Ja 4 — Cullaka-Setthi Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja4.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

License: Public Domain (original English edition, published 1895–1907)

Edited by E. B. Cowell

Original edition: Cambridge University Press, volume 1, 1895

Pinned source revision: https://github.com/suttacentral/sc-data/commit/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

Scope: Complete numbered source article from the traditional Jātaka commentary; canonical verses appear in story context. This is not a verse-only edition.

Changes: Converted the pinned SuttaCentral HTML article to plain text; removed inline print page-reference labels and normalized whitespace. The original source retains references.

Text

“With humblest start.” This story was told by the Master about the Elder named Little Wayman, while in Jivaka’s Mango-grove near Rajagaha. And here an account of Little Wayman’s birth must be given. Tradition tells us that the daughter of a rich merchant’s family in Rajagaha actually stooped to intimacy with a slave. Becoming alarmed lest her misconduct should get known, she said to the slave, “We can’t live on here; for if my mother and father come to know of this sin of ours, they will tear us limb from limb. Let us go and live afar off.” So with their belongings in their hands they stole together out by the hardly-opened door, and fled away, they cared not whither, to find a shelter beyond the ken of her family. Then they went and lived together in a certain place, with the result that she conceived. And when her full time was nearly come, she told her husband and said, “If I am taken in labour away from kith and kin, that will be a trouble to both of us. So let us go home.” First he agreed to start to-day, and then he put it off till the morrow; and so he let the days slip by, till she thought to herself, “This fool is so conscious of his great offence that he dares not go. One’s parents are one’s best friends; so whether he goes or stays, I must go.” So, when he went out, she put all her household matters in order and set off home, telling her next-door neighbour where she was going. Returning home, and not finding his wife, but discovering from the neighbours that she had started off home, he hurried after her and came up with her on the road; and then and there she was taken in labour.

“What’s this, my dear?” said he.

“I have given birth to a son, my husband,” said she.

Accordingly, as the very thing had now happened which was the only reason for the journey, they both agreed that it was no good going on now, and so turned back again. And as their child had been born by the way, they called him ‘Wayman.’

Not long after, she became with child again, and everything fell out as Before. And as this second child too was born by the way, they called him ‘Wayman’ too, distinguishing the elder as ‘Great Wayman’ and the younger as ‘Little Wayman: Then, with both their children, they again went back to their own home.

Now, as they were living there, their way-child heard other boys talking of their uncles and grandfathers and grandmothers; so he asked his mother whether he hadn’t got relations like the other boys. “Oh yes, my dear,” said his mother; “but they don’t live here. Your grandfather is a wealthy merchant in the city of Rajagaha, and you have plenty of relations there.” “Why don’t we go there, mother?” She told the boy the reason why they stayed away; but, as the children kept on speaking about these relations, she said to her husband, “The children are always plaguing me. Are my parents going to eat us at sight? Come, let us shew the children their grandfather’s family.” “Well, I don’t mind taking them there; but I really could not face your parents.” “All right; so long as, some way or other, the children come to see their grandfather’s family,” said she.

So those two took their children and coming in due course to Rajagaha put up in a public rest-house by the city gate. Then, taking with them the two children, the woman caused their coming to be made known to her parents. The latter, on hearing the message, returned this answer, “True, it is strange to be without children unless one has renounced the world in quest of Arahatship. Still, so great is the guilt of the pair towards us that they may not stand in our sight. Here is a sum of money for them: let them take this and retire to live where they will. But the children they may send here.” Then the merchant’s daughter took the money so sent her, and despatched the children by the messengers. So the children grew up in their grandfather’s house,—Little Wayman being of tender years, while Great Wayman used to go with his grand-father to hear the Buddha preach the Truth. And by constant hearing of the Truth from the Master’s own lips, the lad’s heart yearned to renounce the world for the life of a Brother.

“With your permission,” said he to his grandfather, “I should like to join the Brotherhood.” “What do I hear?” cried the old man. “Why, it would give me greater joy to see you join the Order than to see the whole world join. Become a Brother, if you feel able.” And he took him to the Master.

“Well, merchant,” said the Master, “have you brought your boy with you?” Yes sir; this is my grandson, who wishes to join your Brotherhood.” Then the Master sent for a Mendicant, and told him to admit the lad to the Order; and the Mendicant repeated the Formula of the Perishable Body and admitted the lad as a novice. When the latter had learned by heart many words of the Buddha, and was old enough, he was admitted a full Brother. He now gave himself up to earnest thought till he won Arahatship; and as he passed his days in the enjoyment of Insight and the Paths, he thought whether he could not impart the like happiness to Little Wayman. So he went to his grandfather the merchant, and said, “Great merchant, with your consent, I will admit Little Wayman to the Order.” “Pray do so, reverend sir,” was the reply.

Then the Elder admitted the lad Little Wayman and established him in the Ten Commandments. But Little Wayman proved a dullard: with four months' study he failed to get by heart this single stanza—

Lo! like a fragrant lotus at the dawn

Of day, full-blown, with virgin wealth of scent,

Behold the Buddha's glory shining forth,

As in the vaulted heaven beams the sun!

For, we are told, in the Buddhahood of Kassapa this Little Wayman, having himself attained to knowledge as a Brother, laughed to scorn a dull Brother who was learning a passage by heart. His scorn so confused his butt, that the latter could not learn or recite the passage. And now, in consequence, on joining the Brotherhood he himself proved a dullard. Each new line he learned drove the last out of his memory; and four months slipped away while he was struggling with this single stanza. Said his elder brother to him, "Wayman, you are not equal to receiving this doctrine. In four whole months you have been unable to learn a single stanza. How then can you hope to crown your vocation with supreme success? Leave the monastery." But, though thus expelled by his brother, Little Wayman was so attached to the Buddha's creed that he did not want to become a layman.

Now at that time Great Wayman was acting as steward. And Jivaka Komarabhacca, going to his mango-grove with a large present of perfumes and flowers for the Master, had presented his offering and listened to a discourse; then, rising from his seat and bowing to the Buddha, he went up to Great Wayman and asked, "How many Brethren are there, reverend sir, with the Master?" "Just 500, sir." "Will you bring the 500 Brethren, with the Buddha at their head, to take their meal at my house to-morrow?" "Lay-disciple, one of them named Little Wayman is a dullard and makes no progress in the Faith," said the Elder; "I accept the invitation for everyone but him."

Hearing this, Little Wayman thought to himself, "In accepting the invitation for all these Brethren, the Elder carefully accepts so as to exclude me. This proves that my brother's affection for me is dead. What have I to do with this proves? I will become a layman and live in the exercise of charity and other good works of a lay character." And on the morrow early he went forth, avowedly to become a layman again.

Now at the first break of day, as he was surveying the world, the Master became aware of this; and going forth even earlier than Little Wayman, he paced to and fro by the porch on Little Wayman's road. As the latter came out of the house, he observed the Master, and with a salutation went up to him. "Whither away at this hour, Little Wayman?" said the Master.

"My brother has expelled me from the Order, sir; and I am going to wander forth."

“Little Wayman, as it was under me that you took the vows, why did you not, when expelled by your brother, come to me? Conte, what have you to do with a layman’s life? You shall stop with me.” So saying, he took Little Wayman and seated him at the door of his own perfumed chamber. Then giving him a perfectly clean cloth which he had supernaturally created, the Master said, “Face towards the East, and as you handle this cloth, repeat these words—‘Removal of Impurity; Removal of Impurity.’” Then at the time appointed the Master, attended by the Brotherhood, went to Jivaka’s house and sat down on the seat set for him.

Now Little Wayman, with his gaze fixed on the sun, sat handling the cloth and repeating the words, “Removal of Impurity; Removal of Impurity.” And as he kept handling the piece of cloth, it grew soiled. Then he thought, “Just now this piece of cloth was quite clean; but my personality has destroyed its original state and made it dirty. Impermanent indeed are all compounded things! And even as he realised Death and Decay, he won the Arahat’s Illumination. Knowing that Little Wayman’s mind had won Illumination, the Master sent forth an apparition and in this semblance of himself appeared before him, as if seated in front of him and saying, “Heed it not, Little Wayman, that this mere piece of cloth has become dirty and stained with impurity; within thee are the impurities of lust and other evil things. Remove them.” And the apparition uttered these stanzas—

Impurity in Lust consists, not dirt;

And Lust we term the real Impurity.

Yea, Brethren, whoso drives it from his breast,

He lives the gospel of the Purified.

Impurity in Wrath consists, not dirt;

And Wrath we term the real Impurity.

Yea, Brethren, whoso drives it from his breast,

He lives the gospel of the Purified.

Delusion is Impurity, not dirt;

We term Delusion real Impurity.

Yea, Brethren, whoso drives it from his breast,

He lives the gospel of the Purified.

At the close of these stanzas Little Wayman attained to Arahatship with the four branches of knowledge, whereby he straightway came to have knowledge of all the sacred texts. Tradition has it that, in ages past, when he was a king and was making a solemn

procession round his city, he wiped the sweat from his brow with a spotless cloth which he was wearing; and the cloth was stained. Thought he, “It is this body of mine which has destroyed the original purity and whiteness of the cloth, and dirtied it. Impermanent indeed are all composite things.” Thus he grasped the idea of impermanence; and hence it came to pass that it was the removal of impurity which worked his salvation.

Meantime, Jivaka Komarabhacca offered the Water of Donation; but the Master put his hand over the vessel, saying, “Are there no Brethren, Jivaka, in the monastery?”

Said Great Wayman, “There are no Brethren there, reverend sir.” “Oh yes, there are, Jivaka,” said the Master. “Hi, there!” said Jivaka to a servant; “just you go and see whether or not there are any Brethren in the monastery.”

At that moment Little Wayman, conscious as he was that his brother was declaring there were no Brethren in the monastery, determined to shew him there were, and so filled the whole mango-grove with nothing but Brothers. Some were making robes, others dyeing, whilst others again were repeating the sacred texts—each of a thousand Brethren he made unlike all the others. Finding this host of Brethren in the monastery, the man returned and said that the whole mango-grove was full of Brethren.

But as regards the Elder up in the monastery—

Wayman, a thousand-fold self-multiplied,

Sat on, till bidden, in that pleasant grove.

“Now go back,” said the Master to the man, “and say ‘The Master sends for him whose name is Little Wayman.’

But when the man went and delivered his message, a thousand mouths answered, “I am Little Wayman! I am Little Wayman!”

Back came the man with the report, “They all say they are ‘Little Wayman,’ reverend sir.”

“Well now go back,” said the Master, “and take by the hand the first one of them who says he is Little Wayman, and the others will all vanish.” The man did as he was bidden, and straightway the thousand Brethren vanished from sight. The Elder came back with the man.

When the meal was over, the Master said, “Jivaka, take Little Wayman’s bowl; he will return thanks.” Jivaka did so. Then like a young lion roaring defiance, the Elder ranged the whole of the sacred texts through in his address of thanks. Lastly, the Master rose from his seat and attended by the Order returned to the monastery, and there, after the assignment of tasks by the Brotherhood, he rose from his seat and, standing in the doorway of his perfumed chamber, delivered a Buddha-discourse to the Brotherhood. Ending with a theme which he gave out for meditation, and dismissing the Brotherhood, he retired into

his perfumed chamber, and lay down lion-like on his right side to rest.

At even, the orange-robed Brethren assembled together from all sides in the Hall of Truth and sang the Master's praises, even as though they were spreading a curtain of orange cloth round him as they sat.

"Brethren," it was said, "Great Wayman failed to recognise the bent of Little Wayman, and expelled him from the monastery as a dullard who could not even learn a single stanza in four whole months. But the All-Knowing Buddha by his supremacy in the Truth bestowed on him Arahatship with all its supernatural knowledge, even while a single meal was in progress. And by that knowledge he grasped the whole of the sacred texts. Oh! how great is a Buddha's power!"

Now the Blessed One, knowing full well the talk that was going on in the Hall of Truth, thought it meet to go there. So, rising from his Buddha-couch, he donned his two orange under-cloths, girded himself as with lightning, arrayed himself in his orange-coloured robe, the ample robe of a Buddha, and came forth to the Hall of Truth with the infinite grace of a Buddha, moving with the royal gait of an elephant in the plenitude of his vigour. Ascending the glorious Buddha-throne set in the midst of the resplendent hall, he seated himself upon the middle of the throne emitting those six-coloured rays which mark a Buddha,—like the newly-arisen sun, when from the peaks of the Yugandhara Mountains he illumines the depths of the ocean. Immediately the All-Knowing One came into the Hall, the Brotherhood broke off their talk and were silent. Gazing round on the company with gentle loving-kindness, the Master thought within himself, "This company is perfect! Not a man is guilty of moving hand or foot improperly; not a sound, not a cough or sneeze is to he heard! In their reverence and awe of the majesty and glory of the Buddha, not a man would dare to speak before I did, even if I sat here in silence all my life long. But it is my part to begin; and I will open the conversation." Then in his sweet divine tones he addressed the Brethren and said, "What, pray, is the theme of this conclave? And what was the talk which was broken off?"

"Sir," said they, "it was no profitless theme, but your own praises that we were telling here in conclave."

And when they had told him word for word what they had been saying, the Master said, "Brethren, through me Little Wayman has just now risen to great things in the Faith; in times past it was to great things in the way of wealth that he rose,—but equally through me."

The Brethren asked the Master to explain this; and the Blessed One made clear in these words a thing which succeeding existences had hidden from them—

Once on a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares in Kasi, the Bodhisatta was born into the Treasurer's family, and growing up, was made Treasurer, being called Treasurer Little. A wise and clever man was he, with a keen eye for signs and omens. One day on his way to wait upon the king, he came on a dead mouse lying on the road; and,

taking note of the position of the stars at that moment, he said, “Any decent young fellow with his wits about him has only to pick that mouse up, and he might start a business and keep a wife.”

His words were overheard by a young man of good family but reduced circumstances, who said to himself, “That’s a man who has always got a reason for what he says.” And accordingly he picked up the mouse, which he sold for a farthing at a tavern for their cat.

With the farthing he got molasses and took drinking water in a water-pot. Coming on flower-gatherers returning from the forest, he gave each a tiny quantity of the molasses and ladled the water out to them. Each of them gave him a handful of flowers, with the proceeds of which, next day, he came back again to the flower grounds provided with more molasses and a pot of water. That day the flower-gatherers, before they went, gave him flowering plants with half the flowers left on them; and thus in a little while he obtained eight pennies.

Later, one rainy and windy day, the wind blew down a quantity of rotten branches and boughs and leaves in the king’s pleasaunce, and the gardener did not see how to clear them away. Then up came the young man with an offer to remove the lot, if the wood and leaves might be his. The gardener closed with the offer on the spot. Then this apt pupil of Treasurer Little repaired to the children’s playground and in a very little while had got them by bribes of molasses to collect every stick and leaf in the place into a heap at the entrance to the pleasaunce. Just then the king’s potter was on the look out for fuel to fire bowls for the palace, and coming on this heap, took the lot off his hands. The sale of his wood brought in sixteen pennies to this pupil of Treasurer Little, as well as five bowls and other vessels. Having now twenty-four pennies in all, a plan occurred to him. He went to the vicinity of the city-gate with a jar full of water and supplied 500 mowers with water to drink. Said they, “You’ve done us a good turn, friend. What can we do for you?” “Oh, I’ll tell you when I want your aid,” said he; and as he went about, he struck up an intimacy with a land-trader and a sea-trader. Said the former to him, “To-morrow there will come to town a horse-dealer with 500 horses to sell.” On hearing this piece of news, he said to the mowers, “I want each of you to-day to give me a bundle of grass and not to sell your own grass till mine is sold.” “Certainly,” said they, and delivered the 500 bundles of grass at his house. Unable to get grass for his horses elsewhere, the dealer purchased our friend’s grass for a thousand pieces.

Only a few days later his sea-trading friend brought him news of the arrival of a large ship in port; and another plan struck him. He hired for eight pence a well appointed carriage which plied for hire by the hour, and went in great style down to the port. Having bought the ship on credit and deposited his signet-ring as security, he had a pavilion pitched hard by and said to his people as he took his seat inside, “When merchants are being shewn in, let them be passed on by three successive ushers into my presence.” Hearing that a ship had arrived in port, about a hundred merchants came down to buy the cargo; only to he told that they could not have it as a great merchant had already made a payment on account. So away they all went to the young man; and the footmen duly announced them by three successive ushers, as had been arranged beforehand. Each man of the hundred

severally gave him a thousand pieces to buy a share in the ship and then a further thousand each to buy him out altogether. So it was with 200,000 pieces that this pupil of Treasurer Little returned to Benares.

Actuated by a desire to shew his gratitude, he went with one hundred thousand pieces to call on Treasurer Little. “How did you come by all this wealth?” asked the Treasurer. “In four short months, simply by following your advice,” replied the young man; and he told him the whole story, starting with the dead mouse. Thought Lord High Treasurer Little, on hearing all this, “I must see that a young fellow of these parts does not fall into anybody else’s hands.” So he married him to his own grown-up daughter and settled all the family estates on the young man. And at the Treasurer’s death, he became Treasurer in that city. And the Bodhisatta passed away to fare according to his deserts.

His lesson ended, the Supreme Buddha, the All-Knowing One himself, repeated this stanza:

With humblest start and trifling capital

A shrewd and able man will rise to wealth,

E’en as his breath can nurse a tiny flame.

Also the Blessed One said, “It is through me, Brethren, that Little Wayman has just now risen to great things in the Faith, as in times past to great things in the way of wealth.” His lesson thus finished, the Master made the connexion between the two stories he had told and identified the Birth in these concluding words, “Little Wayman was in those days the pupil of Treasurer Little, and I myself Lord High Treasurer Little.”

The Jātaka, or Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, edited by E.B. Cowell, published by The Cambridge University Press.

Vol. 1, translated by Robert Chalmers, 1895.

Vol. 2, translated by W.H.D. Rouse, 1895.

Vol. 3, translated by H.T. Francis and R.A. Neil, 1897.

Vol. 4, translated by W.H.D. Rouse, 1901.

Vol. 5, translated by H.T. Francis, 1905.

Vol. 6, translated by E.B. Cowell and W.H.D. Rouse, 1907.

These translations are in the public domain. You are free to do whatever you like with them.

Scanned, proofed and formatted at sacred-texts.com, January 2006–February 2010, by John Bruno Hare and others. Thanks to the Sacred Texts Archive for making these texts

available in digital form.

Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.