Ja 543 — Bhuridatta Jātaka

English translation by E. B. Cowell and W. H. D. Rouse.

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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

“Whatever jewels there may be,” etc. This story the Master told, while dwelling at Savatthi, about some lay-brethren who kept the fast-days. On a fast-day, it is said, they rose early in the morning, took upon them the fasting vows, gave alms, and after their meal took perfumes and garlands in their hands and went to Jetavana, and at the time of hearing the Law seated themselves on one side. The Master, coming to the Hall of Truth, having sat down in the adorned Buddha-seat, looked upon the assembly of the brethren. Now the Tathagatas like to converse with those among the brethren or others, in reference to whom a religious discourse takes its rise; therefore on the present occasion, as he knew that a religious discourse concerning former teachers would arise in connection with these lay-brethren, while he was conversing with them, he asked them, “O lay-brethren, do you keep the fast-day?” On their replying in the affirmative, he said, “It is right and well done of you, O lay-brethren; but yet it is no matter for wonder that you who have a Buddha teacher like me should keep the fast-day,—sages of old who were without any teacher forsook great glory and kept the fast-day.” And so saying, he told at their request an old legend of the past.

I.

Once upon a time, Brahmadatta, when he was reigning in Benares, had made his son viceroy; but when he saw his great glory, he became suspicious lest he should also seize the kingdom. So he said to him, “Do you depart hence and dwell for the present where you please, and at my death take the hereditary kingdom.” The prince complied, and after saluting his father, went out and proceeding to the Yamuna built a hut of leaves between the river and the sea and dwelt there, living on roots and fruits. Now at that time a young Naga female in the Naga-world beneath the ocean who had lost her husband, and on account of her carnal passions when she saw the happiness of the other Nagas who had husbands living she had left the Naga-world, was wandering by the seashore, when she observed the prince’s foot-prints, and following the track saw the hut of leaves. Now the

prince happened to be away, having gone out in search of various kinds of fruit. She entered into the hut, and as she saw the wooden bedstead and the rest of the furniture she thought to herself, “This is the dwelling-place of some ascetic, I will prove him, whether he is an ascetic from faith or not. If he is an ascetic from faith and bent upon self-abnegation he will not accept my adorned bed; but if he is at heart a lover of pleasure and not an ascetic from faith he will lie down on my bed; then I will take him and make him my husband and dwell here.” So she went back to the Naga-world and collected divine flowers and perfumes and prepared a bed of flowers, and having made an offering of flowers and scattered perfumed powder about and adorned the hut, she departed to the abode of the Nagas. When the prince returned at evening time and entered the hut, and saw what she had done, he said, “Who has prepared this bed?” And when he ate the various fruits, he exclaimed, “Oh these sweet-scented flowers, this bed has been pleasantly arranged,” and being filled with pleasure as he was not a true ascetic at heart, he lay down on the couch of flowers and fell fast asleep. The next day he rose at sunrise and went off to collect fruits, without sweeping his hut of leaves. At that moment the female Naga came up and seeing the withered flowers knew at once, “This man is a lover of pleasure and not an ascetic from faith, I shall be able to capture him”; so she took away the old flowers and brought others and spread a fresh bed and adorned the hut of leaves and strewed flowers etc. in the covered walk and then returned to the Naga-world. He rested that night also on that bed of flowers and the next day he thought to himself, “Who can it be that adorns this hut?” So he did not go out to gather fruits, but remained concealed not far from the hut. The Naga woman, having collected perfumes and flowers, came along the path to the hermitage. The prince, having beheld the Naga in all her great beauty, at once fell in love with her, and, without letting himself be seen, entered the hut as she was preparing the couch and asked her who she was. “My lord, I am a Naga woman.” “Hast thou a husband or not?” “I am a widow without a husband; and where dost thou dwell?” “I am Brahmadattakumara, the son of the king of Benares; but why dost thou wander about, leaving the abode of the Nagas?” “My lord, as I beheld the happiness of the other Naga women who had husbands I became discontented on account of carnal passion and I came away and go wandering about, seeking for a husband.” “I also am not an ascetic from faith, but I have come to dwell here because my father drove me away; vex not thyself, I will be thy husband and we will dwell here in concord.” She at once consented; and from that time they lived harmoniously together there. By her magic power she made a costly house and brought a costly couch and spread a bed. Thenceforth he ate no roots or fruits but feasted on divine meat and drink. After a while she conceived and brought forth a son whom they called Sagara-Brahmadatta. When the child was able to walk, she brought forth a daughter, and as she was born on the seashore they called her Samuddaja. Now a forester who lived in Benares came to that place, and on giving him greeting recognised the prince, and after he had stayed there a few days, he said, “My lord, I will tell the king’s family that you are dwelling here,” and he accordingly departed and went to the city. Now just then the king died, and after the ministers had buried him they met together on the seventh day, and they deliberated together, “a kingdom without a king cannot stand; we know not where the prince dwells nor whether he is alive or dead,—we will send forth the festal car and so get a king.” At that time the forester came to the city, and having heard the news went to the ministers and told them that before he came there he had been staying three or four days near the prince. The ministers paid him

respect and went there under his guidance, and after a friendly greeting told the prince that the king was dead and asked him to assume the kingdom. He thought to himself, “I will learn what the Naga woman thinks”; so he went to her and said, “Lady, my father is dead and his ministers have come to raise the royal umbrella over me; let us go and we will both reign in Benares which is twelve yojanas in extent, and you shall be the chief among the sixteen thousand queens.” “My lord, I cannot go.” “Why?” “We possess deadly poison and we are easily displeased for a trifling matter; and the anger of a co-wife is a serious thing; if I see or hear anything and cast an angry glance thereon, it will be instantly scattered like a handful of chaff; therefore I cannot go.” The prince asked her again the next day; and then she said to him, “I myself will on no account go, but these my sons are not young Nagas; as they are your children they are of the race of men; if you love me watch over them. But as they are of a watery nature and therefore delicate, they would die if they went by the road and bore the burden of the wind and sunshine; so I will hollow out a boat and fill it with water, and you shall let them play in the water and when you have brought them to the city you shall have a lake prepared in the precincts of the palace; in this way they will not suffer.” With these words, having saluted the prince and walked round him respectfully, she embraced her sons and folded them between her breasts and kissed their heads, and entrusted them to him, and with many tears and sobs at once vanished and departed to the Naga-world. The prince also, overcome with sorrow, his eyes filled with tears, went out of the house, and, after wiping his eyes, proceeded to the ministers, who at once besprinkled him and said, “Sire, let us go to our city.” He commanded them to hollow out a ship and put it on a cart and fill it with water. “Strew all sorts of flowers of various colours and scents on the surface of the water, for my sons have a watery nature and they will go along joyfully playing there”; and the ministers did so. When the king came to Benares he entered the city which was all adorned, and he seated himself on the terrace, surrounded by sixteen thousand dancing girls and his ministers and other officers; and having held a great drinking feast for seven days, he caused a lake to be prepared for his sons, where they sported continually. But one day when the water was let into the lake, a tortoise entered, and not seeing any way of exit it floated on the surface of the water; and while the lads were playing about, it rose out of the water and putting out its head looked at them and then sank down in the water. When they saw it they were frightened and ran to their father, and said to him, “O father, a yakkha has frightened us in the lake.” The king ordered some men to go and seize it, and they threw a net and caught the tortoise and shewed it to the king. When the princes saw it, they cried out, “O father, it is a demon.” The king through love of his sons was angry with the tortoise, and ordered the attendants to punish it. Some said, “It is an enemy to the king, it should be pounded to powder with a pestle and mortar,” others said, “Let us cook it three times over and eat it,” others, “Bake it upon hot coals,” others, “It must be baked in a jar”; but one minister who was afraid of the water, said, “It should be thrown into the whirlpool of the Yamuna, it will be utterly destroyed there, there is no punishment for it like that.” The tortoise, as he heard his words, thrust out his head and said, “Friend, what sin have I committed that you are discussing such a punishment for me? The other punishments I can bear, but this last is excessively cruel, do not even mention it.” When the king heard him, he said, “This is the one to carry into action,” so he ordered him to be thrown into the whirlpool of the Yamuna; there he found a current which led to the dwelling of the Nagas, and went by it to their place. Now at that time some young sons of the Naga king

Dhatarattha were sporting in that stream, and when they saw they cried, “Seize that slave.” The tortoise thought, “I have escaped from the hand of the king of Benares to fall into the hands of these fierce Nagas;. by what means shall I get away?” Then he thought of a plan, and, making up a false story, he said to them, “Why do you speak in this way who belong to the court of King Dhatarattha? I am a tortoise named Cittacula, and I am come to Dhatarattha as a messenger from the king of Benares; our king has sent me as he wishes to give his daughter to King Dhatarattha, shew me to him,” and they well pleased took him, and going to the king related the whole matter. The king ordered them to bring him; but being displeased when he saw him, he said, “Those who have such mean bodies cannot act as messengers.” The tortoise, when he heard this, replied by telling his own good qualities, “Why should the king need messengers as tall as a palm tree? a small body or a big body is of no matter,—the real matter is the power to carry out the errand where you are sent. Now our king, O monarch, has many messengers; men do his business on the dry land, birds in the air, and I in the water, for I am a favourite of the king’s named Cittacula and I have a particular post, do not scoff at me.” Then King Dhatarattha asked him why he was sent by the king, and he made answer, “The king said to me that he had made friendship with all the kings of Jambudipa, and that he now wished to give his daughter Samuddaja in order to make friendship with the Naga king Dhatarattha; with these words he sent me, and do you make no delay but send a company at once with me and name the day and receive the maiden.” Being highly pleased the king paid him great honour and sent four Naga youths with him, bidding them go and fix a day after hearing the king’s words, and then return, and they, having taken the tortoise with them, departed from the abode of the Nagas. The tortoise saw a lotus-pond between the Yamuna and Benares, and wishing to escape by some device he said, “O Naga youths, our king and his queen and son saw me coming out of the water as I went to the king’s palace, and they asked me to give them some lotuses and lotus roots; I will gather some for them; do you let me go here, and, if you do not see me, go forward to the king,—I will meet you there.” They believed him and let him go, and he hid himself; and the others, as they could not see him, thought that he must have gone on to the king, and so proceeded to the palace in the guise of young men. The king received them with honour and asked them from whence they had come. “From Dhatarattha, your majesty.” “Wherefore?” “O king, we are his messengers; Dhatarattha asks after your health and he will give you whatever you desire; and he asks you to give us your daughter Samuddaja as his queen.” To explain this they repeated the first stanza:

“Whatever jewels there may be in Dhatarattha’s palace stored,

They all are yours, his royal boon; give us your daughter for our lord.”

When the king heard it he replied in the second stanza:

“Ne’er has a man been known to wed his daughter to a Naga king;

Such match were utterly unfit,—how could we think of such a thing?”

The youths made answer, “If an alliance with Dhatarattha seems so improper to you, then why did you send your attendant the tortoise Cittacula to our king, offering to give your

daughter Samuddaja? Since after sending such a message you now shew scorn to our king, we shall know how to deal with you as you deserve." So saying they uttered two stanzas by way of threat:

"You sacrifice your life, O king,—your throne and kingdom what are they?

Before a Naga in his wrath all mortal glory fades away;

You a poor mortal standing there, who, by your vanity undone,

Would look with scorn on Yamuna, king Varuna's imperial son."

Then the king repeated two stanzas:

"I do not scorn that king of yours, Dhatarattha of wide renown,

Of many Nagas is he king, he wears by right a royal crown;

But great and noble though he be, sprung from Videha's khattiya line,

My daughter is of purer blood,—let him not dream of child of mine."

Although the Naga youths wished to kill him on the spot by the blast of their breath, yet they reflected that as they had been sent to fix the marriage day it would not be right to go away and leave the man dead; so they vanished at once out of sight, saying, "we will depart and tell the king." Their king asked them whether they had brought the princess. They being angry replied, "O king, why dost thou send us about hither and thither without cause? If thou wishest to kill us, then slay us here at once. He reviles and defames thee, and sets his daughter on a pinnacle in his pride of birth,"—in this way repeating things said and unsaid, they roused the king's wrath. He ordered them to assemble his army, saying:

"Assataras and Kambalas,—summon the Nagas one and all;

Towards Benares let them flock, but do no harm to great or small."

Then the Nagas answered, "If no man is to be harmed, then what shall we do, if we go there?" He uttered two stanzas to tell them what they were to do and what he himself would do:

"Over the tanks and palaces, the public roads and tops of trees,

Over the gateways twilled in wreaths let them hang dangling in the breeze;

While with white body and white hoods I will the city all invest,

And drawing close my lines of siege with terror fill each Kasi breast."

The Nagas did so. The Teacher thus described what happened:

“Seeing the snakes on every side, the women throng, a trembling crowd,

And as the monsters swell their hoods in fear they shriek and wail aloud;

Benares city prostrate lay before these wild invading bands,

Raising their arms all begged and prayed, “Give him the daughter he demands.”

While the king lay in bed he beard the wailing of his own wives and those of the citizens, and being afraid of death from the threats of the four youths, he thrice exclaimed, “I will give to Dhatarattha my daughter Samuddaja”; and all the Naga kings, when they heard it, retired for the distance of a league, and, fixing their camp there, built a very city of the gods and despatched a complimentary present, saying, “Let him send his daughter as he says.” The king, having received the proffered present, dismissed those who brought it, saying, “Do you depart, I will send my daughter by the hands of my ministers.” Then he sent for his daughter and, taking her upon the terrace, he opened a window and said to her, “Daughter, behold this adorned city; they say that you are to be the chief queen of a king there,—the city is not far off, you can come back when you feel a home-longing,—but you must go there now.” Then he made the attendants wash her head and adorn her with all kinds of ornaments and set her in a covered carriage and sent her off in the care of his ministers. The Naga kings came to meet her and paid her great honour. The ministers entered the city and gave her up and returned with much wealth. The princess was taken up into the palace and made to lie on a divinely decked bed; and the young Naga women, assuming humpbacked and other deformed appearances, waited on her as if they were human attendants. As soon as she lay down on the heavenly bed she felt a divinely soft touch and fell asleep. Dhatarattha, having received her, vanished instantly with all his host and appeared in the world of the Nagas. When the princess awoke and saw the adorned heavenly bed and the golden and jewelled palaces, etc., and the gardens and tanks and the Naga-world, itself like an adorned city of the gods, she asked the humpbacked and other female attendants, “This city is magnificently adorned, it is not like our city; whose is it?” “O lady, it belongs to your lord,—it is not those of scanty merits who win such glory as this,—you have obtained it by reason of your great merits.” Then Dhatarattha ordered the drums to be carried about the Naga city, which was five hundred yojanas in extent, with a proclamation that whoever betrayed any signs of his snake-nature to Samuddaja should be punished; therefore not one dared to appear as a snake before her. So she lived affectionately and harmoniously with him under the idea that it was a world of men.

Ii.

In course of time Dhatarattha’s queen conceived and brought forth a son, and from his fair appearance they named him Sudassana; then again she bore a second whom they called Datta, —now he was a Bodhisatta. Then she bore another whom they called Subhaga, and a fourth whom they called Arittha. Yet even though she had borne these four sons, she knew not that it was the world of the Nagas. But one day they said to Arittha, “Your mother

is a woman, not a Naga." Arittha said to himself, "I will prove her," so one day while drinking his mother's breast, he assumed a serpent's form and struck the back of her foot with his tail. When she saw his serpent-form she uttered a great cry in her terror and threw him on the ground, and struck his eye with her nail so that the blood poured forth. The king, hearing her cry, asked why she screamed, and when he learned what Arittha had done, he came up, with threats, "Seize the slave and put him to death." The princess, knowing his passionate nature, exclaimed in her love for her son, "My lord, I struck my son's eye, forgive him." The king, when she said this, replied, "What can I do?" and forgave him. That very day she learned that it was the dwelling of the Nagas, and thenceforth Arittha was always called Kanarittha (or one-eyed Arittha).

Now the four princes grew up to years of discretion. Then their father gave them each a kingdom a hundred yojanas square; they possessed great glory, and each was attended by sixteen thousand Naga maidens. Now their father's kingdom was only a hundred yojanas square, and the three sons went every month to visit their parents. But the Bodhisatta went every fortnight, and he used to propound some question which had arisen in the Naga realm and then go with his father to visit the great king Virupakkha, when he would discuss the question with him. Now one day when Virupakkha had gone with the Naga assembly to the world of the gods, and were sitting there waiting upon Sakka, a question arose among the gods and none could answer it, but the Great Being who was seated on a noble throne answered it. Then the king of the gods honoured him with divine flowers and fruits, and addressed him, "O Datta, thou art endued with a wisdom as broad as the earth; henceforth be thou called Bhuridatta," and he gave him this name.

From that time forth he used to go to pay his homage to Sakka, and when he saw the exceedingly delightful splendour of his court with its heavenly nymphs he longed for the heavenly world, "What have I to do with this frog-eating snake-nature? I will return to the snake-world and keep the fast and follow the observances by which one may be born among the gods." With these thoughts he asked his parents on his return to the abode of the snakes, "O my father and mother, I will keep the fast." "By all means, O son, keep it; but when you keep it do not go outside, but keep it within this one empty palace in the Naga realm, for there is great fear of the Nagas outside." He consented; so he kept the fast only in the parks and gardens of the empty palace. But the snake maidens kept waiting on him with their musical instruments, and he thought to himself, "If I dwell here my observance of the fast will never come to its completion,—I will go to the haunts of men and keep the fast there." So in his fear of being hindered he said to his wife, without telling it to his parents, "Lady, if I go to the haunts of men there is a banyan tree on the bank of the Yamuna,—I will fold up my body in the top of an ant-hill near by and undertake the fast with its four divisions, and I will lie down there and observe the fast; and when I have lain there all night and kept the fast let ten of your women come every time at dawn with musical instruments in their hands, and after decking me with perfumes and flowers let them conduct me back with song and dance to the abode of the Nagas." With these words he went and folded his body on the top of an ant-hill, and saying aloud, "Let who will take my skin or muscles or bones or blood," he undertook the fast with its four divisions and lay down, after assuming a body which only consisted of a head and a tail, and kept the fast. At daybreak the Naga girls came, and having done as they were ordered, conducted him to

the Naga abode; and while he observed the fast in this fashion, a long period of time elapsed.

Iii.

Now at that time a Brahmin who dwelt in a village near the gate of Benares used to go into the forest with his son Somadatta and set snares and nets and stakes and kill wild animals, and carrying the flesh on a pole sold it and so made a livelihood. One day he failed to catch even a young lizard, and he said to his son, “If we go home empty-handed your mother will be angry, let us catch something at any rate”; so he went towards the ant-hill where the Bodhisatta was lying, and observing the footsteps of the deer who went down to the Yamuna to drink, he said, “My son, this is a haunt of deer, do you return and wait, while I will wound some deer that has come to drink”; so taking his bow he stood watching for deer at the foot of a tree. Now at evening time a deer came to drink,—he wounded it; it did not however fall at once, but spurred on by the force of the arrow it fled with the blood flowing down, and the father and son pursuing it to the spot where it fell took its flesh and, going out of the wood, reached that banyan as the sun set. “It is a bad time, we cannot go on, we will stay here,” so saying they laid the flesh on one side and climbing the tree lay among the branches. The Brahmin woke at dawn, and was listening to hear the sound of the deer, when the Naga maidens came up and prepared the flowery couch for the Bodhisatta. He laid aside his snake’s body and assuming a divine body adorned with all kinds of ornaments sat on his flower-bed with all the glory of a Sakka. The Naga maidens honoured him with perfumes and garlands and played their heavenly instruments and performed their dance and song. When the Brahmin heard the sound he said, “Who is this? I will find out”; and he called to his son, but though he called he could not wake him. “Let him sleep on,” he said, “he is tired, I will go myself alone”; so he came down from the tree and approached, but the Naga maidens when they saw him sank into the earth with all their instruments and departed to the abode of the Nagas, and the Bodhisatta was left alone. The Brahmin, standing near, questioned him in these two stanzas:

“What youth is this, red-eyed, who here is seen,

His shoulders broad with ample space between,—

And what ten maidens these who guard him round

Clad in fair robes, with golden bracelets bound!

Who art thou ‘midst this forest greenery,

Bright like a fire just newly dressed with ghee?

Art thou a Sakka or a yakkha, say,

Or some famed Naga prince of potent sway?”

When the Great Being heard him he thought, “If I say that I am one of the Sakkas he will believe me, for he is a Brahmin; but I must speak only the truth to-day,” so he thus declared his Naga birth:

“I am a Naga great in power, invincible with poisonous breath,

A prosperous land with all its sons my angry bite could smite with death;

My mother is Samuddaja, Dhatarattha as sire I claim,

Sudassan’s youngest brother I, and Bhuridatta is my name.”

But when the Great Being said this, he reflected, “This Brahmin is fierce and cruel, he may betray me to a snake-charmer, and so hinder my performance of the fast; what if I were to take him to the Naga kingdom and, give him great honour there, and thus carry on my fast without a break” So he said to him, “O Brahmin, I will give thee great honour, come to the pleasant home of the Nagas, let us go at once thither.” “My lord, I have a son, I will go if he comes too.” The Bodhisatta replied, “Go, Brahmin, and fetch him,” and he thus described to him his own dwelling:

“Awful and dark is yonder lake, incessant storms its waters toss,

That is my home: my subjects there all hear and none my bidding cross;

Plunge thou beneath the dark blue waves,—the peacocks and the herons call,—

Plunge and enjoy the bliss there stored for those who keep the precepts all.”

The Brahmin went and told this to his son and brought him, and the Great Being took them both and went to the bank of the Yamuna, and, standing there, said:

“Fear not, O Brahmin with thy son,—follow my words and thou shalt live

Honoured and happy in my home with all the pleasures I can give.”

So saying the Great Being by his power brought the father and son to the dwelling of the Nagas, where they obtained a divine condition; and he bestowed on them divine prosperity and gave to each of them four hundred Naga maidens, and great was the prosperity they enjoyed. The Bodhisatta continued to practise his fast diligently, and every fortnight he went to pay honour to his parents and discoursed on the law; and then going to the Brahmin he inquired concerning his health, and said to him, “Tell me anything that you want, enjoy yourself without discontent”; and, after giving a kindly greeting also to Somadatta, he proceeded to his own home. The Brahmin, after dwelling a year in the Naga realm, through his lack of previous merit began to grow discontented and longed to return to the world of men; the dwelling-place of the Nagas seemed like a hell to him, the adorned palace like a prison, the Naga maidens with their ornaments like female yakkhas.

He thought to himself, “I am discontented, I will learn what Somadatta thinks”; so he went to him and said, “Art thou not discontented, my son?” “Why should I be discontented? let us not feel any such feeling. Are you discontented, father?” “Yes, my son?” “Why so?” “Because I do not see your mother and your brothers and sisters; come, my son, let us go.” He answered that he would not go, but, being repeatedly entreated by his father, he at last consented. The Brahmin reflected, “I have won my son’s consent, but if I tell Bhuridatta that I am discontented, he will heap more honour upon me, and I shall not be able to go. My object can only be attained in one way. I will describe his prosperity and then ask him, “why do you leave all this glory and go to the world of men to practise the observance of the fast?” When he answers, “for the sake of obtaining heaven,” I will tell him, “far more then should we do so, who have made our livelihood by slaughtering living creatures. I too will go to the world of men, and see my kindred, and will then leave the world and follow the law of the ascetics,” and then he will let me depart.” Having thus determined, one day when the other came up to him and asked him whether he was discontented, he assured him that nothing was wanting that he could supply, and, without making any mention of his intended departure, at first he only described the other’s prosperity in the following stanzas:

“Level the ground on every side, with tagara blossoms whitened o’er,

Red with the cochineal insect-swarms, the brightest verdure for its floor,

With sacred shrines in every wood, and swan-filled lakes which charm the eye,

While strewn the fallen lotus leaves as carpets on the surface lie,—

The thousand-columned palaces with halls where heavenly maidens dance,

Their columns all of jewels wrought, whose angles in the sunshine glance;

Thou hast indeed a glorious home, won by thy merits as thine own,

When all desires are gratified as soon as each new wish is known;

Thou enviest not great Sakka’s halls,—what are his stateliest courts to thine?

Thy palaces more glorious are and with more dazzling splendours shine.”

The Great Being replied, “Say not so, Brahmin; our glory compared to Sakka’s seems only as a mustard-seed beside Mount Meru,—we are not even equal to his attendants,” and he repeated a stanza:

“Our highest thoughts cannot conceive the imperial pomp round Sakka’s throne,

Or the four Regents in his court, each in his own appointed zone.”

When he heard him repeat his words “this palace of yours is Sakka’s palace,” he said, “I have had this in my mind, and it is through my desire to obtain Vejayanta that I practise the observance of the fast,”—then he repeated a stanza, describing his own earnest wish:

“I long intensely for the home of the immortal saints on high,

Therefore upon that ant-hill top I keep the fast unceasingly.”

The Brahmin, on hearing this, thought to himself, “Now I have gained my opportunity,” and filled with joy he repeated two stanzas, begging leave to depart:

“I too sought deer when with my son into that forest glade I sped;

The friends I left at home know not whether I am alive or dead;

O Bhuridatta, let us go, thou glorious lord of Kasi race,

Let us depart and see once more our kindred in their native place.”

The Bodhisatta answered:

“‘Tis my desire that you should dwell with us, and here pass happy hours;

Where in the upper world of men will you find haunts of peace like ours?

But would you dwell awhile elsewhere and yet enjoy our pleasures still,

Then take my leave,—go, see your friends, and be as happy as you will.”

And thinking to himself “if he obtains this happiness through me he will be sure not to tell it to anyone else,—I will give him my jewel which grants all desires,” he gave him the jewel and said

“The bearer of this heavenly gem beholds his children and his farm;

Take it, O Brahmin, and begone,—its bearer never comes to harm.”

The Brahmin replied:

“I understand thy words too well, I am grown old as thou canst see,

I will adopt the ascetic life, what are life’s pleasures now to me?”

The Bodhisatta said:

“If thou shouldst fail and break thy vow then seek life’s common joys once more,

And come and find me out again and I will give thee ample store.”

The Brahmin answered:

“O Bhuridatta, I accept with thanks the offer thou hast made;

Should the occasion come to me I will return to claim thy aid.”

The Great Being perceived that he had no desire to abide there, so he commanded some young Nagas to take him to the world of men. The Master thus described what happened:

“Then Bhuridatta gave commands to four of his young Nagas, ‘Go,

Take ye this Brahmin in your charge and lead him where he wants to go.”

The four attendants heard the words,—at once their lord’s command was done:

They brought the Brahmin to the place and leaving him returned alone.”

Then the Brahmin, as he went along, said to his son, “Somadatta, we wounded a deer in this place and a boar in that,” and seeing a lake on the way he exclaimed, “Somadatta, let us bathe”; so they both took off their divine ornaments and clothes, and wrapping them up in a bundle laid them on the bank and bathed. At that very moment the ornaments vanished and returned to the Naga-world, and their former poor yellow clothes were wrapped round their bodies, and their bows, arrows, and spears came back as they were before. “We are undone, father,” bewailed Somadatta; but his father comforted him, “Fear not; as long as there are deer we shall make a livelihood by killing deer in the forest.” Somadatta’s mother heard of their coming, and having gone to meet them she brought them home and she satisfied them with food and drink. When the Brahmin had eaten and fallen asleep she asked her son, “Where have you been all this time?” “O mother, we were carried by the Naga king Bhuridatta to the great Naga realm, and we have now come back, as we were discontented.” “Have you brought any jewels? “ None, mother.” “Why did he not give any to you?” “Mother, Bhuridatta gave to my father a jewel which grants all desires, but he would not accept it.” “Wherefore?” “He is going, they say, to become an ascetic.” “What, after leaving me so long with the burden of the children and dwelling in the Naga realm, he is now going to become an ascetic?” so flying into a passion she struck his back with the spoon which she used for frying the rice and upbraided him, saying, “Thou wicked Brahmin, why didst say that thou wast going to become an ascetic and so refuse the precious jewel, and why didst thou come here and not take the ascetic’s vow? Depart from my house directly.” But he said to her, “Good lady, be not angry, as long as there are deer in the forest I will support you and your children.” So the next day he went with his son into the forest and followed there the same livelihood as before.

Iv.

Now at that time a garula bird which dwelt in a silk-cotton tree in Himavat in a region of the great southern ocean swept up the water with the wind of its wings, and swooping down on the Naga region seized a Naga king by the head; but this was the period when the garulas did not know how to seize the Nagas,—they learned how in the Pandara Jataka. So although he seized it by the head, without scattering the water, he carried it dangling to the summit of Himavat. A Brahmin, an old inhabitant of Kasi, who was following the life of an anchorite in the region of Himavat, was dwelling in a hut of leaves which he had built, and there was a great banyan tree at the end of his covered walk, and he had made his abode by day at its root. The garula carried the Naga to the top of the banyan, and the Naga as it hung down in its effort to escape twined its tail round a branch. The garula, being unaware of it, flew up to heaven by dint of his great strength and carried up the banyan tree without its roots. The bird then bore the Naga to the silk-cotton tree and struck it with his beak and split open its belly, and having eaten the fat dropped the body into the middle of the sea. The banyan tree as it fell made a great noise, and the bird, wondering what noise it could be, looked down, and seeing the tree thought to himself, "From whence did I carry that off?" and recognising that it was the banyan at the end of the anchorite's covered walk, he considered, "This tree was of great service to him,—is an evil consequence following me or not? I will ask him and learn." So he went to him in the guise of a young pupil; now at that moment the ascetic was smoothing the earth down. So the king of the garulas, having saluted him and sat down on one side, asked him, as if he were himself ignorant of the fact, what had once grown in that spot. He replied, "A garula was carrying off a Naga for his food, which twined its tail round a branch of a banyan tree in order to escape; but the bird by its great strength made a spring upwards and flew off, and so the tree was torn up; this is the place out of which it was torn." "What demerit accrued to the bird?" "If he did it not knowing what he did, it was only ignorance, not a sin." "What was the case with the Naga?" "He did not seize the tree with an intent to hurt it, therefore he also has no demerit." The garula was pleased with the ascetic and said, "My friend, I am that king of the garulas, and I am pleased with your explanation of my question. Now you live here in the forest and I know the Alambayana spell of priceless value. I will give it to you as my fee for your lesson,—be pleased to accept it." "I know enough about spells,—you can be going." But he continued to press him and at last he persuaded him to accept it, so he gave him the spell and shewed him the simples and departed.

Now at that time a poor Brahmin in Benares had got deeply into debt, and being pressed by his creditors he said to himself, "Why should I go on living here? I am sure it will be better to go into the forest and die." So having gone from his home he went by successive journeys till he came to that hermitage. He entered it and pleased the ascetic by his diligent discharge of his duties. The ascetic said to himself, "This Brahmin is very helpful to me, I will give him the divine spell which the king of garulas gave to me." So he said to him, "O Brahmin, I know the Alambayana spell, I will give it to you, do you take it." The other replied, "Peace, good friend, I do not want any spell," but the other pressed him again and again and at last persuaded him; so he gave him the spell and shewed him the simples necessary for it and described the entire method of using it.

The Brahmin said to himself, "I have gained a means of livelihood"; so after staying there a few days, he made the excuse of an attack of rheumatism, and after begging the ascetic's

forgiveness he took his respectful leave of him and departed from the forest, and by successive stages reached the bank of the Yamuna, from whence he went along the high road repeating the spell. Now at that very time a thousand Naga youths who waited on Bhuridatta were carrying that jewel which grants all desires. They had come out of the Naga-world and had stopped and placed it on a hillock of sand, and there, after playing all night in the water by its radiance, they had put on all their ornaments at the approach of morning, and, causing the jewel to contract its splendour, had sat down, guarding it. The Brahmin reached the spot while he was repeating his charm, and they, on hearing the charm, seized with terror lest it should be the garula king, plunged into the earth without staying to take the jewel and fled to the Naga-world. The Brahmin, when he saw the jewel, exclaimed, "My spell has at once succeeded"; and he joyfully seized the jewel and went on his way. Now at that very time the outcast Brahmin was entering the forest with his son Somadatta to kill deer, and when he saw the jewel on the other's hand he said to his son, "Is not this the jewel which Bhuridatta gave to us ?" "Yes," said his son, "it is the very same." "Well, I will tell him its evil qualities and so deceive him and get the jewel for my own." "O father, you did not keep the jewel before when Bhuridatta gave it to you: this Brahmin will assuredly cheat you,—be silent about it." "Let be, my son; you shall see which can cheat best, he or I." So he went to Alambayana and addressed him:

"Where did you get that gem of yours, bringing good luck and fair to th' eye;

But having certain signs and marks, which I can recognise it by?"

Alambayana answered in the following stanza:

"This morning as I walked along I saw the jewel where it lay,

Its thousand red-eyed guards all fled and left it there to be my prey."

The outcast's son, wishing to cheat him, proceeded in three stanzas to tell him the jewel's evil qualities, desiring to secure it himself:

"Carefully tended, honoured well, and worn or stowed away with care,

It brings its owner all good things, however large his wishes are;

But if he shews it disrespect and wears or stows it heedlessly,

Sore will he rue the finding it,—'twill only bring him misery.

Do you have nought to do therewith,—you have no skill such ware to hold:

Give it to me and take instead a hundred pounds of yellow gold."

Then Alambayana spoke a stanza in reply:

"I will not sell this gem of mine, though cows or jewels offered be;

Its signs and marks I know full well, and it shall ne'er be bought from me."

The Brahmin said:

"If cows or jewels will not buy from you that jewel which you wear,

What is the price you'll sell it for? come, a true answer let me hear."

Alambayana answered:

"He who can tell me where to find the mighty Naga in his pride,

To him this jewel will I give, flashing its rays on every side."

The Brahmin said:

"Is this perchance the Garul King, come in a Brahmin's guise to-day,

Seeking, while on the track for food, to seize the Naga as his prey?"

Alambayana answered:

"No bird-king I,—a garul bird ne'er came across these eyes of mine,—

I am a Brahmin doctor, friend, and snakes and snake-bites are my line."

The Brahmin said:

"What special power do you possess, or have you learned some subtil skill

Which gives you this immunity to handle snakes whose fangs can kill?"

He replied, thus describing his power:

"The hermit Kosiya in the wood kept a long painful penance well,

And at the end a Garula revealed to him the serpent-spell.

That holiest sage, who dwelt retired upon a lonely mountain height,

I waited on with earnest zeal and served unwearied day and night;

And at the last to recompense my years of faithful ministry

My blessed teacher did reveal the heavenly secret unto me.

Trusting in this all-powerful spell, the fiercest snakes I do not fear;

I counteract their deadliest bites, I Alambayana the seer."

As he heard him, the outcast Brahmin thought to himself, "This Alambayana is ready to give the pearl of gems to anyone who shews him the Naga; I will shew him Bhuridatta and so secure the gem"; so he uttered this stanza as he consulted with his son:

"Let us secure this gem, my son; come, Somadatta, let's be quick,

Nor lose our luck as did the fool who smashed his meal-dish with his stick."

Somadatta replied:

"All honour due he shewed to you, when you came in that stranger's way;

And would you turn and rob him now, his kindly welcome to repay?

If you want wealth, go seek for it from Bhuridatta as before;

Ask him and he will gladly give all that your heart desires, and more."

The Brahmin said:

"That which, by lucky fortune brought, in bowl or hand all ready lies,

Eat it at once nor questions ask, lest thou shouldst lose the offered prize."

Somadatta replied:

"Earth yawns for him, hell's fiercest fires await the traitor at the end,

Or, with fell hunger gnawed, he pines a living death, who cheats his friend.

Ask Bhuridatta,—he will give, if you want wealth, the wished-for boon;

But if you sin, I fear the sin will find you out and that right soon."

The Brahmin said:

"But, through a costly sacrifice Brahmins may sin and yet be clean;

Great sacrifices we will bring and, so made pure, escape the sin."

Somadatta said:

"Cease your vile talk, I will not stay,—this very moment I depart,

I will not go one step with you, this baseness rankling in your heart."

So saying, the wise youth, rejecting his father's counsel, exclaimed with a loud voice which startled the deities in the neighbourhood, "I will not go with such a sinner," and fled away as his father stood looking on; and, plunging into the recesses of Himavat, there became an ascetic, and, having practised the Faculties and the Attainments and become perfected in mystic meditation, he was born in the Brahma world. The Teacher explained this in the following stanza:

"The noble Somadatta thus rebuked his father where he stood,

Startling the spirits of the place, and turned and hurried from the wood."

The outcast Brahmin thought to himself, "Whither will Somadatta go except to his own home?" and when he saw that Alambayana was a little vexed, he said to him, "Do not mind, Alambayana, I will introduce you to Bhuridatta." So he took him and went to the place where the snake king kept the fast-day; and when he saw him lying on the top of the ant-hill with his hoods contracted he stood a little way off, and holding out his hand uttered two stanzas:

"Seize this King-serpent where he lies and snatch forthwith that priceless gem,

Which bright-red like a lady-bird glows on his head a diadem.

On yonder ant-heap see! he lies, stretched out without a thought of fear,—

Spread like a heap of cotton there,—seize him before he knows you're near."

The Great Being opened his eyes, and, seeing the outcast, he pondered, "I took this fellow to my Naga home and settled him in high prosperity, but he would not accept the jewel which I gave him, and now he is come here with a snake-charmer. But if I were angry with him for his treachery, my moral character would be injured. Now my first of all duties is to keep the fast-day in its four periods,—that must remain inviolate; so whether Alambayana cut me in pieces or cook me or fix me on a spit, I must at all events not be angry with him." So closing his eyes and following the highest ideal of Resolution he placed his head between his hoods and lay perfectly motionless.

V.

Then the outcast Brahmin exclaimed, "O Alambayana, do you seize this Naga and give me the gem." Alambayana, being delighted at seeing the Naga, and not caring the least for the gem, threw it into his hand, saying, "Take it, Brahmin"; but the jewel slipped out of his hand, and as soon as it fell it went into the ground and was lost in the Naga-world. The Brahmin found himself bereft of the three things, the priceless gem, Bhuridatta's friendship, and his son, and went off to his home, loudly lamenting, "I have lost everything, I would not follow my son's words." But Alambayana, having first anointed his body with divine drugs and eaten a little and so fortified himself within, uttered the divine spell, and, going up to the Bodhisatta, seized him by the tail, and, holding him fast, opened his mouth

and, having himself eaten a drug, spat into it. The pure-natured Naga king did not allow himself to feel any anger through fear of violating the moral precepts, and though he opened his eyes did not open them to the full. After he had made the snake full of the magic drug, and, holding him by the tail with his head downwards, had shaken him and made him vomit the food he had swallowed, he stretched him out at full length on the ground. Then pressing him like a pillow with his hands he crushed his bones to pieces, and then, seizing his tail, pounded him as if he were beating cloth. The Great Being felt no anger even though he suffered such pain.

The Teacher described this in the following stanza:

“By dint of drugs of magic power and muttering spells with evil skill,

He seized and held him without fear and made him subject to his will.”

Having thus made the Great Being helpless, he prepared a basket of creepers and threw him into it; at first his huge body would not go into it, but after kicking it with his heels he forced it to enter. Then, going to a certain village, he set the basket down in the middle of it and shouted aloud, “Let all come here who wish to see a snake dance”; and all the villagers crowded round. Then he called to the Naga king to come out, and the Great Being reflected, “It will be best for me to please the crowd and dance to-day; perhaps he will gain plenty of money and in his content will let me go; whatever he makes me do, I will do it.” So when Alambayana took him out of the basket and told him to swell out he assumed his full size; and so when he told him to become small or round or heaped up like a bank, or to assume one hood or two hoods or three or four or five or ten or twenty or any number up to a hundred, or to become high or low, or to make his body visible or invisible, or to become blue or yellow or red or white or pink, or to emit water, or to emit water and smoke, he made himself assume all these various appearances as he was commanded and exhibited his dancing powers. No one who witnessed it could keep back his tears and the people brought gold coin, gold, garments, ornaments, and the like, so that he received a hundred thousand pieces in that village alone.

Now at first, after he had captured the Great Being, he had intended to let him go when he had gained a thousand pieces; but when he had made such a harvest, he said, “I have gained all this money in one little village,—what a fortune I shall get in a city!” So, after settling his family there, he made a basket all covered with jewels, and having thrown the Great Being into it, he mounted a luxurious carriage and started with a great train of attendants. He made him dance in every village and town which they passed, and at last they reached Benares. He gave the snake-king honey and fried grain, and killed frogs for him to eat; but he would not take the food, through fear of not being released from his captivity; but even though he did not take his food, the other made him shew his sports, and began with the four villages at the gates of the city, where he spent a month. Then on the fast-day of the fifteenth he announced to the king that he would that day exhibit the snake’s dancing powers before him. The king in consequence made a proclamation by beat of drum and collected a large crowd, and tiers of scaffolding were erected in the courtyard of the palace.

Vi.

But on the day when the Bodhisatta was seized by Alambana, the Great Being's mother saw in a dream that a black man with red eyes had cut off her arm with a sword and was carrying it away, streaming with blood. She sprang up in terror, but on feeling her right arm she recognised it to be only a dream. Then she considered in herself, "I have seen an evil frightful dream; it portends some misfortune either to my four sons or to King Dhatarattha or to myself." But presently she fixed her thoughts especially on the Bodhisatta: "Now all the others are dwelling in the Naga-world, but he has gone into the world of men resolved to keep the precepts and under a vow to observe the fast-day; therefore I wonder whether some snake-charmer or garula is seizing him." So she thought of him more and more, and at last at the end of a fortnight she became quite dejected, saying, "My son could not live a whole fortnight without me,—surely some evil must have befallen him." After a month had passed there was no limit to the tears which flowed from her eyes in her distress, and she sat watching the road by which he would come back, continually saying, "Surely he will now be coming home,—surely be will now be coming home." Then her eldest son Sudassana came with a great retinue to pay a visit to his parents at the end of a month's absence, and having left his attendants outside he ascended the palace, and after saluting his mother stood on one side; but she said nothing to him as she kept sorrowing for Bhuridatta. He thought to himself, "Whenever I have returned before my mother has always been pleased and given me a kind welcome, but to-day she is in deep distress; what can be the reason?" So he asked her, saying:

"You see me come with all success, my every wish has hit the mark;

And yet you shew no signs of joy, and your whole countenance is dark,—

Dark as a lotus rudely plucked which droops and withers in the hand;

Is this the welcome which you give when I come back from foreign land?"

Even at these words of his she still said nothing. Then Sudassana thought, "Can she have been abused or slandered by someone?" So he uttered another stanza, questioning her:

"Has anyone upbraided you or are you racked with secret pain,

That thus your countenance is dark, e'en when you see me back again?"

She replied as follows:

"I saw an evil dream, my son, a month agone this very day;

There came a man who lopped my arm as on my bed I sleeping lay,

And carried off the bleeding limb,—no tears of mine his hand could stay.

Blank terror overpowers my heart, and since I saw that cruel sight

A moment's peace or happiness I have not known by day or night."

When she had said this she burst out lamenting, "I cannot see anywhere my darling son your youngest brother; some evil must have happened to him," and she exclaimed:

"He whom fair maidens in their bloom used to be proud to wait upon,

Their hair adorned with golden nets,—Bhuridatta,—alas! is gone;

He whom stout soldiers used to guard, with their drawn swords, a gallant train,

Flashing like kanikara flowers,—alas! I look for him in vain!

I must pursue your brother's track and find where he has fixed to dwell,

Fulfilling his ascetic vow, and learn myself if all be well."

Having uttered these words she set out with his retinue as well as her own.

Now Bhuridatta's wives had not felt anxious when they did not find him on the top of the ant-hill, as they said that he was no doubt gone to his mother's home; but when they heard that she was coming weeping because she could nowhere see her son, they went to meet her and fell at her feet, making a loud lamentation, "O lady, it is a month to-day since we last saw your son."

The Teacher described this as follows:

"The wives of Bhuridatta there beheld his mother drawing nigh,

And putting out their arms they wept with an exceeding bitter cry;

"Bhuridatta, thy son, went hence a month ago, we know not where;

Whether he be alive or dead we cannot tell in our despair."

The mother joined with her daughters-in-law in their lamentations in the middle of the road and then went up with them into the palace, and there her grief burst forth as she looked on her son's bed:

"Like a lone bird whose brood is slain, when it beholds its empty nest,

So sorrow, when I look in vain for Bhuridatta, fills my breast.

Deep in my heart my grief for him burns with a fierce and steady glow

Just like the furnace which a smith carries where'er he is called to go."

As she thus wept, Bhuridatta's house seemed to be filled with one continuous sound like the hollow roar of the ocean. No one could remain unmoved, and the whole dwelling was like a sal-forest smitten by the storm of doom's-day.

The Teacher thus described it:

"Like sal-trees prostrate in a storm, their branches broken, roots uptorn,

So mother, wives, and children, lay in that lone dwelling-place forlorn."

Arittha and Subhaga also, the brothers, who had come to visit their parents, heard the noise and entered Bhuridatta's dwelling and tried to comfort their mother.

The Teacher thus described it:

"Arittha then and Subhaga, eager to help and comfort, come,

Hearing the sounds of wild lament which rose in Bhuridatta's home;

"Mother, be calm, thy wailings end,—this is the lot of all who live;

They all must pass from birth to birth: change rules in all things,—do not grieve."

Samuddaja replied:

"My son, I know it but too well, this is the lot of all who live,

But now no common loss is mine,—left thus forlorn I can but grieve;

Verily if I see him not, my jewel and my soul's delight,

My Bhuridatta, I will end my wretched life this very night."

Her sons answered:

"Mourn not, dear mother, still your grief,—we'll bring our brother back;

Through the wide earth on every side we will pursue his track

O'er hill and dale, through village, town and city, till he's found,—

Within ten days we promise you to bring him safe and sound."

Then Sudassana thought, "If we all three go in one direction there will be much delay: we must go to three different places,—one to the world of the gods, one to Himavat, and one

to the world of men. But if Kanarittha goes to the land of men he will set that village or town on fire where he shall happen to see Bhuridatta, for he is cruel-natured,—it will not do to send him"; so he said to him, "Do thou go to the world of the gods; if the gods have carried him to their world in order to learn the law from him, then do thou bring him thence." But he said to Subhaga, "Do thou go to Himavat and search for Bhuridatta in the five rivers and come back." But as he was resolving to go himself to the world of men, he reflected, "If I go as a young man people will revile me; I must go as an ascetic, for ascetics are dear and welcome to men." So he took the garb of an ascetic and, after bidding his mother farewell, set out.

Now the Bodhisatta had a sister, born of another mother, named Accimukhi, who had a very great love for the Bodhisatta. When she saw Subhaga setting out, she said to him, "Brother, I am greatly troubled, I will go with you." "Sister," he replied, "you cannot go with me, for I have assumed an ascetic's dress." "I will become a little frog and I will go inside your matted hair." On his consenting, she became a young frog and lay down in his matted hair. Subhaga resolved that he would search for him from the very commencement, so asked his wife where he spent the fast-day and went there first of all. When he saw there the blood on the spot where the Great Being had been seized by Alambana and the place where the latter had made the basket of creeping plants, he felt sure that the Bodhisatta had been seized by a snake-charmer and being overcome with grief, and having his eyes filled with tears, he followed Alambana's track. When he came to the village where he had first displayed the dancing, he asked the people whether a snake-charmer had shewn his tricks there with such and such a kind of snake. "Yes, Alambana shewed these tricks a month ago." "Did he gain anything thereby?" "Yes, he gained a hundred thousand pieces in this one place." "Where has he gone now?" "To such and such a village." He went off and, asking his way as he went, he at last arrived at the palace-gate. Now at that very moment Alambana had come there, just bathed and anointed, and wearing a tunic of fine cloth, and making his attendant carry his jewelled basket. A great crowd collected, a seat was placed for the king, and he, while he was still within the palace, sent a message, "I am coming, let him make the king of snakes play." Then Alambana placed the jewelled basket on a variegated rug, and gave the sign, saying, " Come hither, O snake-king." At that moment Sudassana was standing at the edge of the crowd, while the Great Being put out his head and looked round surveying the people. Now Nagas look at a crowd for two reasons, to see whether any garula is near or any actors; if they see any garulas, they do not dance for fear,—if any actors, they do not dance for shame. The Great Being, as he looked, beheld his brother in another part of the crowd, and, repressing the tears which filled his eyes, he came out of the basket and went up to his brother. The crowd, seeing him approach, retreated in fear and Sudassana was left alone; so he went up to him and laid his head on his foot and wept; and Sudassana also wept. The Great Being at last stopped weeping and went into the basket. Alambana said to himself, "This Naga must have bitten yonder ascetic, I must comfort him"; so he went up to him and said:

"It slipped out of my hand and seized your foot with all its might;

Did it chance bite you? never fear,—there's no harm in its bite."

Sudassana wished to have some talk with him, so he answered:

“This snake of yours can harm me not,

I am a match for him, I wot;

Search where you will, you will not see

One who can charm a snake like me.”

Alambana did not know who it was, so he answered angrily:

“This lout dressed out in Brahmin guise challenges me to-day,—

Let all the assembly hear my words and give us both fair play.”

Then Sudassana uttered a stanza in answer:

“A frog shall be my champion, and let a snake be yours,

Five thousand pieces be the stake, and let us shew our powers.”

Alambana rejoined:

“I am a man well-backed with means, and you a bankrupt clown;

Who will stand surety on your side, and where’s the money down?

There is my surety, there’s the stake in case I lose the bet;

Five thousand coins will shew my powers,—your challenge, see, is met.”

Sadassana heard him and said, “Well, let us show our powers for five thousand pieces”; and so undismayed he went up into the royal palace and, going up to the king his father-in-law, he said this stanza:

“O noble monarch, hear my words,—ne’er may good luck thy steps forsake;

Wilt thou be surety in my name? Five thousand pieces is the stake.”

The king thought to himself, “This ascetic asks for a very large sum, what can it mean?” so he replied:

“Is it some debt your father left or is it all your own,

That you should come and ask from me such an unheard-of loan?”

Sudassana repeated two stanzas:

“Alambana would beat me with his snake;

I with my frog his Brahmin pride will break.

Come forth, O king, with all thy train appear,

And see the beating which awaits him here.”

The king consented and went out with the ascetic. When Alambana saw him, he thought, “This ascetic has gone and got the king on his side, he must be some friend of the royal family”; so he grew frightened and began to follow him, saying:

“I do not want to humble thee, I will not boast at all;

But you despise this snake too much, and pride may have a fall.”

Sudassana uttered two stanzas:

“I do not seek to humble thee, a Brahmin, or despise thy skill;

But wherefore thus cajole the crowd with harmless snakes that cannot kill?

If people knew your real worth as well as I can see it plain,—

Why talk of gold?—a little meal would be the limit of your gain.”

Alambana grew angry and said:

“You mendicant in ass’s skin, uncombed and squalid to the sight,

You dare to scorn this snake of mine, and say forsooth it cannot bite;

Come near and try what it can do,—learn by experience if you must;

I warrant you its harmless bite will make of you a heap of dust.”

Then Sudassana uttered a stanza, mocking him:

“A rat or water-snake perchance may bite

And leave its poison if you anger it;

But your red-headed snake is harmless quite,

It will not bite, however much it spit.”

Alambana replied in two stanzas:

“I have been told by holy saints who practised penance ceaselessly,—

Those who in this life give their alms will go to heaven when they die;

I counsel you to give at once if you have anything to give,—

This snake will turn you into dust,—you have but little time to live.”

Sudassana said:

“I too have heard from holy saints, those who give alms will go to heaven;

Give you your alms while yet you may, if you have aught that can be given.

This is no common snake of mine, she’ll make you lower your boastful tone;

A daughter of the Naga king, and a half-sister of my own,—

Accimukhi, her mouth shoots flames; her poison ‘s of the deadliest known.”

Then he called to her in the middle of the crowd, “O Accimukhi, come out of my matted locks and stand on my hand”; and he put out his hand; and when she heard his voice she uttered a cry like a frog three times, while she was lying in his hair, and then came out and sat on his shoulder, and springing up dropped three drops of poison on the palm of his hand and then entered again into his matted locks. Sudassana stood holding the poison and exclaimed three times, “This country will be destroyed, this country will be wholly destroyed”; the sound filled all Benares with its extent of twelve leagues. The king asked what should destroy it. “O king, I see no place where I can drop this poison.” “This earth is big enough, drop it there.” “That is not possible,” he answered, and he repeated a stanza:

“If I should drop it on the ground, listen, O king, to me,—

The grass and creeping plants and herbs would parched and blasted be.”

“Well then, throw it into the sky.” “That also is not possible,” he said, and he repeated a stanza:

“If I should do thy hest, O king, and throw it in the sky,

No rain nor snow will fall from heaven till seven long years roll by.”

“Then throw it into the water.” “That is not possible,” he said, and he repeated a stanza:

“If in the water it were dropped,—listen, O king, to me,—

Fishes and tortoises would die and all that lives i' the sea."

Then the king exclaimed, "I am utterly at a loss,—do you tell us some way to prevent the land being destroyed." "O king, cause three holes to be dug here in succession." The king did so. Sudassana filled the middle hole with drugs, the second with cowdung, the third with heavenly medicines; then he let fall the drops of poison into the middle hole. A flame, which filled the hole with smoke, burst out; this spread and caught the hole with the cowdung, and then bursting out again it caught the hole filled with the heavenly plants and consumed them all, and then itself became extinguished. Alambayana was standing near that hole, and the heat of the poison smote him,—the colour of his skin at once vanished and he became a white leper. Filled with terror, he exclaimed three times, "I will set the snake-king free." On hearing him the Bodhisatta came out of the jewelled basket, and assuming a form radiant with all kinds of ornaments, he stood with all the glory of Indra. Sudassana also and Accimukhi stood by. Then Sudassana said to the king, "Dost thou not know whose children these are?" "I know not." "Thou dost not know us, but thou knowest that the king of Kasi gave his daughter Samuddaja to Dhatarattha." "I know it well, for she was my youngest sister." "We are her sons, and you are our uncle." Then the king embraced them and kissed their heads and wept, and brought them up into the palace, and paid them great honour. While he was shewing all kindness to Bhuridatta he asked him how Alambana had caught him, when he possessed such a terrible poison. Sudassana related the whole story and then said, "O great monarch, a king ought to rule his kingdom in this way," and he taught his uncle the Law. Then he said, "O uncle, our mother is pining for want of seeing Bhuridatta, we cannot stay longer away from her." "It is right, you shall go; but I too want to see my sister; how can I see her?" "O uncle, where is our grandfather, the king of Kasi?" "He could not bear to live without my sister, so he left his kingdom and became an ascetic, and is now dwelling in such and such a forest." "Uncle, my mother is longing to see you and my grandfather; we will take her and go to our grandfather's hermitage, and then you too will see him." So they fixed a day and departed from the palace; and the king, after parting with his sister's sons, returned weeping; and they sank into the earth and went to the Naga-world.

Vii.

When the Great Being thus came among them, the city became filled with one universal lamentation. He himself was tired out with his month's residence in the basket and took to a sick-bed; and there was no limit to the number of Nagas who came to visit him, and he tired himself out, talking to them. In the meantime Kanarittha, who had gone to the world of the gods and did not find the Great Being there, was the first to come back; so they made him the doorkeeper of the Great Being's sick residence, for they said that he was passionate and could keep away the crowd of Nagas. Subhaga also, after searching all Himavat and after that the great ocean and the other rivers, came in the course of his wanderings to search the Yamuna. But when the outcast Brahmin saw that Alambana had become a leper, he thought to himself, "He has become a leper because he worried Bhuridatta; now I too, through lust of the jewel, betrayed him, although he had been my benefactor, to Alambana, and this crime will come upon me. Before it comes, I will go to the Yamuna and will wash away the guilt in the sacred bathing-place." So he went down

into the water, saying that he would wash away the sin of his treachery. At that moment Subhaga came to the spot, and, hearing his words, said to himself, “This evil wretch for the sake of a gem-charm betrayed my brother, who had given him such a means of enriching himself, to Alambana; I. will not spare his life.” So, twisting his tail round his feet and dragging him into the water, he held him down; then when he was breathless he let him remain quiet a while, and when the other lifted his head up he dragged him in again and held him down; this he repeated several times, until at last the outcast Brahmin lifted his head and said:

“I’m bathing at this sacred spot here in Payaga’s holy flood;

My limbs are wet with sacred drops,—what cruel demon seeks my blood?”

Subhaga answered him in the following stanza:

“He who, men say, in ancient days to this proud Kasi wrathful came,

And wrapped it round with his strong coils, that serpent-king of glorious fame,

His son am I, who hold thee now: Subhaga, Brahmin, is my name.”

The Brahmin thought, “Bhuridatta’s brother will not spare my life,—but what if I were to move him to tender-heartedness by reciting the praises of his father and mother, and then beg my life?” So he recited this stanza:

“Scion of Kasi’s royal race divine,

Thy mother born from that illustrious line,

Thou wouldst not leave the meanest Brahmin’s slave

To perish drowned beneath the ruthless wave.”

Subhaga thought, “This wicked Brahmin thinks to deceive me and persuade me to let him go, but I will not give him his life”; so he answered, reminding him of his old deeds:

“A thirsty deer approached to drink—from your tree-porch your shaft flew down:

In fear and pain your victim fled, spurred by an impulse not its own;

Deep in the wood you saw it fall and bore it on your carrying-pole

To where a banyan’s shoots grew thick, clustering around the parent bole;

The parrots sported in the boughs, the kokil’s song melodious rose,

Green spread the grassy sward below,—evening invited to repose;

But there your cruel eye perceived my brother, who the boughs among

In summer pomp of colour drest sported with his attendant throng.

He in his joyance harmed you not, but you in malice did him slay,

An innocent victim,—lo that crime comes back on your own head to-day,

I will not spare your life an hour,—my utmost vengeance you shall pay."

Then the Brahmin thought, "He will not give me my life, but I must try my best to escape"; so he uttered the following stanza:

"Study, the offering of prayers, libations in the sacred fire,

These three things make a Brahmin's life inviolate to mortal's ire."

Subhaga, when he heard this, began to hesitate and he thought to himself, "I will carry him to the Naga-world and ask my brothers about this"; so he repeated two stanzas:

"Beneath the Yamuna's sacred stream, stretching to far Himalaya's feet,

Lies deep the Naga capital where Dhatarattha holds his seat;

There all my hero brethren dwell, to them will I refer thy plea,

And as their judgment shall decide, so shall thy final sentence be."

He then seized him by the neck, and, shaking him with loud abuse and revilings, carried him to the gate of the Great Being's palace.

Viii.

Kanarittha who had become the doorkeeper was sitting there, and when he saw that the other was being dragged along so roughly he went to meet them, and said, "Subhaga, do not hurt him; all Brahmins are the sons of the great spirit Brahman; if he learned that we were hurting his son he would be angry and would destroy all our Naga-world. In the world Brahmins rank as the highest and possess great dignity; thou dost not know what their dignity is, but I do." For they say that Kanarittha in the birth immediately preceding this had been born as a sacrificing Brahmin, and therefore he spoke so positively. Moreover being skilled in sacrificial lore from his former experiences, he said to Subhaga and the Naga assembly, "Come, I will describe to you the character of sacrificial Brahmins," and he went on as follows:

"The Veda and the sacrifice, things of high worth and dignity,

Belong to Brahmins as their right, however worthless they may be;

Great honour is their privilege and he who flouts them in his scorn,

Loses his wealth and breaks the law, and lives guilt-burdened and forlorn."

Then Kanarittha asked Subhaga if he knew who had made the world; and when he confessed his ignorance, he told this stanza to shew that it was created by Brahman the grandfather of the Brahmins:

"Brahmins he made for study; for command

He made the Khattiyas; Vessas plough the land;

Suddas he servants made to obey the rest;

Thus from the first went forth the Lord's behest."

Then he said, "These Brahmins have great powers, and he who conciliates them and gives them gifts is not fated to enter any new birth, but goes at once to the world of the gods "; and he repeated these stanzas:

"Kuvera, Soma, Varuna, of old,

Dhata, Vidhata, and the Sun and Moon,

Offered their sacrifices manifold,

And to their Brahmin priests gave every boon.

The giant Ajjun too who wrought such woe,

Round whose huge bulk a thousand arms once grew,

Each several pair with its own threatening bow,

Heaped on the sacred flame the offerings due."

Then he went on describing the glory of the Brahmins and how the best gifts are to be given to them.

"That ancient king who feasted them so well

Became at last a god, old stories tell.

King Mujalinda long the fire adored,

Glutting its thirst with all the ghee he poured;

And at the last the earned reward it brought,

He found the pathway to the heaven he sought.”

He also repeated these stanzas to illustrate this lesson:

“Dujipa lived a thousand years in all,

Chariots and hosts unnumbered at his call;

But an ascetic’s life was his at last,

And from his hermitage to heaven he past.

Sagara all the earth in triumph crost,

And raised a golden sacrificial post;

None worshipped fire more zealously than he,

And he too rose to be a deity.

The milk and curds which Anga, Kasi’s lord,

In his long offerings so profusely poured,

Swelled Ganga to an ocean by their flood,

Until at last in Sakka’s courts he stood.

Great Sakka’s general on the heavenly plain,

By soma-offerings did the honour gain;

He who now marshals the immortal powers

Rose from a mortal sin-stained lot like ours.

Brahma the great Creator, he who made

The mountains landmarks in his altar yard,

Whose hest the Ganges in its path obeyed,

By sacrifice attained his great reward.”

Then he said to him, “Brother, know you how this sea became salt and undrinkable?” “I know not, Arittha.” “You only know how to injure Brahmins,—listen to me.” Then he repeated a stanza:

“A hermit student, versed in prayer and spell,

Once stood upon the shore, as I’ve heard tell;

He touched the sea,—it forthwith swallowed him,

And since that day has been undrinkable.”

“These Brahmins are all like this”; and he uttered another stanza:

“When Sakka first attained his royal throne,

His special favour upon Brahmins shone;

East, west, north, south, they made their ritual known,

And found at last a Veda of their own.”

Thus Arittha described the Brahmins and their sacrifices and Vedas.

When they heard his words, many Nagas came to visit the Bodhisatta’s sick-bed, and they said to one another, “He is telling a legend of the past,” and they seemed to be in danger of accepting false doctrine. Now the Bodhisatta heard it all as he lay in his bed, and the Nagas told him about it; then the Bodhisatta reflected, “Arittha is telling a false legend,—I will interrupt his discourse, and put true views into the assembly.” So he rose and bathed, and put on all his ornaments, and sat down in the pulpit and gathered all the Naga multitude together. Then he sent for Arittha and said to him, “Arittha, you have spoken falsely when you describe the Brahmins and the Vedas, for the sacrifice of victims by all these ceremonies of the Vedas is not held to be desirable and it does not lead to heaven,—see what unreality there is in your words”; so he repeated these gathas describing the various kinds of sacrifice:

“These Veda studies are the wise man’s toils,

The lure which tempts the victims whom he spoils;

A mirage formed to catch the careless eye,

But which the prudent passes safely by.

The Vedas have no hidden power to save

The traitor or the coward or the knave;

The fire, though tended well for long years past,

Leaves his base master without hope at last.

Though all earth's trees in one vast heap were piled

To satisfy the fire's insatiate child,

Still would it crave for more, insatiate still,—

How could a Naga hope that maw to fill?

Milk ever changes,—thus where milk has been

Butter and curds in natural course are seen;

And the same thirst for change pervades the fire,

Once stirred to life it mounts still higher and higher.

Fire bursts not forth in wood that 's dry or new,

Fire needs an effort ere it leaps to view;

If dry fresh timber of itself could burn,

Spontaneous would each forest blaze in turn.

If he wins merit who to feed the flame

Piles wood and straw, the merit is the same

When cooks light fires or blacksmiths at their trade

Or those who burn the corpses of the dead.

But none, however zealously he prays

Or heaps the fuel round to feed the blaze,

Gains any merit by his mummeries,—

The fire for all its crest of smoke soon dies.

Were Fire the honoured being that you think,

Would it thus dwell with refuse and with stink,

Feeding on carrion with a foul delight,

Where men in horror hasten from the sight?

Some worship as a god the crested flame,

Barbarians give to water that high name;

But both alike have wandered from their road:

Neither is worthy to be called a god.

To worship fire, the common drudge of all,

Senseless and blind and deaf to every call,

And then one’s self to live a life of sin,—

How could one dream that this a heaven could win?

These Brahmins all a livelihood require,

And so they tell us Brahma worships fire;

Why should the increate who all things planned

Worship himself the creature of his hand?

Doctrines and rules of their own, absurd and vain,

Our sires imagined wealth and power to gain;

“Brahmins he made for study, for command

He made the Khattiyas; Vessas plough the land;

Suddas he servants made to obey the rest;

Thus from the first went forth his high behest.”

We see these rules enforced before our eyes,

None but the Brahmins offer sacrifice,

None but the Khattiya exercises sway,

The Vessas plough, the Suddas must obey.

These greedy liars propagate deceit,

And fools believe the fictions they repeat;

He who has eyes can see the sickening sight;

Why does not Brahma set his creatures right?

If his wide power no limits can restrain,

Why is his hand so rarely spread to bless?

Why are his creatures all condemned to pain?

Why does he not to all give happiness?

Why do fraud, lies, and ignorance prevail?

Why triumphs falsehood,—truth and justice fail?

I count your Brahma one th' injust among,

Who made a world in which to shelter wrong.

Those men are counted pure who only kill

Frogs, worms, bees, snakes or insects as they will,—

These are your savage customs which I hate,—

Such as Kamboja hordes might emulate.

If he who kills is counted innocent

And if the victim safe to heaven is sent,

Let Brahmins Brahmins kill—so all were well—

And those who listen to the words they tell.

We see no cattle asking to be slain

That they a new and better life may gain,—

Rather they go unwilling to their death

And in vain struggles yield their latest breath.

To veil the post, the victim and the blow

The Brahmins let their choicest rhetoric flow;

“The post shall as a cow of plenty be

Securing all thy heart’s desires to thee”;

But if the wood thus round the victim spread

Had been as full of treasure as they said,

As full of silver, gold and gems for us,

With heaven’s unknown delights as overplus,

They would have offered for themselves alone

And kept the rich reversion as their own.

These cruel cheats, as ignorant as vile,

Weave their long frauds the simple to beguile,

“Offer thy wealth, cut nails and beard and hair,

And thou shalt have thy bosom’s fondest prayer.”

The offerer, simple to their hearts’ content,

Comes with his purse, they gather round him fast,

Like crows around an owl, on mischief bent,

And leave him bankrupt and stripped bare at last,

The solid coin which he erewhile possessed,

Exchanged for promises which none can test.

Like grasping strangers sent by those who reign

The cultivators’ earnings to distrain,

These rob where’er they prowl with evil eye,—

No law condemns them, yet they ought to die.

The priests a shoot of Butea must hold

As part o’ the rite sacred from days of old;

Indra’s right arm ’Tis called; but were it so,

Would Indra triumph o’er his demon foe?

Indra’s own arm can give him better aid,

’Twas no vain sham which made hell’s hosts afraid.

“Each mountain-range which now some kingdom guards

Was once a heap in ancient altar-yards,

And pious worshippers with patient hands

Piled up the mound at some great lord’s commands.”

So Brahmins say,—fie on the idle boast,

Mountains are heaved aloft at other cost;

And the brick mound, search as you may, contains

No veins of iron for tile miner’s pains.

A holy seer well known in ancient days,

On the seashore was praying, legend says;

There was he drowned and since this fate befell

The ocean’s waves have been undrinkable.

Rivers have drowned their learned men at will

By hundreds and have kept their waters still;

Their streams flow on and never taste the worse,

Why should the sea alone incur the curse?

And the salt-streams which run upon the land

Spring from no curse but own the digger’s hand.

At first there were no women and no men;

’Twas mind first brought mankind to light,—and then,

Though they all started equal in the race,

Their various failures made them soon change place;

It was no lack of merit in the past,

But present faults which made them first or last.

A clever low-caste lad would use his wit,

And read the hymns nor find his head-piece split;

The Brahmins made the Vedas to their cost

When others gained the knowledge which they lost.

Thus sentences are made and learned by rote

In metric forms not easily forgot,—

The obscurity but tempts the foolish mind,

They swallow all they’re told with impulse blind.

Brahmins are not like violent beasts of prey,

No tigers, lions of the woods are they;

They are to cows and oxen near akin,

Differing outside they are as dull within.

If the victorious king would cease to fight

And live in peace with his friends and follow right,

Conquering those passions which his bosom rend,

What happy lives would all his subjects spend!

The Brahmin’s Veda, Khattiya’s policy,

Both arbitrary and delusive be,

They blindly grope their way along a road

By some huge inundation overflowed.

In Brahmin's Veda, Khattiya's policy,

One secret meaning we alike can see;

For after all, loss, gain and glory, and shame

Touch the four castes alike, to all the same.

As householders to gain a livelihood

Count all pursuits legitimate and good,

So Brahmins now in our degenerate day

Will gain a livelihood in any way.

The householder is led by love of gain,

Blindly he follows, dragged in pleasure's train,

Trying all trades, deceitful and a fool,

Fallen alas! how far from wisdom's rule."

The Great Being, having thus confuted their arguments, established his own doctrine, and when they heard his exposition the assembly of Nagas was filled with joy. The Great Being delivered the outcast Brahmin from the Naga-world and did not wound him with a single contemptuous speech. Sagara-brahmadatta also did not let the appointed day pass, but went with his complete army to his father's dwelling-place. The Great Being also, having proclaimed by beat of drum that he would visit his maternal uncle and grandfather, crossed over from the Yamuna and went first to that hermitage with great pomp and magnificence, and his remaining brothers and his father and mother came afterwards. At that moment Sagara-brahmadatta, not recognising the Great Being, as he approached with his great retinue, asked his father :

"Whose drums are these?. whose tabours, conchs, and what those instruments, whose voice

Swells with deep concert through the air and makes the monarch's heart rejoice?

Who is this youth who marches there, with quiver and with bow arrayed,

Wearing a golden coronet that shines like lightning round his head?

Who is it that approaches there, whose youthful countenance shines bright,

Like an acacia brand which glows in a smith's forge with steady light?

Whose bright umbrella, golden-hued, o'erpowers the sun in noonday's pride,

While deftly hangs a fly-flapper ready for action by his side?

See peacocks' tails on golden sticks wave by his face with colours blent,

While his bright ear-rings deck his brow as lightning wreaths the firmament.

What hero owns that long large eye, that tuft of wool between the brows,

Those teeth as white as buds or shells, their line so faultless and so even,

Those lac-dyed hands, those bimba lips,—he shines forth like the sun in heaven;

Like some tall sal-tree full of bloom, upon a mountain peak alone,

Indra in his triumphant dress with every demon foe o'erthrown.

Who is it bursts upon our view, drawing from out its sheath his brand,

Its jewelled handle and rich work radiant with splendour in his hand,

Who now takes off his golden shoes, richly inwrought with varied thread,

And, bending with obeisance low, pours honour on the Sage's head?"

Being thus asked by his son Sagara-brahmadatta, the ascetic, possessed of transcendent knowledge and supernatural power, replied, "O my son, these are the sons of King Dhatarattha, the Naga sons of thy sister"; and he repeated this gatha:

"These are all Dhatarattha's sons glorious in power and great in fame,—

They all revere Samuddaja and her as common mother claim."

While they were thus talking, the host of Nagas came up and saluted the ascetic's feet and then sat down on one side. Samuddaja also saluted her father, and then after weeping returned with the Nagas to the Naga-world. Sagara-brahmadatta stayed there for a few days and then went to Benares, and Samuddaja died in the Naga-world. The Bodhisatta, having kept the precepts all his life and performed all the duties of the fast-day, at the end

of his life went with the host of Nagas to fill the seats of heaven.

After the lesson the Teacher exclaimed, “Thus pious disciples, wise men of former times before the Buddha was born, gave up the glory of the Naga state and rigorously fulfilled the duties of the fast-day”; and he then identified the birth: “At that time the family of the great King were my father and mother, Devadatta was the outcast Brahmin, Ananda was Somadatta, Uppalavanna was Accimukhi, Saripputta was Sudassana, Moggallana was Subhaga, Sunakkhatta was Kanarittha, and I myself was Bhuridatta.”

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