wealth to yourself. You are so cheap that you cannot even use the wealth for your own enjoyment! It is utterly wasted and useless. The family fortune has become like a pond possessed by demons, where no one can quench his thirst. It would be better if you were dead!

“Illisa, my former son, if you change your ways you will be the one to benefit most. If you rebuild my free food kitchen and give hot meals to all who ask, you will earn both merit and peace of mind. But if you refuse to be generous, I will make all your riches disappear. And I will split your crooked skull with my divine diamond dagger!”

In fear of his own death, Illisa the Cheap promised, “I will give generously from now on, oh King of Gods.”

Sakka accepted his promise. Still floating in the air, he preached on the true value of giving. He also convinced him to practice the Five Training Steps, for the benefit of himself and others. These are to give up entirely: destroying life, taking what is not given, sexual wrongdoing, speaking falsely, and losing one’s mind from alcohol.

Then Sakka disappeared and returned to his heavenly home.

Illisa did indeed change his ways. He gave alms generously, did many other good deeds, and became much happier. When he died he was reborn in a heaven world.

The moral is: Poor indeed is the rich man who won’t part with a penny.

Tale 79 — A Motherless Son

[Betrayal]

Once upon a time, King Brahmadata was ruling in Benares in northern India. He had a clever minister who pleased him very much. To show his appreciation he appointed him headman of a remote border village. His duty was to represent the king and collect the king's taxes from the villagers.

Before long the headman was completely accepted by the villagers. Since he had been sent by the just King Brahmadata, they respected him highly. They came to trust him as much as if he had been born among them.

In addition to being clever, the headman was also very greedy. Collecting the king's taxes was not enough reward for him. After becoming friendly with a gang of bandits, he thought up a plan to make himself rich.

The headman said to his friends, the robbers, "I will find excuses and reasons to lead all the villagers into the jungle. This will be easy for me, since they trust me as one of their own. I will keep them busy in the jungle, while you invade the village and rob everything of value. Carry everything away before I bring the people home. In return for my help, you must give me half of all the loot!" The bandits agreed, and a date was set.

When the day arrived, the headman assembled all the villagers and led them into the jungle. According to the plan, the bandits entered the unprotected village. They stole everything of value they could find. They also killed all the defenseless village cows, and cooked and ate the meat. At the end of the day the gang collected all their stolen goods and escaped.

It just so happened that on that very same day a travelling merchant came to the village to trade his goods. When he saw the bandits he stayed out of sight.

The headman brought all the villagers home in the evening. He ordered them to make a lot of noise by beating drums as they marched towards the village. If the bandits had still been there, they would have heard the villagers coming for sure.

The village people saw that they had been robbed and all their cows were dead and partly eaten. This made them very sad. The travelling merchant appeared and said to them, "This treacherous village headman has betrayed your trust in him. He must be a partner of the gang of bandits. Only after

they left with all your valuables did he lead you home. beating drums as loudly as possible!

‘This man pretends to know nothing about what has happened - as innocent as a new-born lamb! In truth, it’s as if a son did something so shameful that his mother would say -‘I am not his mother. He is not my son. My son is dead!’”

Before long, news of the crime reached the king. He recalled the treacherous headman and punished him according to the law.

The moral is: No one defends a betrayer of trust.

Tale 80 — Fear Maker and Little Archer

[Self-deception]

Some say that the world comes into being, disappears, and comes into being ... over and over, throughout time. In one of these previous worlds, countless years ago, Truth was unknown and the Five Training Steps were practiced by only a few. Even the Enlightenment Being - the Bodhisatta - did not know Truth, and had not yet discovered the Five Training Steps.

Once upon a time in that long ago world, there was a king named Brahmadata. Like many other kings of that name, he ruled in the place known today as Benares.

The Bodhisatta was born in a rich high class family in a market town, also in northern India. He happened to be a dwarf, bent over and partly hunchbacked. When he became a young man he remained short and stooped. Many people found him unpleasant to look at.

He studied under a very outstanding teacher. He learned all there was to know. at that time, about the two great branches of knowledge - religion and science. He also learned how to use a bow and arrow better than anyone else in India. For this reason his teacher called him 'Little Archer'.

Like most new graduates he was quite clever. He thought, "Many people judge by appearance alone. If I go to a king and ask for a job, he'll probably ask, 'Having such a short body, what can you possibly do for me?' Therefore it would be better if I can team up with a front man - someone who is handsome in appearance, tall and well-grown in body, and strong in personality. I will provide the brains, but remain out of sight behind his shadow. In this way we can earn a good living together."

One day he was walking in the district where the weavers live and work. He happened to see a big, strong looking man. He greeted him and asked his name. The weaver said, "Because of my appearance, people call me Fear Maker."

"With such an impressive name." said Little Archer, "and being so big and strong looking, why do you have such a low paying job?" "Because life is hard," he replied.

"I have an idea." said the dwarf "In all India there is no one as skilled with a bow and arrow as I am. But I don't look the part! If I asked a king for work

he would either laugh or get angry at me. He would not believe that a hunchbacked little dwarf could be the greatest archer in India!

‘But you look perfect. And your name helps too. Therefore, let us go together to the king. You will be the front man and do all the talking. The king will hire you immediately. Meanwhile I will remain as if hidden underneath your shadow. I will be the real archer and we will prosper and be happy. You just have to do whatever I tell you.’

Thinking he had nothing to lose, Fear Maker agreed, saying, ‘It’s a deal, my friend!’

The two partners went off to Benares to see the king. When they entered the throne room, they bowed respectfully to the king. He asked them, ‘Why have you come here?’

Fear Maker stood in front and did all the talking. He answered, ‘I am the great archer known as Fear Maker. There is no one in all India who understands the science of archery as well as I do. I wish to be in your service, your majesty.’

The king was quite impressed. He asked, ‘What shall I pay you?’ ‘I will serve you for 500 pieces of money per week. your majesty,’ he replied.

Nodding, the king noticed the silent dwarf stooping behind him, almost out of sight. ‘Who is this little man?’ he asked. ‘What does he do for you?’ ‘He’s my little assistant,’ said Fear Maker. ‘Very well,’ said King Brahmadata, ‘the job is yours.’

In this way Fear Maker was accepted into the king’s service, but it was Little Archer who did all the work.

Before long, news came to the palace that there was a ferocious tiger living in the jungle next to the king’s highway. He ambushed travellers, and then killed and ate them. Many began to avoid the king’s highway out of fear of the man-eater.

The king summoned Fear Maker and asked, ‘Can you capture this rampaging tiger, young man?’ ‘Your majesty,’ he answered, ‘I am known as your best archer. Why wouldn’t I be able to capture a tiger?’ Hearing this, the king gave him an extra sum of money and sent him out to catch the tiger.

Fear Maker went home and told all this to his partner. “All right,” said Little Archer, “be on your way!” “Aren’t you coming too?” asked the surprised Fear Maker. “No, I won’t go,” he replied, “but I will give you a perfect plan. You must do exactly as I say.” “I will, my little friend. Please tell me,” said the big front man.

The clever little dwarf said to his friend, “Go to the district of the tiger, but don’t rush straight to his home by yourself. Instead, gather together a thousand local villagers and give them all bows and arrows. Take them directly to the tiger’s home. But then you must let them go on ahead while you hide in the underbrush.

“The local villagers will be very afraid of the tiger. When they see him they will surround him and beat him. Being so terrified, they won’t stop beating him until he’s dead!

“Meanwhile you must cut a piece of vine with your teeth. Then come out of hiding and approach the dead tiger, holding the vine in your hand. When you see the tiger’s body, shout at the people, ‘Hey! Who has killed the tiger? I was going to capture him with this vine and lead him like a bull to the king. That’s why I’ve been searching in the jungle. Now tell me who has killed the tiger before I could get here with my vine.’

“The villagers will be easily frightened by this. They will say, ‘Lord Fear Maker, please don’t tell the king! Then they will give you a big bribe to be quiet. Thinking you have killed the dangerous tiger, King Brahmadata will also reward you greatly.’ This was the tricky plan of the clever Little Archer.

Fear Maker did exactly as he had been instructed. The man-eating tiger was killed, and fear was removed from that part of the king’s highway. Followed by a big crowd he returned to the king and said, “Your majesty, I have killed the tiger and made the jungle safe for people again.” The king was pleased and gave him a huge reward.

Before long there were similar complaints about a buffalo who threatened another royal road. Again the king sent Fear Maker. Following Little Archer’s strategy he did exactly as before. He took credit for killing the buffalo and was greatly rewarded again by the grateful king.

By this time Fear Maker had become a very rich and powerful nobleman. All the wealth and praise, which he didn’t really deserve, soon went to his

head. He became intoxicated with his own conceit. and began thinking he was a 'big man' in his own right. He even looked down on Little Archer and ignored his advice. He said to him, "You think this is all because of you. But I don't need you. I can do all this without you!" He had come to believe the appearance created by Little Archer's plan.

Then it happened that an enemy king attacked. He surrounded the city of Benares with his army. He sent a message to King Brahmadata that he must either surrender his kingdom or wage war. The King of Benares ordered his greatest hero, Fear Maker, to go out and fight the enemy.

Fear Maker was dressed in full military armour. He mounted the mightiest armoured war elephant. Little Archer knew that the ungrateful conceited braggart, called Fear Maker. was really scared to death underneath. So he too mounted the elephant and sat behind Fear Maker. The mighty elephant walked through the city gates towards the battlefield, followed by a big crowd.

When Fear Maker heard the huge noise made by the war drums, he began trembling with fear. To keep him from falling off the elephant and being killed, Little Archer tied a rope around him and held him with it.

When Fear Maker saw the field of battle he was overwhelmed by the terrible fear of death. So much so, that he couldn't help but release his bowels and urinate at the same time - all over the back of the poor brave war elephant!

The Enlightenment Being said, "Before you bragged and spoke roughly like a big man. But now, the only big thing you do is make a filthy mess all over this elephant's back! Your present actions prove your past appearance was false."

Fear Maker had embarrassed himself. Little Archer had humbled him by speaking the truth. But he couldn't help feeling sympathy for him. He said, "Don't be afraid anymore, my friend. With me to protect you, your life is safe. Climb down from the elephant and go home and take a bath."

Alone atop the great elephant, the Enlightenment Being thought, "Now is the time to show what is in the heart of this hunchbacked little dwarf!" Shouting mightily as he rode he charged into the field of battle. Without killing any men or animals, he crashed through the enemy's defences. He

broke into the king's camp, captured him, and took him back as prisoner to the King of Benares.

King Brahmadata was delighted with Little Archer's great victory. He rewarded him with wealth and fame. He became known throughout all India as 'Little Archer the Wise'. He sent his friend Fear Maker back to his home village and supported him with monthly payments.

Little Archer the Wise practiced generosity and other meritorious deeds. When he died he was reborn as he deserved.

The moral is: "Appearances can be deceiving."

Tale 81 — Forest Monks in a King’s Pleasure Garden

[Pupils Without a Teacher]

Once upon a time, there was a high class rich man who gave up his wealth and his easy life in the ordinary world. He went to the Himalayan forests and lived as a homeless holy man. By practicing meditation, he developed his mind and gained the highest knowledge. Dwelling in high mental states, he enjoyed great inner happiness and peace of mind. Before long, he had 500 pupils.

In a certain year, when the rainy season was beginning, the pupils said to their teacher, “Oh wise master, we would like to go to the places where most people live. We would like to get some salt and other seasonings and bring them back here.”

The teacher said, “You have my permission. It would be healthy for you to do so, and return when the rainy season is over. But I will stay here and meditate by myself.” They knelt down and paid their farewell respects.

The 500 pupils went to Benares and began living in the royal pleasure garden. The next day they collected alms in the villages outside the city gates. They received generous gifts of food. On the following day they went inside the city. People gladly gave them food.

After a few days, people told the king, “Oh lord king, 500 forest monks have come from the Himalayas to live in your pleasure garden. They live in a simple way, without luxuries. They control their senses and are known to be very good indeed.”

Hearing such good reports, the king went to visit them. He knelt down and paid his respects. He invited them to stay in the garden during the whole four months of the rainy season. They accepted, and from then on were given their food in the king’s palace.

Before long a certain holiday took place. It was celebrated by drinking alcohol, which the people thought would bring good luck. The King of Benares thought, “Good wine is not usually available to monks who live simply in the forests. I will treat them to some as a special gift.” So he gave the 500 forest monks a large quantity of the very best tasting wine.

The monks were not at all accustomed to alcohol. They drank the king's wine and walked back to the garden. By the time they got there, they were completely drunk. Some of them began dancing, while others sang songs. Usually they put away their bowls and other things neatly. But this time they just left everything lying around, here and there. Soon they all passed out into a drunken sleep.

When they had slept off their drunkenness, they awoke and saw the messy condition they'd left everything in. They became sad and said to each other, 'We have done a bad thing, which is not proper for holy men like US.' Their embarrassment and shame made them weep with regret. They said, 'We have done these unwholesome things only because we are away from our holy teacher.'

At that very moment the 500 forest monks left the pleasure garden and returned to the Himalayas. When they arrived they put away their bowls and other belongings neatly, as was their custom. Then they went to their beloved master and greeted him respectfully.

He asked them, 'How are you, my children? Did you find enough food and lodgings in the city? Were you happy and united?'

They replied. 'Venerable master, we were happy and united. But we drank what we were not supposed to drink. We lost all our common sense and self-control. We danced and sang like silly monkeys. It's fortunate we didn't turn into monkeys! We drank wine, we danced, we sang, and in the end we cried from shame.'

The kind teacher said, 'It is easy for things like this to happen to pupils who have no teacher to guide them. Learn from this. do not do such things in the future.'

From then on they lived happily and grew in goodness.

The moral is: A pupil without a teacher is easily embarrassed.

Tale 82, 41, 104, 369, 439 — The Curse of Mittavinda

Chapter 1. Jealousy

Once upon a time, there was a monk who lived in a tiny monastery in a little village. He was very fortunate that the village rich man supported him in the monastery. He never had to worry about the cares of the world. His alms food was always provided automatically by the rich man.

So the monk was calm and peaceful in his mind. There was no fear of losing his comfort and his daily food. There was no desire for greater comforts and pleasures of the world. Instead, he was free to practice the correct conduct of a monk, always trying to eliminate his faults and do only wholesome deeds. But he didn't know just how lucky he was!

One day an elder monk arrived in the little village. He had followed the path of Truth until he had become perfect and faultless.

When the village rich man saw this unknown monk, he was very pleased by his gentle manner and his calm attitude. So he invited him into his home. He gave him food to eat, and he thought himself very fortunate to hear a short teaching from him. He then invited him to take shelter at the village monastery. He said, "I will visit you there this evening, to make sure all is well."

When the perfect monk arrived at the monastery, he met the village monk. They greeted each other pleasantly. Then the village monk asked, "Have you had your lunch today?" The other replied, "Yes, I was given lunch by the supporter of this monastery. He also invited me to take shelter here."

The village monk took him to a room and left him there. The perfect monk passed his time in meditation.

Later that evening, the village rich man came. He brought fruit drinks, flowers and lamp oil, in honor of the visiting holy man. He asked the village monk, "Where is our guest?" He told him what room he had given him.

The man went to the room, bowed respectfully, and greeted the perfect monk. Again he appreciated hearing the way of Truth as taught by the rare faultless one.

Afterwards, as evening approached, he lit the lamps and offered the flowers at the monastery's lovely temple shrine. He invited both monks to lunch at his home the next day. Then he left and returned home.

In the evening, a terrible thing happened. The village monk, who had been so contented, allowed the poison of jealousy to creep into his mind. He thought, "The village rich man has made it easy for me here. He provides shelter each night and fills my belly once a day.

"But I'm afraid this will change because he respects this new monk so highly. If he remains in this monastery, my supporter may stop caring for me. Therefore, I must make sure the new monk does not stay."

Thinking in this way, he lost his former mental calm. His mind became disturbed due to his jealousy — the fear of losing his comfort and his daily food. This led to the added mental pain of resentment against the perfect monk. He began plotting and scheming to get rid of him.

Late that night, as was the custom, the monks met together to end the day. The perfect monk spoke in his usual friendly way, but the village monk would not speak to him at all.

So the wise monk understood that he was jealous and resentful. He thought, "This monk does not understand my freedom from attachment to families, people and comforts. I am free of any desire to remain here. I am also free of any desire to leave here. It makes no difference. It is sad this other one cannot understand non-attachment. I pity him for the price he must pay for his ignorance."

He returned to his room, closed the door, and meditated in a high mental state throughout the night.

The next day, when it was time to go collect alms food from the supporter of the monastery, the village monk rang the temple gong. But he rang it by tapping it lightly with his finger nail. Even the birds in the temple courtyard could not hear the tiny sound.

Then he went to the visiting monk's room and knocked on the door. But again he only tapped lightly with his finger nail. Even the little mice inside the walls could not hear the silent tapping.

Having done his courteous duty in such a tricky way, he went to the rich man's home. The man bowed respectfully to the monk, took his alms bowl and asked, "Where is the new monk, our visitor?"

The village monk replied, "I have not seen him. I rang the gong, I knocked at his door, but he did not appear. Perhaps he was not used to such rich food as you gave him yesterday. Perhaps he is still asleep, busily digesting it, dreaming of his next feast! Perhaps this is the kind of monk who pleases you so much!"

Meanwhile, back at the monastery, the perfect monk awoke. He cleaned himself and put on his robe. Then he calmly departed to collect alms food wherever he happened to find it.

The rich man fed the village monk the richest of food. It was delicious and sweet, made from rice, milk, butter, sugar and honey. When the monk had eaten his fill, the man took his bowl, scrubbed it clean, and sweetened it with perfumed water. He filled it up again with the same wonderful food. He gave it back to the monk, saying, "Honorable monk, our holy visitor must be worn out from travelling. Please take my humble alms food to him." Saying nothing, he accepted the generous gift for the other.

By now the village monk's mind was trapped by its own jealous scheming. He thought, "If that other monk eats this fantastic meal, even if I grabbed him by the throat and kicked him out, he still would never leave! I must secretly get rid of this alms food. But if I give it to a stranger, it will become known and talked about. If I throw it away in a pond, the butter will float on the surface and be discovered. If I throw it away on the ground, crows will come from miles around to feast on it, and that too would be noticed. So how can I get rid of it?"

Then he saw a field that had just been burned by farmers to enrich the soil. It was covered with hot glowing coals. So he threw the rich man's generous gift on the coals. The alms food burned up without a trace. And with it went his peace of mind!

For, when he got back to the monastery, he found the visitor gone. He thought, "This must have been a perfectly wise monk. He must have known I was jealous afraid of losing my favored position. He must have known I resented him and tried to trick him into leaving. I wasted alms food meant for him. And all for the sake of keeping my own belly full! I'm afraid

something terrible will happen to me! What have I done?" So, afraid of losing his easy daily food, he had thrown away his peace of mind.

For the rest of his life the rich man continued to support him. But his mind was filled with torment and suffering. He felt doomed like a walking starving zombie, or a living hungry ghost.

When he died, his torment continued. For he was reborn in a hell world, where he suffered for hundreds of thousands of years.

Finally, there too he died, as all beings must. But the results of his past actions were only partly completed. So he was reborn as a demon, 500 times! In those 500 lives, there was only one day when he got enough to eat, and that was a meal of afterbirth dropped by a deer in the forest!

Then he was reborn as a starving stray dog another 500 times! For the sake of a full monk's belly in a past life, all these 500 lives were also filled with hunger, and quarrelling over food. Only a single time did he get enough to eat, and that was a meal of vomit he found in a gutter!

Finally most of the results of his actions were finished. Only then was he so very fortunate enough to be reborn as a human being. He was born into the poorest of the poor beggar families of the city of Kasi, in northern India. He was given the name, Mittavinda.

From the moment of his birth, this poor family became even more poor and miserable. After a few years, the pain of hunger became so great, that his parents beat him and chased Mittavinda away for good. They shouted, "Be gone forever! You are nothing but a curse!"

Poor Mittavinda! So very long ago he had not known how lucky he was. He was contented as a humble village monk. But he allowed the poison of jealousy to enter his mind — the fear of losing his easy daily food. This led to the self-torture of resentment against a perfect monk, and to trickery in denying him one wholesome gift of alms food. And it took a thousand and one lives for the loss of his comfort and daily food to be completed. What he had feared, his own actions had brought to pass!

Chapter 2. Greed

Little did poor Mittavinda know that his lives of constant hunger were about to come to an end. After wandering about, he eventually ended up in Benares.

At that time the Enlightenment Being was living the life of a world famous teacher in Benares. He had 500 students. As an act of charity, the people of the city supported these poor students with food. They also paid the teacher's fees for teaching them.

Mittavinda was permitted to join them. He began studying under the great teacher. And at last, he began eating regularly.

But he paid no attention to the teachings of the wise master. He was disobedient and violent. During 500 lives as a hungry dog, quarrelling had become a habit. So he constantly got into fist fights with the other students.

It became so bad that many of the students quit. The income of the world famous teacher dwindled down to almost nothing. Because of all his fighting, Mittavinda was finally forced to run away from Benares.

He found his way to a small remote village. He lived there as a hard working laborer, married a very poor woman. and had two children.

It became known that he had studied under the world famous teacher of Benares. So the poor villagers selected him to give advice when questions arose. They provided a place for him to live near the entrance to the village. And they began following his advice.

But things did not go well. The village was fined seven times by the king. Seven times their houses were burned. And seven times the town pond dried up.

They realized that all their troubles began when they started taking Mittavinda's advice. So they chased him and his family out of the village. They shouted, 'Be gone forever! You are nothing but a curse!'

While they were fleeing, they went through a haunted forest. Demons came out of the shadows and killed and ate his wife and children. But Mittavinda escaped.

'He made his way to a seaport city. He was lonely, miserable and penniless. It just so happened that there was a kind generous rich merchant living in the

city. He heard the story of Mittavinda's misfortunes. Since they had no children of their own, he and his wife adopted Mittavinda. For better or worse they treated him exactly as their own son.

His new mother and father were very religious. They always tried to do wholesome things. But Mittavinda still had not learned his lesson. He did not accept any religion, so he often did unwholesome things.

Some time after his father's death, his mother decided to try and help him enter the religious life. She said, "There is this world and there is the one to come. If you do bad things, you will suffer painful results in both worlds."

But foolish Mittavinda replied, "I will do whatever I enjoy doing and become happier and happier. There is no point considering whether what I do is wholesome or unwholesome. I don't care about such things!"

On the next full moon holy day, Mittavinda's mother advised him to go to the temple and listen all night long to the wise words of the monks. He said, "I wouldn't waste my time!" So she said, "When you return I will give you a thousand gold coins."

Mittavinda thought that with enough money he could enjoy himself constantly and be happy all the time. So he went to the temple. But he sat in a corner, paid no attention, and fell asleep for the night. Early the next morning he went home to collect his reward.

Meanwhile his mother thought he would appreciate wise teachings. Then he would bring the oldest monk home with him. So she prepared delicious food for the expected guest. When she saw him returning alone, she said, "Oh my son, why didn't you ask the senior monk to come home with you for breakfast?"

He said, "I did not go to the temple to listen to a monk or to bring him home with me. I went only to get your thousand gold coins!" His disappointed mother said, "Never mind the money. Since there is so much delicious food prepared — only eat and sleep!" He replied, "Until you give me the money I refuse to eat!" So she gave him the thousand gold coins. Only then did he gobble up the food until all he could do was fall asleep.

Mittavinda did not think a thousand gold coins were enough for him to constantly enjoy himself. So he used the money to start a business, and before long he became very rich. One day he came home and said, "Mother,

I now have 120,000 gold coins. But I am not yet satisfied. Therefore I will go abroad on the next ship and make even more money!”

She replied, “Oh my son, why do you want to go abroad? The ocean is dangerous and it is very risky doing business in a strange land. I have 80,000 gold coins right here in the house. That is enough for you. Please don’t go, my only son!”

Then she held him to keep him from leaving. But Mittavinda was crazy with greed. So he pushed his mother’s hand away and slapped her face. She fell to the floor. She was so hurt and shocked that she yelled at him, “Be gone forever! You are nothing but a curse!”

Without looking back, Mittavinda rushed to the harbor and set sail on the first departing ship

Chapter 3. Pleasure

After seven days on the Indian Ocean, all the winds and currents stopped completely. The ship was stuck! After being dead in the water for seven days, all on board were terrified they would die.

So they drew straws to find out who was the cause of their bad luck and frightening misfortune. Seven times the short straw was drawn by Mittavinda!

They forced him onto a tiny bamboo raft, and set him adrift on the open seas. They shouted, “Be gone forever! You are nothing but a curse!” And suddenly a strong wind sent the ship on its way.

But once again Mittavinda’s life was spared. This was a result of his wholesome actions as a monk, so many births ago. No matter how long it takes, actions cause results.

Sometimes an action causes more than one result, some pleasant and some unpleasant. It is said there are Asuras who live through such mixed results in an unusual way.

Asuras are unfortunate ugly gods. Some of them are lucky enough to change their form into beautiful young dancing girl goddesses. These are called Apsaras.

They enjoy the greatest pleasures for seven days. But then they must go to a hell world and suffer torments as hungry ghosts for seven days. Again they become Apsara goddesses — back and forth, back and forth — until both kinds of results are finished.

While floating on the tiny bamboo raft, it just so happened that Mittavinda came to a lovely Glass Palace. There he met four very pretty Apsaras. They enjoyed their time together, filled with heavenly pleasures, for seven days.

Then, when it was time for the goddesses to become hungry ghosts, they said to Mittavinda, “Wait for us just seven short days, and we will return and continue our pleasure.”

The Glass Palace and the four Apsaras disappeared. But still Mittavinda had not regained the peace of mind thrown away by the village monk, so very long ago. Seven days of pleasure had not satisfied him. He could not wait

for the lovely goddesses to return. He wanted more and more. So he continued on. in the little bamboo raft.

Lo and behold, he came to a shining Silver Palace, with eight Apsara goddesses living there. Again he enjoyed seven days of the greatest pleasure. These Apsaras also asked him to wait the next seven days, and disappeared into a hell world.

Amazing as it may seem, the greedy Mittavinda went on to seven days of pleasure in a sparkling Jewel Palace with 16 Apsaras. But they too disappeared. Then he spent seven days in a glowing Golden Palace with 32 of the most beautiful Apsaras of all.

But still he was not satisfied! When all 32 asked him to wait seven days, again he departed on the raft.

Before long he came to the entrance of a hell world filled with suffering tortured beings. They were living through the results of their own actions. But his desire for more pleasure was so strong that Mittavinda thought he saw a beautiful city surrounded by a wall with four fabulous gates. He thought, "I will go inside and make myself king!"

After he entered, he saw one of the victims of this hell world. He had a collar around his neck that spun like a wheel, with five sharp blades cutting into his face, head, chest and back. But Mittavinda was still so greedy for pleasure that he could not see the pain right before his eyes. Instead he saw the spinning collar of cutting blades as if it were a lovely lotus blossom. He saw the dripping blood as if it were the red powder of perfumed sandal wood. And the screams of pain from the poor victim sounded like the sweetest of songs!

He said to the poor man, "You've had that lovely lotus crown long enough! Give it to me, for I deserve to wear it now." The condemned man warned him, "This is a cutting collar, a wheel of blades." But Mittavinda said, "You only say that because you don't want to give it up."

The victim thought, "At last the results of my past unwholesome deeds must be completed. Like me, this poor fool must be here for striking his mother. I will give him the wheel of pain." So he said, "Since you want it so badly, take the lotus crown!"

With these words the wheel of blades spun off the former victim's neck and began spinning around the head of Mittavinda. And suddenly all his

illusions disappeared — he knew this was no beautiful city, but a terrible hell world; he knew this was no lotus crown, but a cutting wheel of blades; and he knew he was not king, but prisoner. Groaning in pain he cried out desperately, “Take back your wheel! Take back your wheel!” But the other one had disappeared.

Just then the king of the gods arrived for a teaching visit to the hell world. Mittavinda asked him. “Oh king of gods, what have I done to deserve this torment?” The god replied, “Refusing to listen to the words of monks, you obtained no wisdom, but only money. A thousand gold coins did not satisfy you, nor even 120,000. Blinded by greed, you struck your mother on your way to grabbing greater wealth still.

“Then the pleasure of four Apsaras in their Glass Palace did not satisfy you. Neither eight Apsaras in a Silver Palace, nor 16 in a Jewel Palace. Not even the pleasure of 32 lovely goddesses in a Golden Palace was enough for you! Blinded by greed for pleasure you wished to be king. Now, at last, you see your crown is only a wheel of torture, and your kingdom is a hell world.

“Learn this, Mittavinda — all who follow their greed wherever it leads are left unsatisfied. For it is in the nature of greed to be dissatisfied with what one has, whether a little or a lot. The more obtained, the more desired — until the circle of greed becomes the circle of pain.”

Having said this, the god returned to his heaven world home. At the same time the wheel crashed down on Mittavinda. With his head spinning in pain, he found himself adrift on the tiny bamboo raft.

Soon he came to an island inhabited by a powerful she-devil. She happened to be disguised as a goat. Being hungry, Mittavinda thought nothing of grabbing the goat by a hind leg. And the she-devil hiding inside kicked him way up into the air. He finally landed in a thorn bush on the outskirts of Benares!

After he untangled himself from the thorns, he saw some goats grazing nearby. He wanted very badly to return to the palaces and the dancing girl Apsaras. Remembering that a goat had kicked him here, he grabbed the leg of one of these goats. He hoped it would kick him back to the island.

Instead, this goat only cried out. The shepherds came, and captured Mittavinda for trying to steal one of the king’s goats.

As he was being taken as a prisoner to the king, they passed by the world famous teacher of Benares. Immediately he recognized his student. He asked the shepherds, “Where are you taking this man?”

They said, “He is a goat thief! We are taking him to the king for punishment!” The teacher said, “Please don’t do so. He is one of my students. Release him to me, so he can be a servant in my school.” They agreed and left him there.

The teacher asked Mittavinda, “What has happened to you since you left me?”

He told the story of being first respected. and then cursed, by the people of the remote village. He told of getting married and having two children, only to see them killed and eaten by demons in the haunted forest. He told of slapping his generous mother when he was crazy with the greed for money. He told of being cursed by his shipmates and being cast adrift on a bamboo raft. He told of the four palaces with their beautiful goddesses, and how each time his pleasure ended he was left unsatisfied. He told of the cutting wheel of torture, the reward for the greedy in hell. And he told of his hunger for goat meat. that only got him kicked back to Benares without even a bite to eat!

The world famous teacher said, “It is clear that your past actions have caused both unpleasant and pleasant results, and that both are eventually completed. But you cannot understand that pleasures always come to an end. Instead, you let them feed your greed for more and more. You are left exhausted and unsatisfied. madly grasping at goat legs! Calm down, my friend. And know that trying to hold water in a tight fist, will always leave you thirsty!”

Hearing this, Mittavinda bowed respectfully to the great teacher. He begged to be allowed to follow him as a student. The Enlightenment Being welcomed him with open arms.

The moral is: In peace of mind, there is neither loss nor gain.

Tale 83 — A Hero Named Jinx

[Friendship]

Once upon a time, there was a very rich man who was well known for wholesomeness. He had a good friend who had the somewhat strange name, Jinx. They had been the best of friends ever since they were little children making mud-pies together. They had gone to the same schools and helped each other always.

After graduating, Jinx fell on hard times. He couldn't find a job and earn a living. So he went to see his lifelong friend, the prosperous and successful rich man. He was kind and comforting to his friend Jinx, and was happy to hire him to manage his property and business.

After he went to work in the rich man's mansion. pretty soon his strange name became a household word. People said, "Wait a minute, Jinx," "Hurry up, Jinx," "Do this, Jinx," "Do that, Jinx."

After a while some of the rich man's neighbors went to him and said, 'Dear friend and neighbor, we are concerned that misfortune may strike. Your mansion manager has a very strange and unlucky name. You should not let him live with you any longer. His name fills your house, with people saying, 'Wait a minute, Jinx,'

'Hurry up, Jinx,' 'Do this, Jinx,' 'Do that, Jinx.' People only use the word 'jinx' when they want to cause bad luck or misfortune. Even house spirits and fairies would be frightened by hearing it constantly and would run away. This can only bring disaster to your household. The man named Jinx is inferior to you — he is miserable and ugly. What advantage can you possibly get by keeping such a fellow around?"

The rich man replied, "Jinx is my best friend! We have supported and cared for each other ever since we were little tots making mud-pies together. A lifelong trustworthy friend is of great value indeed! I could not reject him and lose our friendship just because of his name. After all, a name is only for recognition.

"The wise don't give a name a I second thought. Only fools are superstitious about sounds and words and names. They don't make good luck or bad luck!" So saying, the rich man refused to follow the advice of his busybody neighbors.

One day he went on a journey to his home village. While he was away, he left his friend Jinx in charge of his mansion home.

It just so happened that a gang of robbers heard about this. They decided it would be a perfect time to rob the mansion. So they armed themselves with various weapons and surrounded the rich man's home during the night.

Meanwhile, the faithful Jinx suspected that robbers might attack. So he stayed up all night to guard his friend's possessions. When he caught sight of the gang surrounding the house, he woke up everybody inside. Then he got them to blow shell horns and beat drums and make as much noise as possible.

Hearing all this, the bandits thought, "We must have been given bad information. There must be many people inside and the rich man must still be at home." So they threw down their clubs and other weapons, and ran away.

The next morning the people from the mansion were surprised to see the discarded weapons. They said to each other. "If we didn't have such a wise house protector, all the wealth in the mansion would certainly have been stolen. Jinx has turned out to be a hero! Rather than bringing bad luck, such a strong friend has been a blessing to the rich man."

When the master of the house returned home his neighbors met him and told him what had happened. He said, "You all advised against letting my friend stay with me. If I had done as you said, I'd be penniless today!"

"Walking together for just seven steps is enough to start a friendship. Continuing for 12 steps forms a bond of loyalty. Remaining together for a month brings the closeness of relatives. And for longer still, the friend becomes like a second self. So my friend Jinx is no jinx — but a great blessing!"

The moral is: The longer the friendship, the greater its rewards.

Tale 84 — A Question From a Seven-year-old

[Six Worthy Ways]

Once upon a time there was a rich man living in Benares, in northern India. He had a son who was intelligent, curious and eager to learn. Even though he was only seven years old, he was determined to find out what is really valuable.

One day the little boy asked his father, “What are the ways to gain the most valuable things in life?”

His father said, “Only worthy ways lead to worthwhile goals. These are the six worthy ways:

- keep yourself healthy and fit;
- be wholesome in every way;
- listen to those with more experience;
- learn from those with more knowledge;
- live according to Truth;
- act with sincerity, not just energy.”

The boy paid close attention to his father’s words. He tried hard to practice these ways from then on. As he grew up and became wise, he realized that the six worthy ways, and the most valuable things in life, could not be separated.

The moral is: “A serious question deserves a serious answer.”

Tale 86, 290, 362 — A Lesson From a Snake

[The Value of Goodness]

Once upon a time, King Brahmadata of Benares had a very valuable adviser priest. He came from a rich noble family. He was intelligent and full of knowledge. He was generous with his wealth and knowledge, holding nothing back. People thought of him as a kind and good person.

By practicing the Five Training Steps, he trained his mind to avoid the five unwholesome actions. He discovered that giving up each unwholesome action made him better off in its own way:

- destroying life, since you have to kill part of yourself in order to kill someone else;
- taking what is not given, since this makes the owner angry at you;
- doing wrong in sexual ways, since this leads to the pain of jealousy and envy;
- speaking falsely, since you can't be true to yourself and false to another at the same time;
- losing your mind from alcohol, since then you might hurt yourself by doing the other four.

Seeing how he lived, King Brahmadata thought, “This is truly a good man.”

The priest was curious to learn more about the value of goodness. He thought, “The king honors and respects me more than his other priests. But I wonder what it is about me that he really respects most. Is it my nationality, my noble birth or family wealth? Is it my great learning and vast knowledge? Or is it because of my goodness? I must find the answer to this.”

Therefore, he decided to perform an experiment in order to answer his question. He would pretend to be a thief!

On the next day, when he was leaving the palace, he went by the royal coin maker. He was stamping out coins from gold. The good priest, not intending to keep it, took a coin and continued walking out of the palace. Because the money maker admired the famous priest highly, he remained sitting and said nothing.

On the following day the make-believe thief took two gold coins. Again the royal coin maker did not protest.

Finally, on the third day, the king's favorite priest grabbed a whole handful of gold coins. This time the money maker didn't care about the priest's position or reputation. He cried out, "This is the third time you have robbed his majesty the king." Holding onto him, he shouted, "I've caught the thief who robs the king! I've caught the thief who robs the king! I've caught the thief who robs the king!"

Suddenly a crowd of people came running in, yelling, "Aha! You pretended to be better than us! An example of goodness!" They slapped him, tied his hands behind his back, and hauled him off to the king.

But on their way, they happened to go by some snake charmers. They were entertaining some bystanders from the king's court with a poisonous cobra. They held him by the tail and neck, and coiled him around their necks to show how brave they were.

The tied up prisoner said to them, "Please be careful! Don't grab that cobra by the tail. Don't grab him by his neck. And don't coil that poisonous snake around your own necks. He may bite you and bring your lives to a sudden end!"

The snake charmers said, "You ignorant priest, you don't understand about this cobra. He is well-mannered and very good indeed. He is not bad like you! You are a thief who has stolen from the king. Because of your wickedness and criminal behavior, you are being carried off with your hands tied behind your back. But there's no need to tie up a snake who is good!"

The priest thought, "Even a poisonous cobra, who doesn't bite or harm anyone, is given the name 'good'. In truth, goodness is the quality people admire most in the world!"

When they arrived at the throne room, the king asked, "What is this, my children?" They replied, "This is the thief who stole from your royal treasury." The king said, "Then punish him according to the law."

The adviser priest said, "My lord king, I am no thief!" "Then why did you take gold coins from the palace?" asked the king.

The priest explained, “I have done this only as an experiment, to test why it is you honor and respect me more than others. Is it because of my family background and wealth, or my great knowledge? Because of those things, I was able to get away with taking one or two gold coins. Or do you respect my goodness most of all? It is clear that by grabbing a handful of coins I no longer had the name ‘good’. This alone turned respect into disgrace!

“Even a poisonous cobra, who doesn’t harm anyone, is called ‘good’. There is no need for any other title!”

To emphasize the lesson he had learned, the wise priest recited:

“High birth and wealth and even knowledge vast, I find, Are less admired than goodness is, by humankind.”

The king pardoned his most valuable adviser priest.

He asked to be allowed to leave the king’s service in the ordinary world and become a forest monk. After refusing several times, the king eventually gave his permission.

The priest went to the Himalayas and meditated peacefully. When he died he was reborn in a heaven world.

The moral is: People prize goodness most of all.

Tale 87 — A Priest Who Worshipped Luck

[Superstition]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born into a high class family in north-western India. When he grew up, he realized his ordinary life could not give him lasting happiness. So he left everything behind and went to live in the Himalayas as a forest monk. He meditated and gained knowledge and peace of mind.

One day he decided to come down from the forests to the city of Rajagaha. When he arrived he stayed overnight in the king's pleasure garden.

The next morning he went into the city to collect alms food. The king saw him and was pleased with his humble and dignified attitude. So he invited him to the palace. He offered him a seat and gave him the best foods to eat. Then he invited him to live in the garden for good. The holy man agreed, and from then on he lived in the king's pleasure garden and had his meals in the king's palace.

At that time there was a priest in the city who was known as 'Lucky Cloth'. He used to predict good or bad luck by examining a piece of cloth.

It just so happened that he had a new suit of clothes. One day, after his bath, he asked his servant to bring the suit to him. The servant saw that it had been chewed slightly by mice, so he told the priest.

Lucky Cloth thought, "It is dangerous to keep in the house these clothes that have been chewed by mice. This is a sure sign of a curse that could destroy my home. Therefore, I can't even give them to my children or servants. The curse would still be in my house!

"In fact, I can't give these unlucky clothes to anyone. The only safe thing to do is to get rid of them once and for all. The best way to do that is to throw them in the corpse grounds, the place where dead bodies are put for wild animals to eat.

"But how can I do that? If I tell a servant to do it, desire will make him keep the clothes, and the curse will remain in my household. Therefore, I can trust this task only to my son."

He called his son to him and told all about the curse of the clothes that were slightly chewed by mice. He told him not even to touch them with his hand.

He was to carry them on a stick and go throw them in the corpse grounds. Then he must bathe from head to foot before returning home.

The son obeyed his father. When he arrived at the corpse grounds, carrying the clothes on a stick, he found the holy man sitting by the gate. When Lucky Cloth's son threw away the cursed suit, the holy man picked it up. He examined it and saw the tiny teeth marks made by the mice. But since they could hardly be noticed, he took the suit with him back to the pleasure garden.

After bathing thoroughly, his son told Priest Lucky Cloth what had happened. He thought, "This cursed suit of clothes will bring great harm to the king's favorite holy man. I must warn him." So he went to the pleasure garden and said. "Holy one, the unlucky cloth you have taken, please throw it away! It is cursed and will bring harm to you!"

But the holy man replied, "No no, what others throw away in the corpse grounds is a blessing to me! We forest meditators are not seers of good and bad luck. All kinds of Buddhas and Enlightenment Beings have given up superstitions about luck. Anyone who is wise should do the same. No one knows the future!"

Hearing about the truly wise and enlightened ones made Priest Lucky Cloth see how foolish he had been. From then on he gave up his many superstitions and followed the teachings of the humble holy man.

The moral is: A fool's curse can be a wise man's blessing.

Tale 88, 28 — The Bull Called Delightful

[All Deserve Respect]

Once upon a time, in the country of Gandhara in northern India, there was a city called Takkasila. In that city the Enlightenment Being was born as a certain calf. Since he was well bred for strength, he was bought by a high class rich man. He became very fond of the gentle animal, and called him 'Delightful'. He took good care of him and fed him only the best.

When Delightful grew up into a big fine strong bull, he thought, "I was brought up by this generous man. He gave me such good food and constant care, even though sometimes there were difficulties. Now I am a big grown up bull and there is no other bull who can pull as heavy a load as I can. Therefore, I would like to use my strength to give something in return to my master."

So he said to the man, "Sir, please find some wealthy merchant who is proud of having many strong bulls. Challenge him by saying that your bull can pull one hundred heavily loaded bullock carts."

Following his advice, the high class rich man went to such a merchant and struck up a conversation. After a while, he brought up the idea of who had the strongest bull in the city.

The merchant said, "Many have bulls, but no one has any as strong as mine." The rich man said, "Sir, I have a bull who can pull one-hundred heavily loaded bullock carts." "No, friend, how can there be such a bull? That is unbelievable!" said the merchant. The other replied, "I do have such a bull, and I am willing to make a bet."

The merchant said, "I will bet a thousand gold coins that your bull cannot pull a hundred loaded bullock carts." So the bet was made and they agreed on a date and time for the challenge.

The merchant attached together one-hundred big bullock carts. He filled them with sand and gravel to make them very heavy.

The high class rich man fed the finest rice to the bull called Delightful. He bathed him and decorated him and hung a beautiful garland of flowers around his neck.

Then he harnessed him to the first cart and climbed up onto it. Being so high class, he could not resist the urge to make himself seem very important. So he cracked a whip in the air, and yelled at the faithful bull, “Pull, you dumb animal! I command you to pull, you big dummy!”

The bull called Delightful thought, “This challenge was my idea! I have never done anything bad to my master, and yet he insults me with such hard and harsh words!” So he remained in his place and refused to pull the carts.

The merchant laughed and demanded his winnings from the bet. The high class rich man had to pay him the one-thousand gold coins. He returned home and sat down, saddened by his lost bet, and embarrassed by the blow to his pride.

The bull called Delightful grazed peacefully on his way home. When he arrived, he saw his master sadly lying on his side. He asked. “Sir, why are you lying there like that? Are you sleeping? You look sad.” The man said, “I lost a thousand gold coins because of you. With such a loss, how could I sleep?”

The bull replied, “Sir, you called me ‘dummy’. You even cracked a whip in the air over my head. In all my life, did I ever break anything, step on anything, make a mess in the wrong place, or behave like a ‘dummy’ in any way?” He answered, “No, my pet.”

The bull called Delightful said, “Then sir, why did you call me ‘dumb animal’, and insult me even in the presence of others? The fault is yours. I have done nothing wrong. But since I feel sorry for you, go again to the merchant and make the same bet for two-thousand gold coins. And remember to use only the respectful words I deserve so well.”

Then the high class rich man went back to the merchant and made the bet for two-thousand gold coins. The merchant thought it would be easy money. Again he set up the one-hundred heavily loaded bullock carts. Again the rich man fed and bathed the bull, and hung a garland of flowers around his neck.

When all was ready, the rich man touched Delightful’s forehead with a lotus blossom, having given up the whip. Thinking of him as fondly as if he were his own child, he said. “My son, please do me the honor of pulling these one-hundred bullock carts.”

Lo and behold, the wonderful bull pulled with all his might and dragged the heavy carts, until the last one stood in the place of the first.

The merchant, with his mouth hanging open in disbelief, had to pay the two-thousand gold coins. The onlookers were so impressed that they honored the bull called Delightful with gifts. But even more important to the high class rich man than his winnings, was his valuable lesson in humility and respect.

The moral is: Harsh words bring no reward. Respectful words bring honor to all.

Tale 89 — The Phony Holy Man

[Hypocrisy]

Once upon a time there was a man who looked and acted just like a holy man. He wore nothing but rags, had long matted hair, and relied on a little village to support him. But he was sneaky and tricky. He only pretended to give up attachment to the everyday world. He was a phony holy man.

A wealthy man living in the village wanted to earn merit by doing good deeds. So he had a simple little temple built in the nearby forest for the holy man to live in. He also fed him the finest foods from his own home.

He thought this holy man with matted hair was sincere and good, one who would not do anything unwholesome. Since he was afraid of bandits, he took his family fortune of 100 gold coins to the little temple. He buried it under the ground and said to the holy man, “Venerable one, please look after this my family fortune.”

The holy man replied, “There’s no need to worry about such things with people like me. We holy ones have given up attachment to the ordinary world. We have no greed or desire to obtain the possessions of others.”

“Very well, venerable one,” said the man. He left thinking himself very wise indeed, to trust such a good holy man.

However, the wicked holy man thought, “Aha! This treasure of 100 gold coins is enough for me to live on for the rest of my life! I will never have to work or beg again!” So a few days later he dug up the gold and secretly buried it near the roadside.

The next day he went to the wealthy villager’s home for lunch as usual. After eating his fill he said, “Most honorable gentleman, I have lived here supported by you for a long time. But holy ones who have given up the world are not supposed to become too attached to one village or supporter. It would make a holy man like me impure! Therefore, kindly permit me to humbly go on my way.”

The man pleaded with him again and again not to go, but it was useless. “Go then, venerable sir,” he agreed at last. He went with him as far as the boundary of the village and left him there.

After going on a short way himself, the phony holy man thought, “I must make absolutely sure that stupid villager does not suspect me. He trusts me so much that he will believe anything. So I will deceive him with a clever trick!” He stuck a blade of dry grass in his matted hair and went back.

When he saw him returning, the wealthy villager asked, “Venerable one, why have you come back?” He replied, “Dear friend, this blade of grass from the thatched roof of your house has stuck in my hair. It is most unwholesome and impure for a holy one such as myself to ‘take what is not given’.”

The amazed villager said, “Think nothing of it, your reverence. Please put it down and continue on your way. Venerable ones such as you do not even take a blade of grass that belongs to another. How marvelous! How exalted you are, the purest of the holy. How lucky I was to be able to support you!” More trusting than ever, he bowed respectfully and sent him on his way again.

It just so happened that the Enlightenment Being was living the life of a trader at that time. He was in the midst of a trading trip when he stopped overnight at the village. He had overheard the entire conversation between the villager and the ‘purest of the holy’. He thought, “That sounds ridiculous! This man must have stolen something far more valuable than the blade of dry grass he has made such a big show of returning to its rightful owner.”

The trader asked the wealthy villager, “Friend, did you perhaps give anything to this holy looking man for safekeeping?” “Yes friend,” he replied, “I trusted him to guard my family fortune of 100 gold coins.” “I advise you to go see if they are where you left them,” said the trader.

Suddenly worried, he ran to the forest temple, dug up the ground, and found his treasure gone. He ran back to the trader and said, “It has been stolen!” “Friend,” he replied, “No one but that so-called holy man could have taken it. Let’s catch him and get your treasure back.”

They both chased after him as fast as they could. When they caught up with him they made him tell where he had hidden the money. They went to the hiding place by the roadside and dug up the buried treasure.

Looking at the gleaming gold the Bodhisatta said, “You hypocritical holy man. You spoke well those beautiful words, admired by all, that one is not

to 'take what is not given'. You hesitated to leave with even a blade of grass that didn't belong to you. But it was so easy for you to steal a hundred gold coins!" After ridiculing the way he had acted in this way, he advised him to change his ways for his own good.

The moral is: Be careful of a holy man who puts on a big show.

Tale 90, 363 — One Way Hospitality

[Ingratitude]

Once upon a time there were two merchants who wrote letters back and forth to each other. They never met face to face. One lived in Benares and the other lived in a remote border village.

The country merchant sent a large caravan to Benares. It had 500 carts loaded with fruits and vegetables and other products. He told his workers to trade all these goods with the help of the Benares merchant.

When they arrived in the big city they went directly to the merchant. They gave him the gifts they had brought. He was pleased and invited them to stay in his own home. He even gave them money for their living expenses. He treated them with the very best hospitality. He asked about the well-being of the country merchant and gave them gifts to take back to him. Since it is easier for a local person to get a good price, he saw to it that all their goods were fairly traded. They returned home and told their master all that had happened.

Later on, the Benares merchant sent a caravan of 500 carts to the border village. His workers also took gifts to the country merchant. When they arrived he asked,

“Where do you come from?” They said they came from the Benares merchant, the one who wrote him letters.

Taking the gifts, the country merchant laughed in a very discourteous way and said, “Anyone could say they came from the Benares merchant!” Then he sent them away, giving them no place to stay, no gifts, and no help at all.

The caravan workers went downtown to the marketplace and did the best they could trading without local help. They returned to Benares and told their master all that had happened.

Before too long, the country merchant sent another caravan of 500 carts to Benares. Again his workers took gifts to the same merchant. When his workers saw them coming, they said to him, “We know just how to provide suitable lodgings, food and expense money for these people.”

They took them outside the city walls to a good place to camp for the night. They said they would return to Benares and prepare food and get expense money for them.

Instead they rounded up all their fellow workers and returned to the campsite in the middle of the night. They robbed all 500 carts, including the workers' outer garments. They chased away the bullocks, and removed and carried off the cart wheels.

The villagers were terrified. They ran back home as fast as their legs could carry them.

The city merchant's workers told him all they had done. He said, 'Those who forget gratitude and ignore simple hospitality wind up getting what they deserve. Those who do not appreciate the help they have received soon find that no one will help them anymore.'

The moral is: If you don't help others, you can't expect them to help you.

Tale 91 — Poison Dice

[Deception]

Once upon a time there was a rich man living in Benares who was addicted to gambling. He played dice with another gambling addict, a man whose mind worked in tricky ways.

While the rich gambler was very honest and above board, the tricky one was dishonest. When he kept on winning he kept on playing. But when he began to lose he secretly put one of the dice in his mouth and swallowed it. Then he claimed it was lost and stopped the game.

The rich gambler began to notice this trick. Then one day he decided to teach him a lesson. He smeared poison on the dice and let it dry so it was invisible. He took these dice to the usual place and said, "Let's play dice!"

His friend agreed. They set up the gambling board and began to play. As usual the tricky one began by winning every throw of the dice. But as soon as he began to lose he sneaked the dice into his mouth.

Seeing this the rich gambler said, "Swallow now, and then something you don't expect will happen. Your own dishonesty will make you suffer much."

After swallowing the poison dice the trickster fell down sick and fainted. The rich gambler, who was basically good at heart, thought, "Enough is enough. Now I must save his life."

He made a medical mixture to cause vomiting. He made him swallow it, and he threw up the poison dice. He gave him a drink made with clear butter, thick palm syrup, honey and cane sugar. This made the trickster feel just fine again.

Afterwards he advised him not to deceive a trusting friend again. Eventually both gamblers died and were reborn as they deserved.

The moral is: Deceiving a friend may be hazardous to your health.

Tale 92 — The Mystery of the Missing Necklace

Chapter 1. One Crime Leads to Another

Once upon a time, King Brahmadata was ruling in Benares in northern India. After completing his education, the Enlightenment Being became one of his ministers.

One day the king went on an outing to his pleasure garden. A big crowd from the court went with him. They visited many parts of the lovely park. Near a cool forest they came upon a beautiful clear pond. The king decided to go for a swim. So he dove into the water. Then he invited all the ladies of his harem to join him in the refreshing pond.

Laughing together, the harem women took off all their ornaments and jewelry — from their heads, necks, ears, wrists, fingers, waists, ankles and toes. Along with their outer clothing, they handed all these over to their servant girls for safekeeping. Then they jumped into the pond with King Brahmadata.

The king had given one of his favorite queens a very valuable pearl necklace. She was so fond of it that she called it by a pet name, ‘Most Precious’.

It just so happened that a curious she-monkey had been watching all this from a branch of a nearby tree. Peering between the green leaves, she had paid very close attention. When she had caught sight of the Most Precious pearl necklace, her eyes had nearly popped out of her head!

Imagining how grand she would look wearing the queen’s beautiful necklace, she patiently watched the servant girl who was guarding it. In the beginning the girl watched very carefully. But the heat of the day soon made her drowsy. When the she-monkey saw her start to snooze, she swung down from the tree as fast as the wind. In a flash she grabbed the necklace called Most Precious, put it around her neck, and ran back up the tree.

Afraid that the other monkeys would see it, the little thief hid the gleaming pearl necklace in a hollow of the tree. Then she sat guarding her loot, remaining silent and pretending to be as innocent as a nun!

In a minute or two the servant girl awoke from her accidental nap. Frightened, she immediately looked over the queen’s possessions. When she

saw the necklace was missing she yelled out in terror, “Help! Help! Some man has taken the queen’s pearl necklace, the one called Most Precious!”

After running to her side, security guards went and reported the theft to the king. He ordered them to stop at nothing, and to catch the thief immediately. Frightened of the king’s wrath, the guards began dashing madly around the pleasure garden searching for the thief.

At that very moment there happened to be a poor man walking just outside the garden. He was on his way back to his far-off home village after paying his meager taxes to the royal treasury. The commotion from inside the park scared him and he started running away.

Unfortunately, the security guards saw him running and said to each other, “That must be the thief!” They rushed through the garden gate and after a short chase easily captured the innocent man. They began beating him as they shouted, “You no good thief! Confess that you robbed the queen’s pearl necklace, the one she calls Most Precious.”

The poor man thought, “If I say I didn’t take it, these men will beat me to death for sure. But if I confess, they will have to take me to the king.” So he said, “Yes, I admit it, I took the necklace.” Hearing this the security guards handcuffed him and hauled him off to the king.

After being told of the man’s confession, the king asked him, “Where is the Most Precious necklace now? What have you done with it?”

Being a somewhat clever fellow, the prisoner replied, “My lord king, I am a very poor man indeed. I have never in my life owned anything at all valuable, not a Most Precious bed or a Most Precious chair — and certainly not a Most Precious pearl necklace. It was your majesty’s own Chief Financial Adviser who made me steal this Most Precious. I gave it to him. He alone knows where it is now.”

King Brahmadata summoned his Chief Financial Adviser and asked, “Did you take Most Precious from this man’s hands?” “Yes my lord,” said he. “Where is it now?” asked the king. “I gave it to the Royal Teacher Priest.”

The Royal Teacher Priest was called for and asked about the stolen necklace. He claimed, “I gave it to the Official Court Musician.”

He in turn was summoned and questioned. He answered, “I gave Most Precious to a high class prostitute.”

When she was identified and brought to the king, he demanded to know what she had done with the queen's pearl necklace. But she alone replied, "Your majesty, I don't know anything about a pearl necklace!"

As the sun began to set, the king said, "Let us continue this investigation tomorrow." He handed the five suspects over to his ministers and returned to his palace for the night.

Chapter 2. The Mystery Is Solved

Meanwhile, the royal minister who happened to be the Enlightenment Being had seen and heard all that had taken place in the pleasure garden. He realized that the mystery could be solved only by careful examination. Jumping to conclusions could lead to the wrong answers. So he started examining and analyzing the situation in his mind.

He thought, “The necklace was lost inside the pleasure garden. But the poor villager was captured outside the pleasure garden. The gates had strong guards standing watch. Therefore, the villager could not have come in to steal the necklace. Likewise, no one from inside the garden could have gotten out through the guarded gates with the stolen necklace. So it can be seen that none of these people could have gotten away with Most Precious, either from inside or outside!

“What a mystery! The poor man who was first accused must have said he gave it to the Chief Financial Adviser just to save himself. The Chief Financial Adviser must have thought it would go easier for him if the Royal Teacher Priest were involved. The priest must have blamed the Official Court Musician so that music would make their time in the palace dungeon pass more pleasantly. And the Official Court Musician probably thought that being with the high class prostitute would take away the misery of prison life. So he said he gave the necklace to her.

“After examining carefully, it is easy to see that all five suspects must be innocent. But the garden is full of monkeys who are known to cause mischief. No doubt some she-monkey thought Most Precious would set her above the rest, and the necklace is still in her hands.”

So he went to the king and said, “Your excellency, if you hand over the suspects to me, I will do the investigation for you.” “By all means, my wise minister,” said the king, “examine into it yourself.”

The minister called for his servant boys. He told them to keep the five suspects together in one place. They were to hide nearby, listen to all that was said, and then report back to him.

When the five prisoners thought they were alone they began talking freely to each other. First the Chief Financial Adviser said to the poor villager, “You little crook! We never saw each other before. So when did you give the stolen Most Precious to me?”

He replied, “My lord sir, most exalted adviser to the great king, I have never had anything of any value whatsoever, not even a broken down bed or chair. I certainly have not seen any such Most Precious necklace! I don’t know what you people are talking about. Being scared to death by the king’s guards, I only mentioned you in the hope that one as important as you could free us both. Please, my lord, don’t be angry at me.”

The Royal Teacher Priest said to the Chief Financial Adviser. “You see, this man admits he has not given it to you, so how could you have given it to me?” He replied, “We are both in high positions. I thought that if we got together and backed each other up, we could settle this matter.”

The Official Court Musician asked, “Oh Royal Teacher Priest, when did you give the queen’s pearl necklace to me?” “I thought that if you were imprisoned with me,” said the priest, “your music would make it much more pleasant. That’s why I lied.”

Then the woman said to the Official Court Musician, “You miserable crook! When did I come to you? When did you come to me? We have never met each other before. So when could you possibly have given me the stolen Most Precious?” He said to her, “Oh dear young lady, please don’t be angry with me. I only accused you so that when we five are imprisoned together, your being with us will make us all happy.”

Not being either a poor frightened stranger or a slippery government official, the high class prostitute was the only one who had told the truth. So there was no one to accuse her of shifting the blame.

Of course the wise minister’s servants had been eavesdropping on the entire conversation. When they reported it all back to him, he realized his suspicion was confirmed — some she-monkey must have taken the necklace. So he thought, “I must come up with a plan to get it back.”

First he had a bunch of cheap imitation jewel ornaments made. Then he had several she-monkeys captured in the royal pleasure garden. He had them decorated with the imitation ornaments — necklaces on their necks. and bracelets on their wrists and ankles. Then they were released in the garden. The minister ordered his servants to watch all the she-monkeys carefully. When they saw anyone with the missing pearl necklace, they were to scare her into dropping it.

The she-monkey who had taken Most Precious was still guarding it in the hollow of the tree. The other she-monkeys strutted back and forth saying, “See how fine we look. We have these beautiful necklaces and bracelets.” She couldn’t stand seeing and hearing this. She thought, “Those are nothing but worthless imitations.” To show them all up, she put on her own neck the Most Precious necklace of real pearls.

Immediately the servants frightened her into dropping it. They took it to their master, the wise minister. He took it to the king and said, “Your majesty, here is the pearl necklace, the one called Most Precious. None of the five who admitted to the crime was really a thief. It was taken instead by a greedy little she-monkey living in your pleasure garden.”

The amazed king asked, “How did you find out it was taken by a she-monkey? And how did you get it back?” The minister told the whole story.

The king said, “You were certainly the right one for the job. In times of need, it is the wise who are appreciated most.” Then he rewarded him by showering him with wealth, like a heavy rain of the seven valuables — gold, silver, pearls, jewels, lapis lazuli, diamonds and coral.

The moral is: Theft from greed, lies from fear, truth from examining.

Tale 93 — The Careless Lion

[Circumspection]

Once upon a time, the Five Training Steps were not yet known in the world. There was a very wealthy man living in Benares who owned a large herd of cattle. He hired a man to look after them.

During the time of year when the rice paddies were filled with the green growing rice plants, the herdsman took the cattle to the forest to graze. From there he brought the milk and butter and cheese to the rich man in Benares.

It just so happened that, being in the forest put the cattle in a very frightening situation. There was a meat eating lion living nearby. Sensing the presence of the lion kept the cattle in constant fear. This made the cows tense and high-strung, leaving them too weak to give more than a little milk.

One day the owner of the cattle asked the herdsman why he was bringing such a small amount of milk and butter and cheese. He replied, “Sir, cows need to be calm and contented to give much milk. Due to a nearby lion, your cows are always afraid and tense. So they give hardly any milk.”

“I see.” said the rich man. Thinking like an animal trapper, he asked, “Is the lion closely connected to any other animal?” The herdsman answered, “Sir, there happens to be a variety of deer living in the forest. They are called ‘minideer’ because they are so small. Even the adults only grow to be about one foot tall. The lion has become very friendly with a certain minideer doe.”

The rich man of Benares said, “So that my cows will be at peace and able to give their usual milk, this is what you are to do. Capture the lion’s friend and rub poison all over her body. Then wait a couple days before releasing her. She will be like bait in a trap for the lion. When he dies, bring his body to me. Then my cows will be safe and happy again.”

The herdsman followed his boss’s orders exactly. When the lion saw his favorite minideer doe he was so overjoyed that he threw all caution to the wind. Without even sniffing the air around her, he immediately began

licking her excitedly all over. Because of too much joy and not enough caution, he fell into the poisonous trap. The poor lion died on the spot.

The moral is: Too much of a good thing can be dangerous.

Tale 94 — The Holy Man Who Tried To Be Too Holy

[Extremism]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being lived in a world where most religions were very similar. They taught that the way to remove suffering from the mind was to make the body suffer instead. As strange as it seems, most people thought that the holiest of the holy were the ones who tortured their bodies the most! Since everyone seemed to agree with this, the Bodhisatta decided to find out for himself if it was true.

He stopped living as an ordinary everyday person and became a holy man according to the custom of the times. This meant that he gave up everything, even his clothes. He went naked, with his body covered only by dust and dirt.

So he wouldn't be spoiled by the taste of good food, he forced himself to eat only filthy things — dirt, ashes, urine and cow dung.

So he could concentrate without being interrupted by anyone, he went to live in the most dangerous part of the forest. If he did see a human being, he ran away like a timid deer.

In the wintertime he spent his days under the trees and his nights out in the open. So in the daytime he was soaked by the cold water dripping from the icicles hanging from the tree branches. And at night he was covered by the falling snow. In this way, in winter, he made his body suffer the most extreme cold in both day and night.

In the summertime he spent his days out in the open and his nights under the trees. So in the daytime he was burned by the most severe rays of the sun. And at night he was blocked from the few cooling breezes of the open air. In this way, in summer, he made his body suffer the most extreme heat in both day and night.

This was how he struggled, trying to bring peace to his mind. He was so determined that he lived his entire life in this way.

Then, just as he was about to die, he saw a vision of himself reborn in a hell world. The vision struck him like lightning, and instantly he knew that all the ways he had tortured his body were completely useless! They had not

brought him peace of mind. Lo and behold, as he gave up his false beliefs and held on to the truth, he died and was reborn in a heaven world!

The moral is: Even at the very last moment, “The truth shall make you free.”

Tale 95 — Clear-sighted the Great, King of the World

[Impermanence]

It is said that there are two ways to practice religion. One is to live apart from the ordinary everyday world as a monk, a nun or a holy one. Those who are sincere in this way have as their highest goal the direct experience of complete Truth — full Enlightenment.

The other way to practice religion is within the ordinary world. Those who are sincere in this way have as their highest goal the harmony of an undivided world, living peacefully under a perfectly wholesome ruler — a ‘King of the World’.

Once upon a time the Enlightenment Being was born and given the name ‘Clear-sighted’. As he grew up he developed ten rules of good government: absence of hidden ill will, absence of open hostility, harmlessness, self-control, patience, gentleness, charity, generosity, straightforwardness and goodness.

The people of the world began to notice the wholesomeness and fairness of Clear-sighted, who lived strictly according to these rules. Gradually those in his vicinity volunteered to live under his authority as king, rather than under the dishonest politicians of the time.

As his reputation spread, every king in the world came to Clear-sighted and said, “Come, oh lord. You are welcome. My kingdom is your kingdom. Advise me how to rule in your name.”

Then Clear-sighted said, “Do not destroy life. Do not take what is not given. Do not behave wrongly in sexual desires. Do not speak falsely. Do not take alcohol that clouds the mind. My commands to the world are only these five. As long as these five are obeyed, my sixth rule is freedom for all to follow local customs and religions.”

After all the people on earth had come to live under his peaceful rule, he became known as Clear-sighted the Great, King of the World. His royal city, the capital of the whole world, was called Kusavati. It was a beautiful and prosperous city with four magnificent gates — one golden, one silver, one jade and one crystal.

Outside the gates, Kusavati was surrounded by seven rows of palm trees — a row with golden trunks and silver leaves and fruits; a row with silver trunks and golden leaves and fruits; a row with cat’s-eye trunks and crystal leaves and fruits; a row with crystal trunks and cat’s-eye leaves and fruits; a row with agate trunks and coral leaves and fruits; a row with coral trunks and agate leaves and fruits; and finally a row with trunks and leaves and fruits of every kind of jewel found in the world!

When breezes blew through these marvelous palms the sweet sounds of gentle music were heard throughout the city. This music was so enticing and pleasant that some of the citizens were enchanted into stopping their work and dancing for joy!

Clear-sighted the Great, King of the World, had a couch encrusted with jewels from the wonderful palms. After a long, righteous and peaceful reign, he lay on the rich couch for the last time. He knew that his end was near.

Of all his 84,000 queens, the one who loved him most was called, ‘Most-pleasant’. Sensing the state of his mind she said, “You rule over all the cities of the world, including this beautiful Kusavati with its four magnificent gates and seven rows of marvelous palms. Think about this and be happy!”

The King of the World said, “No, my dear queen. don’t say that. Instead you should advise me to give up attachment to the cities of the world and all they contain.” Surprised. she asked, “Why do you say this, my lord?” “Because today I will die,” he said.

Then Queen Most-pleasant started to cry, wiping away the tears as they flowed. And all the other 84,000 queens also broke into tears. And the king’s ministers and his whole court, both men and women, could not keep from weeping and sobbing. All eyes overflowed with tears.

But King Clear-sighted the Great said, “Your tears are useless. Be at peace.” Hearing this the wailing subsided and his subjects became silent. Then he said to Queen Most-pleasant, “Oh my queen, do not cry, do not lament. Anything that comes into being, whether it be a kingdom including the whole world, or just a tiny sesame seed — it cannot last forever. Anyone who comes into being, whether it be the King of the World, or the poorest petty thief — all must decay and die. Whatever is built up, falls apart. Whatever becomes, decays. The only true happiness is in the moment when becoming and decaying are not.”

In this way the Enlightenment Being got them to think about what most people don't want to think about — that all things come to an end. He advised them to be generous and wholesome. Then the King of the World, like everyone else, died. He was reborn as a god in a heaven world, where in time, like everyone else, he died.

The moral is: “All good things come to an end.”

Tale 96, 132 — The Prince and the She-devils

Chapter 1. Five Meals in the Forest

Once upon a time King Brahmadata was ruling in Benares, in northern India. The Enlightenment Being was born as the last of his 100 sons and grew up to be a wise young man.

In those days there were Silent Buddhas who came to the palace to receive alms food. They were called Buddhas because they were enlightened — they knew the Truth and experienced life as it really is, in every present moment. They were called Silent because they did not preach the Truth. This was because they knew it was a time when no one would be able to understand it. However, being filled with sympathy for the unhappiness of all beings, the Silent Buddhas wished to help anyone who asked them.

One day the young prince was thinking about his 99 older brothers and wondering if he had any chance to become King of Benares. He decided to ask the Silent Buddhas about it.

The next day the Silent Buddhas came as usual to collect alms food in the palace. The prince brought purified water and washed their feet. When they had sat down he gave them appetizers to eat. Before giving the next course he said to them, “I am 100th in line to the throne. What are the odds that I will become King of Benares?”

They replied, “Oh prince, with so many older brothers there is almost no chance you will ever be king here. However, you might become King of Takkasila. If you can get there in seven days you can become king. But on your way there is a dangerous forest. You must take the road passing through it, since it would take twice as long to go around it.

“That forest is known as ‘Devils Woods’. because it is filled with all kinds of devils — he-devils, she-devils, and even little children-devils! The she-devils spend most of their time by the roadside. They use magic to make buildings and entire cities appear along the way.

“The buildings have ceilings decorated with stars, and gorgeous rich couches surrounded by silk curtains of many colors. Sitting on these couches, the she-devils make themselves look like the sweetest, most pleasant of goddesses. With words dripping with honey they attract travelers saying, ‘You look tired. Come in, sit down, have something to drink and then be on your way.’

“Those who are persuaded to come in are invited to sit down. Then the she-devils use their beautiful physical appearance to trap their visitors with their own burning desires. After giving in to their desires, the strangers are killed by the she-devils and eaten while their blood is still hot!

“In this way those who are attracted by sight are trapped by the physical forms of women. Those who are attracted by sound are trapped by their singing voices and music. Those attracted by smell are trapped by the divine perfumes they wear. Those attracted by taste are trapped by the heavenly tasting delicacies they offer. Those attracted by touch are trapped by their soft luxurious beds and velvet couches.

“But if you, fair prince, can control all five senses, and force yourself to avoid looking at those beautiful enticing she-devils, only then can you become King of Takkasila in seven days.”

The grateful Bodhisatta replied, “Thank-you venerable ones, I will follow your advice. After hearing such warnings, how could I take the chance of looking at them?”

Then he asked the Silent Buddhas to give him special charms to protect him on his dangerous journey through Devils Woods. So they chanted protective blessings onto a string and some sand. He accepted the charms and paid his farewell respects to them, and then to his royal parents.

Returning to his own home he announced to his household servants, “I am going to Takkasila to win the kingship. You are to remain here.” But five of them said, “We also wish to go with you.” “No,” said he, “you can’t come with me. I have been warned that on the way there are beautiful she-devils who trap people who can’t resist the desires coming from their own five senses. Then they kill their victims and eat them while their blood is still hot. It is far too dangerous for you. I will rely only on myself and travel alone.”

But the five would not listen. They said, “If we go with you, oh prince, we will force ourselves to keep from looking at those beautiful she-devils. We will accompany you to Takkasila.” “If you insist, then so be it,” said the prince, “but keep your determination strong.”

The she-devils were waiting for them in Devils Woods. They had already magically formed beautiful villages and cities with lovely houses and palaces along the way.

It just so happened that one of the prince's five servants was easily enchanted by the sight of the curves and figures of the bodies of women. So he began to fall behind in order to admire them. The worried prince asked. 'Why do you delay, my friend?' 'My feet ache,' said the man, 'let me sit and rest a while in one of these mansions. Then I will catch up with you.' 'My good friend,' said the prince, 'those are she-devils. Don't chase after them!'

Nevertheless, blinded by the temptation of the sense of sight, the man replied, 'My lord, I can't turn away. Whatever will happen, let it happen!' Giving him one last warning. the prince continued on with the other four.

The one who remained behind went closer to the beautiful looking forms he was so attracted to. After pleasing themselves fully with the man, the she-devils killed him and ate him on the spot!

Then they went farther into Devils Woods and created another mirage of a beautiful mansion. They sat inside and began singing the sweetest melodies, accompanied by the lovely sounds of all kinds of musical instruments. One of the prince's followers was enchanted by the sound of beautiful music. So he too fell behind and was gobbled up by the still hungry she-devils.

Farther down the road they created another magic mansion filled with the scents of all kinds of divine perfumes. This time the man who loved sweet smells fell behind and was eaten as well.

Next the she-devils created a fabulous restaurant filled with foods having the most heavenly flavors. Here the lover of the tastes of the finest delicacies wandered in and was devoured in turn.

Then the she-devils went still farther down the road, created soft luxurious beds and velvet couches, and sat on them. The last of the prince's followers was one who loved the touch of the softest fabrics and the most luxurious comfort. So he too fell behind and met his death, and was quickly eaten by the ravenous she-devils.

These events left the Enlightenment Being all alone in Devils Woods. A certain she-devil thought, 'Aha! This one is very strong-minded indeed. But I am even more determined. I will not stop until I have tasted his flesh!' So she alone stubbornly followed him, even though the other devils gave up the chase.

As she got closer to the edge of Devils Woods, some woodsmen saw her and asked. “Lovely lady, who is it that walks on ahead of you?” “We are newlyweds,” replied the lying demon, “he is my too pure husband, who ran away from me on our wedding night. That’s why I’m chasing after him.”

The woodsmen caught up to the prince and asked, “Noble sir, this delicate flower-like golden-skinned young maiden has left her family to live with you. Why don’t you walk with her, instead of making her chase after you?”

The prince replied, “Good people, she is not my wife. She is a devil. She killed the five men who followed me and ate them while their blood was still hot!”

Whereupon the lovely looking devil said, “See how it is, gentlemen, anger can make husbands call their own wives devils and hungry ghosts! Such is the way of the world.”

Continuing to follow the prince, the determined she-devil magically made herself look pregnant. Then she seemed to be a first-time mother carrying her make-believe baby on her hip. Whoever saw the pair questioned them just as the woodsmen had. Each time the Bodhisatta repeated, “She is not my wife. She is a devil. She killed the five men who followed me and ate them while their blood was still hot!”

Chapter 2. A Feast in the Palace

Finally they arrived at Takkasila. The she-devil made her 'son' disappear and followed alone.

At the city gate the prince stopped and went into a rest house. Because of the magic power of the charmed sand and string he had gotten from the Silent Buddhas, the she-devil was not able to follow him inside. She stayed outside and made herself look as beautiful as a goddess.

The King of Takkasila happened to see her as he was going to his pleasure garden. Overwhelmed by her beauty, he decided he must have her. He sent a servant to ask if she was married. When he did so, she replied, "Yes, my husband is inside this rest house."

Hearing this, the prince called out from within, "She is not my wife. She is a devil. She killed the five men who followed me and ate them while their blood was still hot!" And once again she said, "See how it is, sir, anger can make husbands call their own wives devils and hungry ghosts! Such is the way of the world."

The servant returned to the king and told him what both had said. To which the king replied, "Unowned goods belong to the king." So he sent for the she-devil and seated her on a royal elephant. After the procession returned to the palace, he made her his number one queen.

That evening the king had a shampoo and bath, ate his supper, and went to bed. The demon had her supper, made herself look even more beautiful than before and followed the king to his bed. After pleasing him, she turned on her side and began to weep.

The king asked, "Why are you crying, my sweetheart?" "My lord," said she, "you picked me up from the roadside. In this palace there are many jealous women. They will say, 'She has no mother or father, no family or country. She was found on the side of the road.' Don't let them make fun of me like that, my lord. Give me power over the whole kingdom so none will dare challenge me."

"My lovely," replied the king, "I have no such power over the whole kingdom. My authority is only over those who revolt or break the law." But since he was so pleased by her physical charms, the king continued, "My sweetheart, I will grant you complete authority over all who dwell within my palace."

Satisfied with this, the new queen waited until the king was asleep. Then she secretly ran off to her home in the city of devils. She gathered together the she-devils, he-devils, and even the hungry little children-devils. Then she took them all back to the palace. She killed her new husband, the king, and gobbled him up — all except his bones! The other devils ate all the rest who lived in the palace — even the dogs and chickens! Only bones were left behind.

The next morning the people found the palace doors locked. Worried, they broke through the windows with axes, went inside, and found human and animal bones scattered around. Only then did they realize that the man in the rest house was right, that the king's new queen was a flesh-eating devil.

Meanwhile, the Enlightenment Being had protected himself from the murderous she-devil during the night. He had spread the charmed sand on the roof of the rest house and wound the charmed string around the outside walls. At dawn he was still awake inside, standing alertly with sword in hand.

After cleaning up the mess in the palace the citizens discussed the situation among themselves. They said, “The man in the rest house must be master of his senses, since he did not even look at the she-devil's dangerous beauty. If such a noble, determined and wise man were ruling our country, we all would prosper. Let us make him our new king.”

In unanimous agreement they went to the rest house and invited the prince to be their king. When he accepted, they escorted him to the palace, seated him on a pile of jewels, and crowned him king.

He ruled righteously, following the ten rules of good government. He avoided the four ways of going astray prejudice, anger, fearfulness and foolishness. And he always remembered the advice of the Silent Buddhas, that had led him to the kingship. Unlike his five unfortunate followers, he had resisted the blind desire for the pleasures of the five senses. Only then could he benefit all his subjects with his wise rule.

The moral is: Living only for pleasures of their senses, fools are devoured.

Tale 97 — A Man Named Bad

[Self Acceptance]

Once upon a time there was a world famous teacher in Takkasila, in north-western India. He had 500 high class students who learned sacred teachings from him.

It just so happened that one of these high class students had been named 'Bad' by his parents. One day he thought, "When I am told, 'Come Bad', 'Go Bad', 'Do this Bad'. it is not nice for me or others. It even sounds disgraceful and unlucky."

So he went to the teacher and asked him to give him a more pleasant name, one that would bring good fortune rather than bad. The teacher said, "Go. my son, go wherever you like and find a more fortunate name. When you return, I will officially give you your new name."

The young man named Bad left the city, and traveled from village to village until he came to a big city. A man had just died and Bad asked what his name was. People said. "His name was Alive." "Alive also died?" asked Bad. The people answered, "Whether his name be Alive or whether it be Dead, in either case he must die. A name is merely a word used to recognize a person. Only a fool would not know this!" After hearing this, Bad no longer felt badly about his own name — but he didn't feel good about it either.

As he continued on his way into the city, a debt-slave girl was being beaten by her masters in the street. He asked, "Why is she being beaten?" He was told, "Because she is a slave until she pays a loan debt to her masters. She has come home from working, with no wages to pay as interest on her debt." "And what is her name?" he asked. "Her name is Rich." they said. "By her name she is Rich. but she has no money even to pay interest?" asked Bad. They said, "Whether her name be Rich or whether it be Poor, in either case she has no money. A name is merely a word used to recognize a person. Only a fool would not know this!" After hearing this, Bad became even less interested in changing his name.

After leaving the city, along the roadside he met a man who had lost his way. He asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Tourguide." "You mean to say that even a Tourguide has gotten lost?" asked Bad. Then the man said, "Whether my name be Tourguide or whether

it be Tourist, in either case I have lost my way. A name is merely a word used to recognize a person. Only a fool would not know this!”

Now completely satisfied with his own name, Bad returned to his teacher.

The world famous teacher of Takkasila asked him, “How are you, my son? Have you found a good name?” He answered, “Sir, those named Alive and Dead both die, Rich and Poor may be penniless, Tourguide and Tourist can get lost. Now I know that a name is merely a word used to recognize a person. The name does not make things happen, only deeds do. So I’m satisfied with my name. There’s no point in changing it.”

The teacher summarized the lesson his pupil had learned this way — “By seeing Alive as dead, Rich as poor, Tourguide as lost, Bad has accepted himself.”

The moral is: “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

Tale 98 — A Man Named Wise

[Cheating]

Once upon a time, the Enlightenment Being was born in a merchants' family in Benares, in northern India. He was given the name Wise. When he grew up he began doing business with a man whose name just happened to be Verywise.

It came to pass that Wise and Verywise took a caravan of 500 bullock carts into the countryside. After selling all their goods they returned to Benares with their handsome profits.

When it came time to split their gains between them, Verywise said, "I should get twice as much profit as you." "How come?" asked Wise. "Because you are Wise and I am Verywise. It is obvious that Wise should get only half as much as Verywise."

Then Wise asked, "Didn't we both invest equal amounts in this caravan trip? Why do you deserve twice as much profit as I?" Verywise replied, "Because of my quality of being Verywise." In this way their quarrel went on with no end in sight.

Then Verywise thought, "I have a plan to win this argument." So he went to his father and asked him to hide inside a huge hollow tree. He said, "When my partner and I come by and ask how to share our profits, then you should say, 'Verywise deserves a double share.'"

Verywise returned to Wise and said, "My friend, neither of us wants this quarrel. Let's go to the old sacred tree and ask the tree spirit to settle it."

When they went to the tree Verywise said solemnly, "My lord tree spirit, we have a problem. Kindly solve it for us." Then his father, hidden inside the hollow tree, disguised his voice and asked, "What is your question?" The man's cheating son said, "My lord tree spirit, this man is Wise and I am Verywise. We have done business together. Tell us how to share the profits." Again disguising his voice, his father responded, "Wise deserves a single share and Verywise deserves a double share."

Hearing this solution, Wise decided to find out if it really was a tree spirit speaking from inside the tree. So he threw some hay into it and set it on fire. Immediately Verywise's father grabbed onto a branch, jumped out of the flames and fell on the ground. He said in his own voice, "Although his

name is Verywise, my son is just a clever cheater. I'm lucky that the one named Wise really is so. and I've escaped only half toasted!"

Then Wise and Verywise shared their profits equally. Eventually they both died and were reborn as they deserved.

The moral is: A cheater may be clever but not wise.

Tale 99, 101 — Achieving Nothing

[No Thing]

Once upon a time the Bodhisatta — the Enlightenment Being — was born into a high class family in northern India. When he grew up he gave up the ordinary desires of the everyday world and became a holy man. He went to the Himalayan Mountains where 500 other holy men became his followers.

He meditated throughout his long life. He gained supernatural powers — like flying through the air and understanding people's thoughts without their speaking. These special powers impressed his 500 followers greatly.

One rainy season, the chief follower took 250 of the holy men into the hill country villages to collect salt and other necessities. It just so happened that this was the time when the master was about to die. The 250 who were still by his side realized this. So they asked him, “Oh most holy one, in your long life practicing goodness and meditation, what was your greatest achievement?”

Having difficulty speaking as he was dying, the last words of the Enlightenment Being were, “No Thing.” Then he was reborn in a heaven world.

Expecting to hear about some fantastic magical power, the 250 followers were disappointed. They said to each other. “After a long life practicing goodness and meditation, our poor master has achieved ‘nothing’.” Since they considered him a failure, they burned his body with no special ceremony, honors, or even respect.

When the chief follower returned he asked, “Where is the holy one?” “He has died,” they told him. “Did you ask him about his greatest achievement?” “Of course we did,” they answered. “And what did he say?” asked the chief follower. “He said he achieved ‘nothing’,” they replied, “so we didn't celebrate his funeral with any special honors.”

Then the chief follower said, “You brothers did not understand the meaning of the teacher's words. He achieved the great knowledge of ‘No Thing’. He realized that the names of things are not what they are. There is what there is, without being called ‘this thing’ or ‘that thing’. There is no ‘Thing’.” In this way the chief follower explained the wonderful achievement of their great master, but they still did not understand.

Meanwhile, from his heaven world,, the reborn Enlightenment Being saw that his former chief follower's words were not accepted. So he left the heaven world and appeared floating in the air above his former followers' monastery. In praise of the chief follower's wisdom he said, "The one who hears the Truth and understands automatically, is far better off than a hundred fools who spend a hundred years thinking and thinking and thinking."

By preaching in this way, the Great Being encouraged the 500 holy men to continue seeking Truth. After lives spent in serious meditation, all 500 died and were reborn in the same heaven world with their former master.

The moral is: When the wise speak, listen!

Tale 100 — A Mother's Wise Advice

[Non-violence]

Once upon a time, the son of Brahmadata was ruling righteously in Benares, in northern India. It came to pass that the King of Kosala made war, killed the King of Benares, and made the queen become his own wife.

Meanwhile, the queen's son escaped by sneaking away through the sewers. In the countryside he eventually raised a large army and surrounded the city. He sent a message to the king, the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother. He told him to surrender the kingdom or fight a battle.

The prince's mother, the Queen of Benares, heard of this threat from her son. She was a gentle and kind woman who wanted to prevent violence and suffering and killing. So she sent a message to her son — “There is no need for the risks of battle. It would be wiser to close every entrance to the city. Eventually the lack of food, water and firewood will wear down the citizens. Then they will give the city to you without any fighting.”

The prince decided to follow his mother's wise advice. His army blockaded the city for seven days and nights. Then the citizens captured their unlawful king, cut off his head, and delivered it to the prince. He entered the city triumphantly and became the new King of Benares.

The moral is: Kind advice is wise advice.

Appendix A.

Who Was the Bodhisatta?

Some who tell these stories say that they are about past lives of the Buddha, the Enlightened One. Before he became enlightened as the Buddha, he was called the Bodhisatta, the Enlightenment Being. Look at the list below to see who is said to be the Bodhisatta in each tale.

- 51. King Goodness the Great
- 52. King Fruitful
- 53. The richest man in Benares
- 54, 85. A caravan leader
- 55. Prince Five-Weapons
- 56. A poor farmer
- 57. Mr. Monkey
- 58. A prince of monkeys
- 59, 60. A drummer living in a small country village
- 61. A very well-known teacher
- 62. A king who loved to gamble
- 63. The Buttermilk Wise Man
- 64, 65. A well-known teacher
- 66. Born into a rich high class family
- 67. The king
- 68. Born into an ordinary family
- 69. A doctor who was an expert at treating snake bites
- 70. The Shovel Wise Man
- 71. A world famous teacher and holy man
- 72. The Elephant King Goodness
- 73. A holy man living humbly in a little hut
- 74. A wise tree spirit who was the leader of a large clan

Appendix A. Who Was the Bodhisatta?

- 75.** The Fish Who Worked a Miracle
- 76.** The Meditating Security Guard
- 77.** A humble forest monk
- 78.** The barber
- 79.** A traveling merchant
- 80.** A dwarf, bent over and partly hunchbacked
- 81.** A homeless holy man and teacher
- 82.** The world famous teacher
- 83.** A very rich man
- 84.** A rich man living in Benares
- 85, 54.** A caravan leader
- 86.** A very valuable adviser priest
- 87.** A forest monk
- 88.** The Bull Called Delightful
- 89.** A trader
- 90.** The Benares merchant
- 91.** A rich man living in Benares who was gambling
- 92.** The wise minister
- 93.** A very wealthy man living in Benares
- 94.** The Holy Man Who Tried To Be Too Holy
- 95.** Clear-sighted the Great, King of the World
- 96.** The last of King Brahmadata's 100 sons
- 97.** A world famous teacher
- 98.** A Man Named Wise
- 99.** The master
- 100.** The son of Brahmadata ruling righteously in Benares

Appendix B.

An Arrangement of Morals

The morals from the stories are arranged below, according to the Ten Perfections. The Enlightenment Being — the Bodhisatta — developed each of them along his way to realizing the full enlightenment of the Buddha. This can be used as a different order for reading the stories.

Moral	Tale	Page
If you don't help others, you can't expect them to help you.	90	150
The ungrateful stops at nothing, and digs his own grave.	72	83
Poor indeed is the rich man who won't part with a penny.	78	114
Wholesomeness — Morality		
Keep sober - and keep your common sense.	53	38
A pupil without a teacher is easily embarrassed.	81	123
Deceiving a friend may be hazardous to your health.	91	151
People prize goodness most of all.	86	140
Desire enslaves, wisdom liberates.	66	70

Appendix B.
An Arrangement of Morals

Moral	Tale	Page
Giving up attachment to the ordinary world — Renunciation		
Only one possession is enough to keep the mind from finding freedom.	70	77
It's easier to gain power than to give it up.	52	36
Wickedness between women and men brings unhappiness to both.	61	55
Wisdom		
Beware of the panic-stricken man. What he can do is more dangerous than what scared him in the first place.	77	108
A cheater may be clever but not wise.	98	174
It's a fortunate brother who has an intelligent sister.	67	72
One way or another, we're all related.	68	73
Seduction can be dangerous to men and women both.	63	65
You can't force someone to be good.	62	61
"Don't bite off more than you can chew."	56	45

Appendix B.

An Arrangement of Morals

Moral	Tale	Page
Too much of a good thing can be dangerous.	93	159
It pays to be careful.	58	50
“Appearances can be deceiving.”	80	121
“A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”	97	172
“A serious question deserves a serious answer.”	84	137
A fool’s curse can be a wise man’s blessing.	87	142
Fools are deaf to wise words.	74	90
When the wise speak, listen!	99	176
Theft from greed, lies from fear, truth from examining.	92	157
The wise are led by common sense; fools follow only hunger.	54	40
The only weapon you need is hidden inside you.	55	44
Energy — Perseverance		
“Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today.”	71	79

Appendix B.
An Arrangement of Morals

Moral	Tale	Page
Patience		
Understanding relieves anger.	64	67
Overdoing leads to a downfall.	59	51
Truthfulness		
Be careful of a holy man who puts on a big show.	89	148
No one defends a betrayer of trust.	79	116
Even at the very last moment, “The truth shall make you free.”	94	161
Determination		
Determination wins respect.	69	74
It pays to have a holy man around.	76	94
Living only for pleasures of, their senses, fools are devoured.	96	170
Refusing to harm others, the good heart wins over all.	51	18

Appendix B.
An Arrangement of Morals

Moral	Tale	Page
Loving-kindness		
The longer the friendship, the greater its rewards.	83	136
Gratitude is a reward, which is itself rewarded.	73	89
Kind advice is wise advice.	100	177
True innocence relieves the suffering of many.	75	92
Even-mindedness — Equanimity		
Harsh words bring no reward. Respectful words bring honor to all.	88	145
A good loser is a true gentleman.	57	47
“All good things come to an end.”	95	164
In peace of mind, there is neither loss nor gain.	82	134