Ja 545 — Mahanaradakassapa Jātaka

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

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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

“There was a king of the Videhas,” etc. This story was told by the Master, while dwelling in the Latthivana pleasure garden, in relation to the conversion of Uruvela-Kassapa. Now the Teacher by whom the glorious reign of law was begun, after converting the ascetics Uruvela-Kassapa and the rest, came to the pleasure garden of Latthivana, surrounded by the thousand bhikkhus who had before been ascetics, in order to persuade the King of Magadha to give his promise; and at that time, when the Magadha king, who had come with an attending company of twelve myriads, had seated himself after saluting the Buddha, a dispute arose among the Brahmans and householders of his train, “Has Uruvela-Kassapa placed himself under the spiritual guidance of the great Samana, or has the great Samana placed himself under the spiritual guidance of Uruvela-Kassapa?” Then the Blessed One thought to himself, “I will shew them that Kassapa has placed himself under my spiritual guidance,” and he uttered this stanza:

“What was it that you saw, O inhabitant of Uruvela, that you, renowned for your asceticism, abandoned your sacred fire? I ask you, Kassapa, this question,—how is it that your fire sacrifice has been deserted?”

Then the elder, Who understood the Buddha’s purport, replied in this stanza:

“The sacrifices only speak of forms and sounds and tastes, and sensual pleasures and women; and knowing that all these things, being found in the elements of material existence, are filth, I took no more delight in sacrifices or offerings.”

And in order to shew that he was a disciple, he laid his head upon the Buddha’s feet and said, “The Blessed One is my teacher, and I am his disciple.” So saying he rose into the air seven times, to the height of a palm tree, two palm trees, and so on to seven palm trees, and then having come down and saluted the Blessed One, he sat down on one side. The great multitude when they saw that miracle uttered the glories of the Teacher, saying, “O

great is the power of Buddha; though filled with such a firm conviction of his own, and though he believed himself to be a saint, Uruvela-Kassapa burst the bonds of error and was converted by the Tathagata." The Teacher said, "It is not wonderful that I who have now attained omniscience should have converted him; in olden time when I was the Brahma named Narada and still subject to passion, I burst this man's bonds of error and made him humble"; and so saying he told the following, at the request of the audience:

In the olden time at Mithila in the kingdom of Videha there ruled a just king of righteousness named Angati. Now in the womb of his chief queen there was conceived a fair and gracious daughter, named Ruja, possessing great merit, and one who had offered prayer for a hundred thousand ages. All his other sixteen thousand wives were barren. This daughter became very dear and engaging to him. Every day he used to send her five and twenty baskets full of various flowers and delicate raiment, bidding her adorn herself with them; and he used to send her a thousand pieces, bidding her give away alms every fortnight as there was abundance of food and drink. Now he had three ministers, Vijaya, Sunama and Alata; and one day when the feast came round on the full moon of the fourth month, and the city and the palace were adorned like the city of the gods, having properly bathed and anointed himself and put on all sorts of ornaments, as he stood with his ministers on a terrace at an open window and saw the round moon mounting up into the clear sky, he asked his ministers, "Pleasant indeed is this clear night,—with what amusement shall we divert ourselves?"

The Teacher thus explained the matter:

"There was a Khattiya king of the Videhas named Angati, possessing many carriages, wealthy and with an innumerable army. One day on the fifteenth night of the fortnight, ere the first watch was over, on the full moon of the fourth month of the rains, he gathered his ministers together,—Vijaya, and Sunama, and the general Alataka, all wise, fathers of sons, wearing a smile, and full of experience. The Videha king questioned them, "Let each of you utter his wish, this is the full moon of the fourth month, it is moonlight without any darkness; with what diversion to-night shall we pass the time away?"

Thus asked by the king, each spoke in accordance with the desire of his heart.

The Teacher thus explained the matter:

"Then the general Alata thus spoke to the king: "Let us gather a gay gallant army together; let us go forth to battle, with a countless host of men; let us bring under thy power those who have kept themselves independent; this is my opinion, let us conquer what is still unconquered." Hearing the words of Alata, Sunama spoke thus, "All your enemies, O king, are met together here,—they have laid aside their strength and behave themselves with submission; to-day is the chief festival; war pleases me not. Let them forthwith bring to us meat and drink and all kinds of food: O king, enjoy thy pleasure in dance and song and music." Hearing the words of Sunama, Vijaya spoke thus, "All pleasures, O great king, are always ready at thy side; these are not hard to find, so as to rejoice in all thy desires: but even if they are always attained, this resolution is riot approved by me. Let us wait on some

Samana or Brahmin learned in sacred lore, one who versed in the text and its meaning may remove our doubt to-day as to the object of our desire." Having heard the words of Vijaya, the king Angati said, "This saying of Vijaya is what pleases me also. Let us wait on some Samana or Brahmin learned in sacred lore, one who versed in the sacred text and its meaning may remove our doubt to-day as to the object of our desire. Do ye all carry out this resolution; on what teacher shall we wait? Who, to-day, versed in the sacred text and its meaning, will remove our doubt as to the object of our desire?" Having heard the words of Videha, Alata replied, "There is yonder naked ascetic in the deer-park, approved by all as wise, Guna, of the Kassapa family, famous, a man of varied discourse, and with a large following of disciples; wait on him, O king, he will remove our doubt." Having heard the words of Alata, the king commanded his charioteer, "We will go to the deer-park, bring hither the chariot yoked."

Then they yoked his chariot made of ivory and with silver decorations, having its equipage all bright and clean, white and spotless like a clear night in its appearance. Four Sindh horses were yoked therein, white as lilies, swift as the wind, well-trained, wearing golden wreaths,—white the umbrella, white the car, white the horses and white the fan. The Videha king as he set out with his counsellors shone like the moon. Many wise and strong men armed with spears and swords, mounted on horses, followed the king of heroes. Having traversed the distance, as it were, in a moment, and alighted from the chariot, the Videha with his ministers approached Guna on foot; and even the Brahmins and wealthy men who were already gathered at the place the king did not order to be removed, though they left him no room."

Surrounded by that mixed assembly the king sat on one side and made his greeting.

The Teacher thus explained the matter:

"Then the king sat down on one side on a soft mattress, covered with soft variegated squirrel-skins and with a soft cushion put over them. The king, being seated, addressed him with the compliments of friendship and civility, "Are your bodily needs provided for? are your vital airs not wasted? is your mode of life comfortable? do you get your due supply of alms? are your movements unimpeded? is your sight unimpaired?" Guna courteously answered the Videha who was so attentive to his duties, "All my wants are provided for, and those two last-mentioned points are as I would wish them. You too,—are your neighbours not too strong for you? have you such good health as you need? does your chariot carry you well? have you none of the sicknesses which afflict the body?" The king, seeking to know the law, having received this kindly greeting, next proceeded to ask him concerning the meaning and text of the law and the rules of right conduct. "How, O Kassapa, should a mortal fulfil the law towards his parents, how towards his teacher, and how towards his wife and children? how should he behave towards the aged, how towards Samanas and Brahmins, how should he deal with his army, how with the people in the country? How should he practise the law and so eventually attain to heaven? and how do some on account of unrighteousness fall down into hell?"

Through the lack of some one who was preeminent among omniscient buddhas, paccekabuddhas, buddhist disciples, or sages, the king asked his successive royal questions well deserving to be asked, of a poor naked mendicant who knew nothing and was as blind as a child; and he, being thus asked, giving no proper answer to the question but seizing the opportunity with a "Hear, O king," declared his own false doctrine, like one who strikes an ox when it is going along or throws refuse into another's food- vessel.

The Teacher thus explained the matter:

"Having heard the Videha king's words, Kassapa thus replied: "Hear, O king, a true unerring utterance. There is no fruit, good or evil, in following the law; there is no other world, O king,—who has ever come back hither from thence? There are no ancestors,—how can there be father or mother? There is no teacher,—who will tame what cannot be tamed? All beings are equal and alike, there are none who should receive or pay honour; there is no such thing as strength or courage,—how can there be vigour or heroism? All beings are predestined, just as the stern-rope must follow the ship. Every mortal gets what he is to get, what then is the use of giving? There is no use, O king, in giving,—the giver is helpless and weak; gifts are enjoined by fools and accepted by the wise; weak fools who think themselves wise give to the prudent."

Having thus described the uselessness of giving, he went on to describe the powerlessness of sin to produce consequences hereafter:

"There are seven aggregates indestructible and uninjuring,—fire, earth, water, air, pleasure, and pain, and the soul; of these seven there is none that can destroy or divide, nor are they ever to be destroyed; weapons pass harmless amongst these aggregates. He who carries off another's head with a sharp sword does not divide these aggregates: how then should there be any consequence from evil doing? All beings become pure by passing through eighty-four great aeons; till that period arrives not even the self-restrained becomes pure. Till that period arrives, however much they have followed virtue, they do not become pure, and even if they commit many sins they do not go beyond that limit. One by one we are purified through the eighty-four great aeons: we cannot go beyond our destiny any more than the sea beyond its shore.'"

Thus did the advocate of annihilation enforce his own doctrine by his vehemence without appealing to any precedent :

"Having heard Kassapa's words, Alata thus replied: "What you say approves itself also to me. I too remember having gone through a former birth. I was a cow-killing huntsman named Pingala in a city. Many a sin did I commit in wealthy Benares,—many living creatures I slew, buffaloes, hogs, and goats. Passing from that birth, I was then born in the prosperous family of a general; verily there are no evil consequences for sin, I did not have to go to hell."

Now there happened to be a slave clothed in rags, named Bijaka, who was keeping the fast, and who had come to listen to Guna; when he heard Kassapa's words and Alata's

reply, he drew many a hot sigh and burst into tears. The Videha king asked him, “Why dost thou weep? what hast thou seen or heard? why dost thou shew me thy pain?”

Bijaka replied, “I have no pain to vex me: listen to me, O king. I too remember my former birth, a happy one; I was one Bhavasetthi in the city of Saketa, devoted to virtue, pure, given to alms, and esteemed by Brahmins. and rich men; and I remember no single evil deed that I committed. But when I passed from that life I was conceived in the womb of a poor prostitute, and was born to a miserable life. But miserable as I am I keep my tranquil mind, and I give the half of my food to whosoever desires it. I fast every fourteenth and fifteenth day, and I never hurt living creatures, and I abstain from theft. But all the good deeds which I do produce no fruit; as Alata says, I think that virtue is useless. I lose my game in life as an unskilful dice-player; Alata wins as he has done, just like a skilled player; I see no door by which I may go to heaven; it is for this that I weep when I heard what Kassapa said.”

Having heard Bijaka’s words, King Angati said, “There is no door to heaven: only wait on destiny. Whether thy lot be happiness or misery, it is only gained through destiny: all will at last reach deliverance from transmigration; be not eager for the future. I too have been fortunate in former births and devoted to Brahmins and rich men, but while I was busy administering the laws I myself had meanwhile no enjoyment.”

Thus having spoken he took his leave: “O venerable Kassapa, all this long time I have been heedless, but now at last I have found a teacher, and from henceforth, following your teaching, I will take my delight only in pleasure, and not even hearing discourses on virtue shall hinder me. Stay where you are, I will now depart; we may yet see one another again and meet hereafter.”

So saying the King of Videha went to his home.

When the king first visited Guna he saluted him respectfully and then asked his question; but when he went away, he went without any salutation: because Guna was untrue to his name, through his own unworthiness, he received no salutation, still less did he get alms. So after the night was passed and the next day had come, the king gathered his ministers together and said to them, “Prepare all the elements of enjoyment, henceforth I will only follow the pursuit of pleasure, no other business is to be mentioned before me, let such and such a one carry on the administration of justice,” and he gave himself up accordingly to enjoyment.

The Teacher thus explained the matter:

“When the night turned to day Angati summoned his ministers into his presence and thus addressed them: “In the Candaka palace let them always provide pleasures ready for me, let no one come with messages concerning public or secret matters. Let Vijaya, Sunama, and the general Alataka, all three well skilled in law, sit in judgment on these matters.” So the king, having said this, thought only of pleasure and busied himself no more in the company of Brahmins and wealthy men.

Then on the fourteenth night the dear daughter of the king, named Ruja, said to her nurse-mother, “Adorn me quickly with my jewels, let my female companions wait on me; to-morrow is the sacred fifteenth day, I will go into the royal presence.” They brought her a garland and precious sandal wood, gems, shells, pearls, and precious things and garments of various dyes; and her many attendants, surrounding her as she sat on a golden chair, adorned her, shining in her beauty.

Then in the midst of her train, blazing with all kinds of ornaments, Ruja entered the palace Candaka as lightning enters a cloud. Having drawn near the king and saluted him, with all due respect, she sat down on one side on a chair inlaid with gold.

The king, when he beheld her surrounded by her train as if a company of heavenly nymphs had visited him, thus addressed her: “Do you enjoy yourself in the tank within the precincts of the palace? do they always bring you all sorts of delicate food? Do you and your maidens gather all kinds of garlands and build bowers for yourselves continually, intent upon sport? Is anything wanting to you? Let them bring it forthwith,—ask what you will, impetuous one, even though it be as hard to get as the moon.”

Hearing his words Ruja answered her father:

“O king, in my lord’s presence every desire of mine is gained. To-morrow is the sacred fifteenth day,—let them bring me a thousand pieces, that I may give it all as a gift to the mendicants.”

Hearing Ruja’s words King Angati replied:

“Much wealth has been wasted by you idly and without fruit. You keep the fast-days and neither eat nor drink; this idea of the duty of fasting comes from destiny,—there is no merit because you abstain. While you live with us, Ruja, put not food away; there is no other world than this,—why vex thyself for nought?”

Then Ruja bright in her beauty, when she heard his words, thus answered him, knowing as she did the past and the future law: “I have heard in time past and I have seen it with mine own eyes,—he who follows children becomes himself a child. The fool who associates with fools plunges deep into folly. It is fitting for Alata and Bijaka to be deceived; but thou art a king full of learning, wise and skilled in the conduct of affairs; how hast thou fallen into such a low theory, worthy of children? If a man is purified by the mere course of existence, then Guna’s own asceticism is useless; like a moth flying into the lighted candle, the idiot has adopted a naked mendicant’s life. Having accepted the idea that all will at last be purified through transmigration, in their great ignorance many corrupt their actions; and being fast caught in the effects of former sins they find it hard to escape, as the fish from the hook.

I will tell thee a parable, O king, for thy case; the wise sometimes learn the truth by a parable. As the ship of the merchants, heavy through taking in too large a cargo, sinks overladen into the sea, so a man, accumulating sin little by little, sinks overladen into hell.

Alata's present cargo, O king, is not what he is collecting now; for that which he is now taking on board he will hereafter sink to hell. Formerly Alata's deeds were righteous, and it is as their result that he enjoys this prosperity. That merit of his is being spent, for he is all intent upon vice; having forsaken the straight road, he is running headlong in a crooked path.

As the balance properly hung in the weighing-house causes the end to swing up when the weight is put in, so does a man cause his fate at last to rise if he gathers together every piece of merit little by little, like that slave Bijaka intent on merit and thinking too much of heaven.

In the sorrow which the slave Bijaka now suffers he receives the fruit of sins which he formerly committed. That sin is melting away since he is devoted to moral virtue, but let him not enter into Kassapa's devious paths."

Then she proceeded to shew the evil of practising sin and the good results of following worthy friends :

"Whatever friend a king honours, whether he be good or evil, devoted to vice or to virtue, the king falls into his power. As is the friend whom he chooses for himself and follows, such he himself becomes,—such is the power of intimacy. One in constant intercourse affects his fellow, a close comrade his associate, just as a poisoned arrow defiles a pure quiver. Let not the wise become the friend of the wicked for fear of contamination. If a man ties up stinking fish with a band of kusa grass, the grass will acquire a putrid smell, so is intimacy with a fool; but if a man binds up myrrh in a common leaf, it will acquire a pleasant odour, so is intimacy with the wise. Therefore, knowing the maturity of his own actions like the ripeness of a basket of fruit, let not the wise man follow the wicked but follow the good, for the wicked lead to hell, while the good bring us to heaven."

The princess, having discoursed on righteousness in these six stanzas, declared the sorrows which she had undergone in her past births:

"I too remember seven births which I have experienced, and when I go from my present life I shall yet pass through seven future ones. My seventh former birth, O king, was as the son of a smith in the city Rajagaha in Magadha. I had an evil companion and I committed much evil; we went about corrupting other men's wives as if we had been immortal. Those actions remained laid up like fire covered with ashes. By the effect of other actions I was born in the land of Vamsa in a merchant's family in Kosambi, great and prosperous and wealthy: I was an only son, continually fostered and honoured. There I followed a friend who was devoted to good works, wise and full of sacred learning, and he grounded me in what was good. I fasted through many a fourteenth and fifteenth night; and that action remained laid up like a treasure in water. But the fruit of the evil deeds which I had done in Magadha came round to me at last like a noxious poison. I passed from thence for a long time, O king, into the Roruva hell, I endured the effects of my own works; when I remember it grieves me still. After spending there a wretched time through a long series of years, I became a castrated goat in Bhennakata. I carried the sons of the wealthy on my

back and in a carriage; it was the fated consequence of my going after other men's wives.

After that I was born in the womb of a monkey in a forest; and on the day of my birth they shewed me to the leader of the herd, who exclaimed, "Bring my son to me," and violently seized my testicles with his teeth and bit them off in spite of my cries." She explained this in verse.

"Passing from this birth, O king, I was born as a monkey in a great forest; I was mutilated by the fierce leader of the herd: this was the fated consequence of my going after other men's wives."

Then she went on to describe the other births:

I was next born, O king, as an ox among the Dasannas, castrated but swift and fair to look at, and I long drew a carriage: this was the fatal consequence of my going after other men's wives. When I passed from that birth I was born in a family among the Vajji people but I was neither man nor woman, for it is a very hard thing to attain the being born as a man; this was the fatal consequence of my going after other men's wives. Next, O king, I was born in the Nandana wood,—a nymph of a lovely complexion in the heaven of the Thirty-three, dressed in garments and ornaments of various hues and wearing jewelled earrings, skilled in dance and song, an attendant in Sakka's court. While I stayed there I remembered all these births and also the seven future births which I shall experience when I go from hence. The good which I did in Kosambi has come round in its turn, and when I pass from this birth I shall be born only among gods or men. For seven births, O king, I shall be honoured and worshipped, but till the sixth is past I shall not be free from my female sex. But there is my seventh birth, O king,—a prosperous son of the gods, I shall be born at last as a male deity in a divine body. Even to-day they are gathering garlands from the heavenly tree in Nandana, and there is a son of the gods, named Java, who is seeking a garland for me. These sixteen years of my present life are only as one moment in heaven —a hundred mortal autumns are only as one heavenly day and night. Thus do our actions follow us even through countless births, bringing good or evil,—no action is ever lost."

Then she declared the supreme Law:

"He who desires to rise continually from birth to birth, let him avoid another's wife as a man with washed feet the mire. He who desires to rise continually from birth to birth, let him worship the Lord as his attendants worship Indra. He who wishes for heavenly enjoyments, a heavenly life, glory, and happiness, let him avoid sins and follow the threefold law. Watchful and wise in body, word and thought, he follows his own highest good, be he born as a woman or a man. Whosoever are born glorious in the world and nursed in all pleasures, without doubt in former time they had lived a virtuous life; all beings separately abide by their own deserts. Dost thou thyself think, O king, what caused thee to own these wives of thine like heavenly nymphs, beautifully adorned and dressed with golden nets?"

Thus she counselled her father. The Teacher thus explained the matter:

“Thus did the maiden Ruja please her father, she taught the bewildered one the true road, and devoutly declared to him the law.”

Having proclaimed the law to her father all night from early morning, she said to him, “O king, listen not to the words of a naked heretic, but receive the words of some good friend like me, who tells thee that there is this world and there is another world, and that there are fated consequences to every good or evil action,—rush not on by a wrong road.” Still she was not able to deliver her father from his false doctrine: he was only pleased when he heard her sweet words, for all parents naturally love their dear children’s speech, but they do not give up their old opinions. So too there arose a stir in the city, “The king’s daughter Ruja is trying to drive away heretical views by teaching the law,” and the multitude were well-pleased, “The wise princess will set him free from false teaching today and will inaugurate prosperity for the citizens.” But though she could not make her father understand she did not lose heart, but resolving that by some means or other she would bring her father true happiness, she placed her joined hands on her head and after having made her obeisance in the ten directions, she offered worship, saying, “In this world there are righteous Samanas and Brahmins who support the world, there are the presiding deities, there are the great Brahma deities,—let them come and cause my father to give up his heresy; and if they have no power in themselves, then let them come by my power and virtue and drive away this heresy and bring about the welfare of the whole world.” Now the Great Brahma of that time was a Bodhisatta named Narada; and the Bodhisattas in their mercy, compassion, and sovereignty, cast their eyes over the world from time to time to behold the righteous and the wicked beings. As he was that day looking over the world he saw the princess worshipping the presiding deities in her desire to deliver her father from heresy, and he thought to himself, “Except me, none other can drive away false teaching, I must come to-day and shew kindness to the princess and bring happiness to the king and his people. In what garb shall I go? Ascetics are dear and venerable to men and their words are counted worthy to be received; I will go in the garb of an ascetic.” So he assumed a pleasing human form, having a complexion like gold, with his hair matted and a golden needle thrust into the tangle; and having put on a tattered dress red outside and within, and having hung over one shoulder a black antelope’s hide made of silver and decorated with golden stars, and having taken a golden begging bowl hung with a string of pearls, and having laid on his shoulders a golden carrying pole curved in three places, and taken up a coral water-pot by a string of pearls, he went with this garb through the heavens shining like the moon in the firmament, and having entered the terrace of the Canda palace he stood in the sky in front of the king.

The Teacher thus explained it:

“Then Narada came down to men from the Brahma-world, and surveying Jambudipa he beheld King Angati. Then he stood on the palace before the king, and Ruja, having beheld him, saluted the divine sage who had come.”

Then the king, being rebuked by the Brahma's glory, could not remain on his throne, but came down and stood on the ground and asked him the cause of his coming and his name and family.

The Master thus explained it:

"Then the king, alarmed in his mind, having come down from his seat spoke thus to Narada, making his inquiries: "Whence comest thou, of heavenly aspect, like the moon illumining the night; tell me in answer thy name and family, how do they call thee in the world of men?"

Then he thought to himself, This king does not believe in another world, I will tell him about another world," so he uttered a verse:

"I come now from the gods like the moon illumining the night,—I tell thee my name and family as thou askest: they know me as Narada and Kassapa."

Then the king thought to himself, "By and bye I will ask him about another world; I will now ask him as to the purpose of this miracle."

"In that thou goest and standest in this marvellous fashion, I ask thee, O Narada, what does it mean; for what reason is this miracle wrought?"

Narada replied:

"Truth, righteousness, self-command, and liberality,—these were in old days my notorious virtues; by these same virtues diligently followed I go swift as thought wherever I desire."

Even while he was thus speaking the king, unable to believe in another world from the inveteracy of his evil doctrines, exclaimed, "Is there such a thing as recompense for good actions?" and repeated a stanza:

"Thou utterest a marvel when thou talkest of the might brought by good actions; if these things are as thou sayest, Narada, this question, being asked, do thou answer me truly."

Narada replied:

"Ask me, O king; this is thy business; this doubt of thine which thou feelest, I will assuredly solve it for thee by reasoning, by logic, and by proofs."

The king said:

"I ask thee this matter, O Narada; give me not a false answer to my question; are there really gods or ancestors,—is there another world as people say?"

Narada answered:

“There are indeed gods and ancestors, there is another world as people say; but men being greedy and infatuated for pleasure know not of another world in their illusion.”

When the king heard this he laughed and uttered a verse:

“If thou believest, Narada, that there is in another world a dwelling-place for the dead, then give me here five hundred pieces, and I will give thee a thousand in the next world.”

Then the Great Being replied, reproving him in the midst of the assembly:

“I would give thee the five hundred if I knew that thou wast virtuous and generous; but who would press thee for the thousand in the next world, if thou, the merciless one, wast dwelling in hell? Here when a man is averse to virtue, a lover of sin, idle, and cruel,—wise men do not entrust a loan to him: there is no return from such a debtor. When men know that another is skilful, active, virtuous and generous, they invite him to borrow by the advantages they hold out; when he has done his business, he will bring back what he has borrowed.”

The king, thus rebuked, was not ready with an answer.

The multitude, being delighted, shouted, “O princess, thou art a being of miraculous power, thou wilt deliver the king this day from his false doctrines,” and the whole city was filled with excitement. Then by the power of the Great Being there was not a person within the range of the seven leagues over which Mithila extends who did not hear his teaching of the law. Then the Great Being reflected, “This king has grasped his false doctrines very firmly; I will frighten him with the fear of hell and make him give them up, and then I will comfort him with some heaven of the gods”; so he said to him, “O king, if thou dost not give up these doctrines, thou wilt go to hell with its endless torments,” and he began to give an account of the different hells:

“When thou goest hence thou wilt see thyself dragged by flocks of ravens and devoured by them as thou livest in hell, and by crows, vultures, and hawks, with thy body torn and dripping blood: who would press thee for a thousand pieces in the next world?”

Having described the raven hell, he said, “If thou dost not dwell there, thou wilt dwell in a hell in the space between three spheres,” and he uttered a stanza to describe it:

“Blind darkness is there, and no moon or sun, a hell evermore tumultuous and dreadful; it is not known as either night or day: who would wander seeking money in such a place?”

Then having described that intermediate hell at full length, he said, “O king, if thou abandonest not thy false doctrines, thou wilt suffer not only this but other torments as well,” and he uttered a stanza:

“Two dogs Sabala and Sama of giant size, mighty and strong, devour with their iron teeth him who is driven hence and goes to another world.”

A similar rule applies to the subsequent hells; therefore all these worlds, together with their guardians, are to be described in a pregnant prose version of the various gathas as in the preceding narrative.

“As he lives in hell thus devoured by cruel beasts of torture, with his body torn and dripping blood, who would press him for a thousand pieces in the next world?

With arrows and well-sharpened spears the Kalupakalas as enemies smite and wound him in hell who before committed evil.

As he wanders in hell thus smitten in belly and side, and with his entrails mangled, his body torn and dripping blood,—who would press him for a thousand pieces in the next world?

Heaven rains down these spears, arrows, javelins and spikes and various weapons, flames fall like burning coals, it rains missiles of rock on the cruel man.

An intolerable hot wind blows in hell, not even a transient pleasure is felt there; rushing about, sick, with no refuge,—who would press him for a thousand pieces in the next world?

Hurrying along yoked in chariots, treading along the fiery ground, urged on with goads and sticks,—who would press him for a thousand pieces in the next world?

As he climbs a fearful blazing mountain studded with razors, his body gashed and dripping with blood,—who would press him for a thousand pieces in the next world?

As he climbs a dreadful blazing heap of burning coals like a mountain, with his body all burned, and miserable, and weeping,—who would press him for a thousand pieces in the next world?

There are lofty thickets like heaps of clouds, full of thorns, with sharp iron spikes which drink the blood of men,—women and men who go after other people’s wives have to climb it, driven on by the servants of Yama bearing spears in their hands.

As he climbs the infernal silk-cotton tree all covered with blood, his body gashed and flayed, sick and racked with pain, panting with deep hot sighs and thus expiating his former crimes,—who would ask him for his old debt?

There are lofty forests like heaps of clouds, covered with swords for leaves, armed with iron knives which drink the blood of men; as he climbs the tree with iron leaves, cut with sharp swords, his body gashed and dripping blood,—who would press him for the thousand pieces in the next world?

When he escapes from that hell of iron leaves and falls into the river Vetarani, who would ask him for his old debt?

On flows the river Vetarani, cruel with boiling water and covered with iron lotuses and sharp leaves; as he is hurried along covered with blood and with his limbs all cut, in the stream of Vetarani where there is nothing to rest upon,—who would ask him for his debt?"

When the king heard this description of hell from the Great Being, bewildered in heart and seeking a refuge, he thus addressed him:

"I tremble like a tree which is being cut down; confused in mind, I know not which way to turn; I am tormented with terror, great is my fear, when I hear these verses uttered by thee. As when a thing burning is plunged in the water, or like an island in a stormy ocean, or like a lamp in the darkness, thou art my refuge, O sage.

Teach me, O seer, the sacred text and its meaning; verily the past has been all sin; teach me, Narada, the path of purity, so that I may not fall into hell."

Then the Great Being to teach him the path of purity told him by way of example of various former kings who had followed righteousness:

"Dhatarattha Vessamitta and Atthaka, Yamataggi and Usinnara and King Sivi, these and other kings, waiting diligently on Brahmins and Samanas, all went to Sakka's heaven; do thou, O king, avoid unrighteousness and follow righteousness. Let them proclaim in thy palace, bearing food in their hands, "Who is hungry or thirsty? Who wants a garland or ointment? What naked man would put on garments decked with various jewels? Who would take an umbrella for his journey, and soft delicate shoes?"' Thus let them proclaim aloud in thy city evening and morning. Put not to labour the aged man nor the aged ox and horse: give to each the due honour still; when he was strong he fulfilled his position of trust."

Thus the Great Being, having discoursed to him concerning liberality and good conduct, seeing that the king would be pleased at being compared to a chariot, proceeded to instruct him in the law under the figure of a chariot which brings every desire:

"Thy body is called a chariot, swift and provided with the mind as a charioteer: having the abstinence from all injury as its axle, liberality as its covering, a careful walk with the feet as the circumference of the wheel, a careful handling with the hands as the side of the carriage; watchfulness over the belly is the name of the wheel, watchfulness over the tongue is the prevention of the wheel's rattling. Its parts are all complete through truthful speech, it is well fastened together by the absence of slander, its frame is all smooth with friendly words and joined well with well-measured speech; well-constructed with faith and the absence of covetousness, with the respectful salutation of humility as the carriage-pole, with the shaft of gentleness and meekness, with the rope of self-restraint, according to the five moral precepts, and the key (?) of absence of anger, and the white umbrella of righteousness, driven with a thorough knowledge of the proper seasons, having the three sticks prepared in his assured confidence, having humble speech as the thong, and with the absence of vain-glory as the yoke, with the cushion of unattached thoughts, following wisdom and free from dust,—let memory be thy goad, and the ready

application of firmness thy reins; mind pursues the path of self-control with its steeds all equally trained, desire and lust are an evil path, but self-control is the straight road. As the steed rushes along after forms and sounds and smells, intellect uses the scourge and the soul is the charioteer. If one goes with his chariot, if this calmness and firmness be steadfast, he will attain all desires, O king,—he will never go to hell.

Thus, O king, I have described to thee in various ways that path to happiness which I begged Narada to tell me that I might not fall into hell."

Having thus instructed him in the law and taken away his false doctrines, and established him in the moral precepts, he commanded him henceforth to eschew evil friends and to follow virtuous friends and to take heed how he walked; then he praised the virtues of the princess and exhorted the royal court and the royal wives, and then passed in their sight to the world of Brahma with great majesty.

The Master, having ended his lesson, exclaimed, "Not now only, but formerly also, Brethren, I converted Uruvela-Kassapa and cut the net of heresy which bound him"; so saying, he identified the Birth, and uttered these stanzas at the end:

"Devadatta was Alata, Bhaddaji was Sunama, Sariputta was Vijaya, Mogallana Bijaka, the Licchavi prince Sunakkhalta the naked ascetic Guna; Ananda was Ruja who converted the king, and Uruvela-Kassapa the king who held false doctrines, and the Bodhisatta was the great Brahma.; thus ye hold the story of the birth."

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.

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Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.