Ja 546 — Vidhurapandita Jātaka

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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

“Thou art pale and thin and weak,” etc. The Master told this tale while dwelling in Jetavana, concerning the Perfection of Wisdom. One day the Brethren raised a discussion in the Hall of Truth, saying, “Sirs, the Master has great and wide wisdom, he is ready and quick-witted, he is sharp and keen-witted and able to crush the arguments of his opponents, by the power of his wisdom he overthrows the subtil questions propounded by Khattiya sages and reduces them to silence, and having established them in the three Refuges and the moral precepts, causes them to enter on the path which leads to immortality.” The Master came and asked what was the topic which the Brethren were debating as they sat together; and on hearing what it was he said, “It is not wonderful, Brethren, that the Tathagata, having attained the Perfection of Wisdom, should overthrow the arguments of his opponents and convert Khattiyas and others. For in the earlier ages, when he was still seeking for supreme knowledge, he was wise and able to crush the arguments of his opponents. Yea verily in the time of Vidhurakumara, on the summit of the Black Mountain which is sixty leagues in height, by the force of my wisdom I converted the Yakkha general, Punnaka, and reduced him to silence and made him give his own life as a gift”; and so saying he told a story of the past.

I.

Once upon a time in the Kuru kingdom in the city of Indapatta a king ruled named Dhananjaya-korabba. He had a minister named Vidhurapandita who gave his instructions concerning temporal and spiritual matters; and having a sweet tongue and great eloquence in discoursing of the law, he bewitched all the kings of Jambudipa by his sweet discourses concerning the law as elephants are fascinated by a favourite lute, nor did he suffer them to depart to their own kingdoms, but dwelt in that city in great glory, teaching the law to the people with all a Buddha’s power. Now there were four rich Brahmin householders in Benares, friends, who, having seen the misery of desires, went into the Himalaya and embraced the ascetic life, and having entered upon the transcendental

faculties and the mystical meditations, continued to dwell a long time there, feeding on the forest roots and fruits, and then, as they went their rounds to procure salt and sour condiments, came to beg in the city Kalacampa in the kingdom of Anga. There four householders who were friends, being pleased with their deportment, having paid them respect and taken their begging vessels, waited upon then with choice food, each in his own house, and taking their promise arranged a home for them in their garden. So the four ascetics having taken their food in the houses of the four householders, went away to pass the day, one going to the heaven of the Thirty-three, another to the world of the Nagas, another to the world of the Supannas, and the fourth to the park Migacira belonging to the Koravya king. Now he who spent his day in the world of the gods, after beholding Sakka's glory, described it in full to his attendant, and so too did he who spent his day in the Naga and Supanna world, and so too he who spent his day in the park of the Koravya king Dhananjaya; each described in full the glory of that respective king. So these four attendants desired these heavenly abodes, and having performed gifts and other works of merit, at the end of their lives, one was born as Sakka, another was born with a wife and child in the Naga world, another was born as the Supanna king in the palace of the Simbali lake, and the fourth was conceived by the chief queen of King Dhananjaya; while the four ascetics were born in the Brahma world. The Koravya prince grew up, and on his father's death assumed his kingdom and ruled in righteousness, but he was famed for his skill in dice. He listened to the instruction of Vidhurapandita and gave alms and kept the moral law and observed the fast. One day when he had undertaken the fast, he went into the garden, determining to practise pious meditation, and, having seated himself in a pleasant spot, he performed the duties of an ascetic. Sakka also, having undertaken to keep the fast, found that there were obstacles in the world of the gods, so he went into that very garden in the world of men, and, having seated himself in a pleasant spot, performed the duties of an ascetic. Varuna also, the Naga king, having undertaken to keep the fast, found that there were obstacles in the Naga world, so he went into that same garden, and, having seated himself in a pleasant place, performed the duties of an ascetic. The Supanna king also, having undertaken to keep the fast, found that there were obstacles in the Supanna world, so he went into that same garden, and, having seated himself in a pleasant spot, performed the duties of an ascetic. Then these four, having risen from their places at evening time, as they stood on the bank of the royal lake, came together and looked at one another, and, being filled with their old kindly affection, they woke up their former friendship and sat down with a pleasant greeting. Sakka sat down on a royal seat, and the others seated themselves as befitted the dignity of each. Then Sakka said to them, "We are all four kings,—now what is the preeminent virtue of each?" Then Varuna the Naga king replied, "My virtue is superior to that of you three," and when they inquired why, he said, "This Supanna king is our enemy, whether before or after we are born, yet even when I see him such a destructive enemy of our race I never feel any anger; therefore my virtue is superior"; and he then uttered the first stanza of the Catuposatha jataka :

"The good man who feels no anger towards one who merits anger and who never lets anger arise within him, he who even when angered does not allow it to be seen,—him they indeed call an ascetic.

“These are my qualities; therefore my virtue is superior.”

The Supanna king, hearing this, said, “This Naga is my chief food; but since, even though I see such food at hand, I endure my hunger and do not commit evil for the sake of food, my virtue is superior,” and he uttered this stanza:

“He who bears hunger with a pinched belly, a self-restrained hermit who eats and drinks by rule, and commits no evil for the sake of food,—him they indeed call an ascetic.”

Then Sakka the king of the gods said, “I left behind various kinds of heavenly glory, all immediate sources of happiness, and came to the world of mankind in order to maintain my virtue,—therefore my virtue is superior”; and he uttered this stanza:

“Having abandoned all sport and pleasure, he utters no false word in the world, he is averse to all outward pomp and carnal desire,—such a man they indeed call an ascetic.”

Thus did Sakka describe his own virtue.

Then King Dhananjaya said, “I to-day have abandoned my court and my seraglio with sixteen thousand dancing girls, and I practise an ascetic’s duties in a garden; therefore my virtue is superior”; and he added this stanza:

“Those who with full knowledge abandon all that they call their own and all the workings of lust, he who is self-restrained, resolute, unselfish, and free from desire,—him they indeed call an ascetic.”

Thus they each declared their own virtue as superior, and then they asked Dhananjaya, “O king, is there any wise man in thy court who could solve this doubt?” “Yes, O kings, I have Vidhura-pandita, who fills a post of unequalled responsibility and declares civil and ecclesiastical law, he will solve our doubt, we will go to him.” They at once consented. So they all went out of the garden and proceeded to the hall for religious assemblies, and, having ordered it to be adorned, they seated the Bodhisatta on a high seat, and, having offered him a friendly greeting, sat down on one side and said, “O wise sir! a doubt has risen in our minds, do thou solve it for us:

“We ask thee the minister of lofty wisdom: a dispute has arisen in our utterances,—do thou consider and solve our perplexities to-day, let us through thee to-day escape from our doubt.”

The wise man, having heard their words, replied, “O kings, how shall I know what you said well or ill concerning your virtue, as you uttered the stanzas in your dispute?” and he added this stanza:

“Those wise men who know the real state of things and who speak wisely at the proper time,— how shall they, however wise, draw out the meaning of verses which have not been uttered to them? How does the Naga king speak, how Garula, the son of Vinata? Or what

says the king of the Gandhabbas? Or how speaks the most noble king of the Kurus?”

Then they uttered this stanza to him:

“The Naga king preaches forbearance, Garula the son of Vinata gentleness, the king of the Gandhabbas abstinence from carnal lust, and the most noble king of the Kurus freedom from all hindrances to religious perfection.”

Then the Great Being, having heard their words, uttered this stanza:

“All these sayings are well spoken,—there is nothing here uttered amiss; and he in whom these are properly fitted like the spokes in the nave of a wheel,—he, who is endowed with these four virtues, is called an ascetic indeed.”

Thus the Great Being declared the virtue of each of them to be one and the same. Then the four, when they heard him, were well pleased, and uttered this stanza in his praise:

“Thou art the best, thou art incomparable, thou art wise, a guardian and knower of the law: having grasped the problem by thy wisdom, thou cuttest the doubts in thy skill as the ivory-workman the ivory with his saw.”

Thus all the four were pleased with his explanation of their question. Then Sakka rewarded him with a robe of heavenly silk, Garula with a golden garland, Varuna the Naga king with a jewel, and King Dhananjaya with a thousand cows, etc.; then Dhananjaya addressed him in this stanza:

“I give thee a thousand cows and a bull and an elephant, and these ten chariots drawn with thoroughbred horses, and sixteen excellent villages, being well pleased with thy solution of the question.”

Then Sakka and the rest, having paid all honour to the Great Being, departed to their own abodes. Here ends the section of the fourfold fast.

Ii.

Now the queen of the Naga king was the lady Vimala; and when she saw that no jewelled ornament was on his neck, she asked him where it was. He replied, “I was pleased at hearing the moral discourse of Vidhura-pandita the son of the Brahmin Canda, and I presented the jewel to him, and not only I, but Sakka honoured him with a robe of heavenly silk, the Supanna king gave him a golden garland, and King Dhananjaya a thousand oxen and many other things besides.” “He is, I suppose, eloquent in the law.” “Lady, what are you talking about? It is as if a Buddha had appeared in Jambudipa! a hundred kings in all Jambudipa, being caught in his sweet words, do not return to their own kingdoms, but remain like wild elephants fascinated by the sound of their favourite lute,—this is the character of his eloquence!” When she heard the account of his preeminence she longed to hear him discourse on the law, and she thought in herself, “If I

tell the king that I long to hear him discourse on the law, and ask him to bring him here, he will not bring him to me; what if I were to pretend to be ill and complained of a sick woman's longing?" So she gave a sign to her attendants and took to her bed. When the king did not see her when he paid his visit to her, he asked the attendants where Vimala was. They replied that she was sick, and when he went to see her he sat on the side of her bed and rubbed her body as he repeated a stanza:

"Pale and thin and weak,—your colour and form was not like this before,—O Vimala, answer my question, what is this pain of the body which has come upon you?"

She told him in the following:

"There is an affection in women,—it is called a longing, O king; O monarch of the Nagas, I desire Vidhura's heart brought here without guile."

He replied to her:

"Thou longest for the moon or the sun or the wind; the very sight of Vidhura is hard to get: who will be able to bring him here?"

When she heard his words, she exclaimed, "I shall die if I do not obtain it," so she turned round in her bed and showed her back and covered her face with the end of her robe. The Naga king went to his own chamber and sat on his bed and pondered how bent Vimala was on obtaining Vidhura's heart; "She will die if she does not obtain the flesh of his heart; how can I get it for her?" Now his daughter Irandati, a Naga princess, came in all her beauty and ornaments to pay her respects to her father, and, having saluted him, she stood on one side. She saw that his countenance was troubled, and she said to him, "You are greatly distressed,—what is the reason?"

"O father, why are you full of care, why is your face like a lotus plucked by the hand? Why are you woe-begone, O king? Do not grieve, O conqueror of enemies."

Hearing his daughter's words, the Naga king answered:

"Thy mother, O Irandati, desires Vidhura's heart, the very sight of Vidhura is hard to get,—who will be able to bring him here?"

Then he said to her, "Daughter, there is no one in my court who can bring Vidhura here; do thou give life to thy mother, and seek out some husband who can bring Vidhura."

So he dismissed her with a half-stanza, suggesting improper thoughts to his daughter:

"Seek thou for a husband, who shall bring Vidhura here."

And when she heard her father's words, she went forth in the night and gave free course to her passionate desire."

As she went she gathered all the flowers in the Himalaya which had colour, scent, or taste, and, having adorned the entire mountain like a precious jewel, she spread a couch of flowers upon it, and, having executed a pleasant dance, she sang a sweet song:

“What gandhabba or demon, what Naga, kimpurasa or man, or what sage, able to grant all desires, will be my husband the livelong night?”

Now at that time the nephew of the great king Vessavana, named Punnaka, the Yakkha general, as he was riding on a magic Sindh horse, three leagues in length, and hastening over the red arsenic surface of the Black Mountain to a gathering of the Yakkhas, heard that song of hers, and the voice of the woman which he had heard in his last previous life pierced his skin and nerves and penetrated to his very bones; and, being fascinated by it, he turned back, seated as he was on his Sindh horse, and thus addressed her, comforting her, “O lady, I can bring you Vidhura’s heart by my knowledge, holiness, and calmness,—do not be anxious about it,” and he added this verse:

“Be comforted, I will be thy husband, I will be thy husband, O thou of faultless eyes: verily my knowledge is such, be comforted, you shall be my wife.”

Then Irandati answered, with her thoughts following the old experience of a wooing in a former birth, “Come, let us go to my father, he will explain this matter to thee.”

Adorned, clad in bright raiment, wearing garlands, and anointed with sandal, she seized the Yakkha by the hand and went into her father’s presence.

And Punnaka, having taken her back, went to her father the Naga king and asked for her as his wife:

“O Naga chief, hear my words, receive a fitting present for thy daughter; I ask for Irandati: give her to me as my possession. A hundred elephants, a hundred horses, a hundred mules and chariots, a hundred complete waggons filled with all sorts of gems,—take thou all these, O Naga king, and give me thy daughter Irandati.”

Then the Naga king replied:

“Wait while I consult my kinsmen, my friends, and acquaintances; a business done without consultation leads afterwards to regret.”

Then the Naga king, having entered his palace, spoke these words as he consulted his wife, “This Punnaka the Yakkha asks me for Irandati; shall we give her to him in exchange for much wealth?”

Vimala answered:

“Our Irandati is not to be won by wealth or treasure; if he obtains by his own worth and brings here the sage’s heart, the princess shall be won by that wealth,—we ask no further

treasure."

Then the Naga Varuna went out from his palace, and, consulting with Punnaka, thus addressed him:

"Our Irandati is not to be won by wealth or treasure; if thou obtainest by thine own worth and bringest here the sage's heart, the princess shall be won by that wealth,—we ask no further treasure."

Punnaka replied:

"Him whom some people call a sage, others will call a fool; tell me, for they utter different opinions about the matter, who is he whom thou callest a sage, O Naga?"

The Naga king answered:

"If thou hast heard of Vidhura the minister of the Koravya king Dhananjaya, bring that sage here, and let Irandati be thy lawful wife."

Hearing these words of Varuna, the Yakkha sprang up greatly pleased; just as he was, he said at once to his attendant, "Bring me here my thoroughbred ready harnessed."

With ears of gold and hoofs of ruby, and mail-armour of molten gold. The man brought the Sindh horse thus caparisoned; and Punnaka, having mounted him, went through the sky to Vessavana and told him of the adventure, thus describing the Naga world; this is described as follows:

"Punnaka, having mounted his horse, a charger fit for bearing the gods, himself richly adorned and with his beard and hair trimmed, went through the sky.

Punnaka, greedy with the passion of desire, longing to win the Naga maiden Irandati, having gone to the glorious king, thus addressed Vessavana Kuvera:

"There is the palace Bhogavati called the Golden Home, the capital of the snake kingdom erected in its golden city.

Watch-towers which mimic lips and necks, with rubies and cat's eye jewels, palaces built of marble and rich with gold, and covered with jewels inlaid with gold.

Mangoes, tilaka-trees and rose-apples, sattapannas, mucalindas and ketakas, piyakas, uddalakas and sahas, and sinduvaritas with their wealth of blossom above,

Champacs, Nagamalikas, bhaginimalas, and jujube trees,—all these different trees bending with their boughs, lend their beauty to the Naga palace.

There is a huge date palm made of precious stones with golden blossoms that fade not, and there dwells the Naga king Varuna, endowed with magical powers and born of

supernatural birth.

There dwells his queen Vimala with a body like a golden creeper, tall like a young kala plant, fair to see with her breasts like nimba fruits.

Fair-skinned and painted with lac dye, like a kanikara tree blossoming in a sheltered spot, like a nymph dwelling in the deva world, like lightning flashing from a thick cloud.

Bewildered and full of a strange longing, she desires Vidhura's heart. I will give it to them, O king,—they will give me for it Irandati."

As he dared not go without Vessavana's permission, he repeated these stanzas to inform him about it. But Vessavana did not listen to him, as he was busy settling some dispute about a palace between two sons of the gods. Punnaka, knowing that his words were not listened to, remained near that one of the two disputants who proved victorious in the contest. Vessavana, having decided the dispute, took no thought of the defeated candidate, but said to the other, "Go thou and dwell in thy palace." Directly the words were said "go thou," Punnaka called some sons of the gods as witnesses, saying, "Ye see that I am sent by my uncle," and at once ordered his steed to be brought and mounted it and set out.

The Teacher thus described what took place:

"Punnaka, having bidden farewell to Vessavana Kuvera the glorious lord of beings, thus gave his command to his servant standing there, "Bring hither my thoroughbred harnessed." With ears of gold, hoofs of ruby, and mail-armour of molten gold. Punnaka, having mounted the god-bearing steed, well-adorned and with his beard and hair well-trimmed, went through space in the sky."

As he went through the air he pondered, "Vidhura-pandita has a great retinue and he cannot be taken by force, but Dhananjaya Koravya is renowned for his skill in gambling. I will conquer him in play and so seize Vidhura-pandita. Now there are many jewels in his house: he will not play for any poor sum; I shall have to bring a jewel of great value, the king will not accept a common jewel. Now there is a precious jewel of price belonging to the universal monarch, in the Vepulla Mountain near the city Rajagaha; I will take that and entice the king to play and so conquer him." He did so.

The Teacher declared the whole story:

"He went to pleasant Rajagaha, the far-off city of Anga, rich in provisions and abounding with food and drink. Like Masakkasara, Indra's capital, filled with the notes of peacocks and herons, resonant, full of beautiful courts, and with every kind of bird like the mountain Himavat covered with flowers. So Punnaka climbed Mount Vepulla, with its heaps of rocks inhabited by kimpurisas, seeking for the glorious jewel, and at last he saw it in the middle of the mountain.

When he saw the glorious precious gem thus flashing light, gleaming so splendidly with its beauty, shining like lightning in the sky,—he at once seized the precious lapis lazuli, the jewel of priceless value, and mounted on his peerless steed, himself of noble beauty, he rushed through space in the sky.

He went to the city Indapatta, and he alighted in the court of the Kurus; the fearless Yakkha summoned the hundred warriors who were gathered there.

“Who wishes to conquer from us the prize of kings? or whom shall we conquer in the contest of worth? what peerless jewel shall we win? or who shall win our best of treasures?”

Thus in four lines he praised Koravya. Then the king thought to himself, “I have never before seen a hero like this who uttered such words; who can it be?” and he asked him in this stanza:

“In what kingdom is thy birthplace? these are not the words of a Koravya: thou surpassest us all in thy form and appearance; tell me thy name and kindred.”

The other reflected, “This king asks my name: now it is the servant Punnaka; but if I tell him that I am Punnaka, he will say, “He is a servant, why does he speak to me so audaciously?” and he will despise me; I will tell him my name in my last past birth.” So he uttered a stanza:

“I am a youth named Kaccayana, O king; they call me one of no mean name; my kindred and friends are in Anga; I have come here for the sake of play.”

Then the king asked him, “What wilt thou give if thou art conquered in play? what hast thou got?” and he uttered this stanza:

“What jewels has the youth, which the gamester who conquers him may win? A king has many jewels,—how canst thou, a poor man, challenge them?”

Then Punnaka answered:

“This is a fascinating jewel of mine, it is a glorious jewel which brings wealth; and the gamester who conquers me shall win this peerless steed which plagues all enemies.”

When the king heard him, he replied

“What will one jewel do, O youth? and what will one thoroughbred avail? Many precious jewels belong to a king, and many peerless steeds swift like the wind

Iii.

When he heard the king’s speech, he said, “O king, why dost thou say this? there is one horse, and there are also a thousand and a hundred thousand horses; there is one jewel,

and there are also a thousand jewels; but all the horses put together are not equal to this one, see what its swiftness is." So saying, he mounted the horse and galloped it along the top of a wall, and the city wall seven leagues in length was as it were surrounded by horses striking neck against neck, and then in course of time neither horse nor Yakkha could be distinguished, and a single strip of red cloth tied on his belly seemed to be spread out all round the wall. Then he alighted from the horse, and, telling him that he had now seen the steed's swiftness, he bade him next mark something new: and lo he made the horse gallop within the city garden on the surface of the water, and he leapt without wetting his hoofs; then he made him walk on the leaves of the lotus beds, and when he clapped his hand and stretched out his arm the horse came and stood upon the palm of his hand. Then he said, "This is indeed a jewel of a horse, O king." "It is indeed, O youth." "Well, let the jewel of a horse be put on one side for a while,—see now the power of the precious jewel."

"O greatest of men, behold this peerless jewel of mine; in it are the bodies of women and the bodies of men; the bodies of beasts are in it and the bodies of birds, the Naga kings and Supannas,—all are created in this jewel.

"An elephant host, a chariot host, horses, foot-soldiers, and banners,—behold this complete army created in the jewel; elephant-riders, the king's body-guard, warriors fighting from chariots, warriors fighting on foot, and troops in battle array,—behold all created in this jewel.

"Behold created in this jewel a city furnished with solid foundations and with many gateways and walls, and with many pleasant spots where four roads meet. Pillars and trenches, bars and bolts, watch-towers and gates,—behold all created in the jewel.

"See various troops of birds in the roads under the gateways, geese, herons, peacocks, ruddy geese and ospreys; cuckoos, spotted birds, peacocks, jivajivakas,—birds of every sort behold gathered together and created in the jewel.

"See a marvellous city with grand walls, making the hair stand erect with wonder, pleasant with banners upraised, and with its sands all of gold,—see the hermitages divided regularly in blocks, and the different houses and their yards, with streets and blind lanes between.

"Behold the drinking shops and taverns, the slaughter-houses and cooks' shops, and the harlots and wantons, created in the jewel. The garland-weavers, the washermen, the astrologers, the cloth merchants, the gold workers, the jewellers—behold created in the jewel.

"See drums and tabours, conchs, tambours and tambourines and all kinds of cymbals, created in the jewel.

"Cymbals, and lutes, dance and song well executed, musical instruments and gongs, behold created in the jewel.

“Jumpers and wrestlers too are here, and a sight of jugglers, and royal bards and barbers, behold created in the jewel.

“Crowds are gathered here of men and women, see the seats tiers beyond tiers created in the jewel.

“See the wrestlers in the crowd striking their doubled arms, see the strikers and the stricken, created in the jewel.

“See on the slopes of the mountains troops of various deer, lions, tigers, boars, bears, wolves, and hyenas; rhinoceroses, gayals, buffaloes, red deer, rurus, antelopes, wild boars, nimkas and hogs, spotted kadali-deer, cats, rabbits, all kinds of hosts of beasts, created in the jewel.

“Rivers well-situated, paved with golden sand, clear with flowing waters and filled with quantities of fishes; crocodiles, sea-monsters are here and porpoises and tortoises, pathinas, pavusas, valajas, and munjarohitas.

“Behold created in the jewel all kinds of trees, filled with various birds, and a forest with its branches made of lapis lazuli.

“See too lakes well-distributed in the four quarters, filled with quantities of birds and abounding with fish with broad scales. See the earth surrounded by the sea, abounding with water everywhere, and diversified with trees,—all created in the jewel.

“See the Videhas in front, the Goyaniyas behind, the Kurus and Jambudipa all created in the jewel.

“See the sun and the moon, shining on the four sides, as they go round Mount Sineru,—created in the jewel.

“See Sineru and Himavat and the miraculous sea and the four guardians of the world,—created in the jewel.

“See parks and forests, crags and mountains, pleasant to look at and full of strange monsters,—all created in the jewel.

“Indra’s gardens Pharusaka, Cittalata, Missaka, and Nandana, and his palace Vejayanta,—behold all created in the jewel.

“Indra’s palace Sudhamma, the heaven of the Thirty-three, the heavenly tree Paricchatta in full flower, and Indra’s elephant Eravana,—behold created in the jewel. See here the maidens of the gods risen like lightning in the air, wandering about in the Nandana,—all created in the jewel.

“See the heavenly maidens bewitching the sons of heaven, and the sons of heaven wandering about, all created in the jewel,

“Behold more than a thousand palaces covered with lapis lazuli, all created with brilliant colours in the jewel. And the beings of the Tavatimsa heaven and the Yama heaven and the Tusita heaven, and those of the Paranimmita heaven all created in the jewel. See here pure lakes with transparent water covered with heavenly coral trees and lotuses and water-lilies.

“In this jewel are ten white lines and ten beautiful lines dark blue; twenty-one brown, and fourteen yellow. Twenty golden lines, twenty silver, and thirty appear of a red colour. Sixteen are black, twenty-five are of the colour of madder,—these are mixed with bandhuka flowers and variegated with blue lotuses.

“O king, best of men, look at this bright flame-like jewel, perfect in all its parts,—this is the destined prize for him who wins.”

Iv.

Punnaka, having thus spoken, went on to say, “O great king, if I am overcome by thee in play I will give thee this precious jewel, but what wilt thou give me?” “Except my body and white umbrella let all that I have be the prize.” “Then my lord, do not delay—I have come from a far distance—let the gaming room be got ready.” So the king gave orders to his ministers and they quickly got the hall ready and prepared a carpet of the finest fibre-cloth for the king and seats for the other kings, and having appointed a suitable seat for Punnaka, they told the king that the time was come. Then Punnaka addressed the king in a verse:

“O king, proceed to the appointed goal,—thou hast not such a jewel: let us conquer by fair dealing, and by the absence of violence, and when thou art conquered pay down thy stake.”

Then the king replied, “O youth, do not be afraid of me as the king, our several victory or defeat shall be by fair dealing and by the absence of violence.” Then Punnaka uttered a verse as calling the other kings to witness that the victory was to be gained by fair dealing only:

“O lofty Pancala and Surasena, O Macchas, and Maddas, with the Kekakas, —let them all see that the contest is without treachery, no one is to interfere in our assembly.”

Then the king attended by a hundred kings took Punnaka and went into the gaming hall, and they all sat down on suitable seats, and placed the golden dice on the silver board. Then Punnaka said quickly, “O king, there are twenty-four throws in playing with dice, they are called malika, savata, bahula, santi, bhadra, etc.; choose thou whichever pleases thee.” The king assented and chose the bahula, Punnaka chose that called savata. Then the king said, “O youth, do thou play the dice first.” “O king, the first throw does not fall to me, do

thou play." The king consented. Now his mother in his last existence but one before this was his guardian deity and by her power the king wins in play. She was standing close by, and the king remembering the goddess sang the song of play and turned the dice in his hand and threw them up into the air. By Punnaka's power the dice fall so as to conquer the king. The king by his skill in play recognised that the dice were falling against him and seizing them and mixing them together in the air he threw them again in the air but he detected that they were again falling against him and seized them as they were. Then Punnaka thought to himself, "This king, though he is playing with a Yakkha like me, mixes the dice as they fall and so takes them up, what can be the reason of this?" Then, having recognised the power of the guardian goddess, he opened his eyes wide as if he were angry and looked at her and she being frightened fled and took refuge trembling in the top of the Cakkavala mountain. The king, when he threw the dice a third time, although he knew that they would fall against him could not put out his hand and seize them in consequence of Punnaka's power and they fell against the king. Then Punnaka threw the dice and they fell favourable to him. Then knowing that he had won he clapped his hands with a loud noise, saying three times, "I have won, I have won," and that sound thrilled through all Jambudipa. The Teacher described the event as follows:

"The king of the Kurus and the Yakkha Punnaka entered wild with the intoxication of play; the king played the losing throw and the Yakkha Punnaka the winning throw. They two met there in contest in the presence of the kings and amidst the witnesses,—the Yakkha conquered the mightiest of men and loud was the tumult which arose there."

The king was displeased at being conquered, and Punnaka repeated a verse to comfort him:

"Victory and defeat belong to one or another of the contending parties, O king; O king, thou hast lost the great prize; being worsted, pay down the price forthwith."

Then he bade him take it in the following verse:

"Elephants, oxen, horses, jewels and earrings, whatever gems I have in the earth, take the best of wealth, O Kaccana,—take it and go where thou wishest."

Punnaka answered:

"Elephants, oxen, horses, jewels and earrings, whatever gems thou hast in the earth, Vidhura the minister is the best of them all, he has been won by me, pay him down to me."

The king said:

"He is my minister, my refuge and help, my shelter, my fortress and my defence,—that minister of mine is not to be weighed against wealth, that minister of mine is like my life."

Punnaka answered:

“There would be a long contest between thee and me, let us go to him and ask him what he wishes, let him decide this matter between us, let then what he determines be the judgment of us both.”

The king replied:

“Verily thou speakest truth; O youth, thou utterest no injustice, let us go at once and ask him: in this way we shall both be satisfied.”

So saying the king took the hundred kings and Punnaka went gladly in haste to the court of justice; and the sage rose from his seat and saluted the king and sat on one side. Then Punnaka addressed the Great Being and said, “O wise man, thou art firm in justice, thou wilt not utter a falsehood, even for the sake of life; such is the echo of thy fame which has spread through the whole world. I shall know to-day whether thou art really firm in justice,” and so saying he uttered a verse:

“Have the gods truly set thee among the Kurus as the councillor Vidhura firm in justice? Art thou the slave or the kinsman of the king? What is thy value in the world, Vidhura?”

Then the Great Being thought to himself, “This man asks this question of me; but I cannot tell him whether I am a kinsman of the king or whether I am superior to the king or whether I am nothing to the king. In this world there is no protection like the truth; one must speak the truth.” So he uttered two verses to show that he was no kinsman to the king nor his superior, but only one of his four slaves:

“Some are slaves from their mothers, others are slaves bought for money, some come of their own will as slaves, others are slaves driven by fear. These are the four sorts of slaves among men. I verily am a slave from my birth: my weal and my woe come from the king, I am the king’s slave even if I go to another,—he may give me by right to thee, O young man.”

Punnaka, on hearing this, being excessively pleased, clapped his hands and said:

“This is my second victory to-day, thy minister when asked has answered thy question; verily the best of kings is unjust; it has been well decided, but thou dost not give it to me.”

Hearing this the king was angry with the Great Being and said, “Not regarding one who can confer honour like me thou regardest this young man who catches thine eye”; then turning to Punnaka, and saying, “If he is a slave take him and go,” he uttered the following stanza:

“If he has thus answered our question, saying, “I am a slave and not a kinsman,” then take, O Kaccana, this best of treasures, take it and go whither thou wilt.”

But when the king had thus spoken, he reflected, “The young man will take the sage and go where he pleases, and after he is once gone I shall find it hard to get any sweet

converse about holy things; what if I were to set him in his proper place and ask him some question in reference to a householder's life?" So he said to him, "O sage, after thou art gone I shall find it hard to get any sweet converse about holy things; wilt thou sit down in a well-decorated pulpit and taking thy proper position expound to me a question relating to the householder's life?" He assented, and having sat down in a well-decorated pulpit he expounded the question which the king asked; and this was the question:

"O Vidhura, how shall there be a prosperous life to him who lives as a householder in his own house? how shall there be for him kind favour among his own people? how shall he be free from suffering? and how shall the young man who speaks truth escape all sorrow when he reaches the next world?" Then Vidhura, full of wisdom and insight, he who sees the real aim and presses steadily onward, he who knows all doctrines, uttered these words:

"Let him not have a wife in common with another; let him not eat a dainty meal alone; let him not deal in vain conversation, for this increases not wisdom. Virtuous, faithful to his duties, not careless, quick to discern, humble-minded, not hard-hearted, compassionate, affectionate, gentle, skilled in winning friends, ready to distribute, prudent in arranging in accordance with the season,—let him continually satisfy the monks and Brahmins with food and drink. Let him long for righteousness and be a pillar of the sacred text, ever ready to ask questions and let him reverentially attend to the virtuous learned. Thus shall there be a prosperous life to one who lives as a householder in his own house, thus shall there be for him kind favour among his own people; thus shall he be free from suffering; and thus the youth who speaks truth shall escape all sorrow when he reaches the next world."

The Great Being, having thus expounded the question relating to the householder's life, came down from his seat and made his salutation to the king. The king also, having paid him great respect, went away to his own abode, surrounded by the hundred kings.

When the Great Being returned, Punnaka said to him:

"Come, I will now depart,—you were given to me by the king; attend only to this duty—this is the ancient law."

The sage Vidhura replied:

"I know it, O youth; I was won by thee; I was given by the king to thee; let me lodge thee for three days in my home while I exhort my sons."

When Punnaka heard this, he thought within himself, "The sage has spoken the truth; this will be a great benefit to me; if he had asked leave to lodge me there for seven days or even for a fortnight, I ought at once to have assented "; so he answered:

"Let that advantage be for me too, let us dwell there three days; do, Sir, whatever needs to be done in thy home; instruct to-day thy sons and thy wife, that they may be happy after thou art gone."

So saying, Punnaka went with the Great Being to his home.

The Teacher thus described the incident:

“Gladly assenting and eagerly longing, the Yakkha went with Vidhura; and the best of the holy ones introduced him into his home, attended by elephants and thoroughbred steeds.”

Now the Great Being had three palaces for the three seasons,—one of them was called Konca, another Mayura, and the third Piyaketa; this verse was uttered about them:

“He went there to Konca, Mayura, and Piyaketa, each of most pleasant aspect, furnished with abundance of food and plenty to eat and to drink, like Indra’s own palace Masakkasara.”

After his arrival, he had a sleeping-chamber, and a raised platform in the seventh story of the decorated palace, and having had a royal couch spread and every kind of dainty to eat and drink set out, he presented to him five hundred women like daughters of the gods, saying, “Let these be your attendants, stay here without a care,” and then went to his own abode. When he was gone, these women took their different musical instruments end performed all kinds of dances as they attended on Punnaka.

The Teacher has thus described it:

“These women adorned like nymphs among the gods dance and sing and address him, each better in her turn.

The guardian of the law, having given him food and drink and fair women, next, thinking only of his highest good, brought him into the presence of his wife.

Then he said to his wife, who was adorned with sandal and liquid perfumes and stood like an ornament of purest gold, “Come, listen, lady; call thy sons here, O fair one with eyes of the hue of copper.”

Anujja, hearing her husband’s words, spoke to her daughter-in-law, fair-eyed and with nails like copper, “O Ceta, who wearest thy bracelets as an armour, and art like a blue water-lily, go, call my sons hither.”

Having uttered her assent and traversed the whole length of the palace she assembled all the friends as well as the sons and daughters, saying, “Your father wishes to give you an exhortation, this will be your last sight of him.” When the young prince Dhammapala-kumara heard this he began to weep, and went before his father surrounded by his younger brothers. When the father saw them, unable to maintain his tranquillity, he embraced them with eyes full of tears, and kissed their heads and pressed his eldest son for a moment to his heart. Then, raising him up from his bosom and going out of the royal chamber, he sat down in the middle of the couch on the raised platform and delivered his address to his thousand sons.

The Teacher has thus described it:

“The guardian of the law, without trembling, kissed his sons on their foreheads when they drew near, and having addressed them uttered these words, “I have been given by the king to this young man. I am subject to him, but to-day I was free to seek my own pleasure, he will now take me and go whither he will, and I am come to admonish you, for how could I go if I had not given you salvation? If Janasandha, the king who dwells in Kurukhetta, should very earnestly ask you, “What do you reckon as having been ancient even in ancient time? what, did your father teach first and foremost?” and if he were then to say, “Ye are all of an equal position with me,—which of you here is not more than a king? do you make a respectful salutation and reply to him, “Say not so, O monarch, this is not the law; how shall the baseborn jackal be of equal position with the royal tiger?”

Having heard this discourse of his the sons and daughters and all the kinsmen, friends, servants, and common folk were unable to maintain their tranquillity and uttered a loud cry; and the Great Being consoled them.

V.

Then having come to all those kinsmen and seeing that they were silent, he said, “Children, do not grieve, all material things are impermanent, honour ends in misfortune; nevertheless I will tell you of a means of obtaining honour, namely, a king’s court; listen to it with your minds earnestly intent.” Then through the Buddha’s magic power he made them enter into a royal court.

The Teacher thus described it:

“Then Vidhura thus addressed his friends and his enemies, his kindred, and his intimates, with his mind and will detached from all things, “Come, dear ones, sit down and listen to me as I tell of a royal dwelling, how a man who enters a king’s court may attain to honour. When he enters a king’s court he does not win honour while he is unknown, nor does one ever win it who is a coward, nor the foolish man, nor the thoughtless. When the king finds out his moral qualities, his wisdom and his purity of heart, then he learns to trust him and hides not his secrets from him.

When he is asked to carry out some business, like a well-fixed balance, with a level beam, and evenly poised, he must not hesitate; if like the balance, he is ready to undertake every burden, he may dwell in a king’s court.

Whether by day or by night, the wiser man should riot hesitate when set upon the king’s business; such an one may dwell in a king’s court. The wise man who, when set upon the king’s business, whether by day or by night, undertakes every commission,—he is the one who may dwell in a king’s court.

He who sees a path made for the king and carefully put in order for him, and refrains from entering himself therein, though advised to do so,—he is the one who may dwell in a king’s

court. Let him on no account ever enjoy the same pleasures as the king, let him follow behind in everything,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him not put on a garment like the king's nor garlands nor ointment like his; let him not wear similar ornaments or practise a tone of voice like his; let him always wear a different attire,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. If the king sports with his ministers or surrounded by his wives, let not the minister make any allusion to the royal ladies. He who is not lifted up, nor fickle, who is prudent and keeps his senses under control, he who is possessed of insight and resolution,—such an one may dwell in a king's court.

Let him not sport with the king's wives nor talk with them privately; let him not take money from his treasury,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him not think too much of sleep, nor drink strong drink to excess, nor kill the deer in the king's forest,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him not seat himself on the king's chair or couch or seat or elephant or chariot; as thinking himself a privileged person,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him prudently keep not too far from the king nor yet too near to him, and let him stand ready before him, telling something for his lord to hear. The king does not count as a common person, the king must not be paired with anyone else; kings are easily vexed, as the eye is hurt if touched by a barley-awn. Let not the wise man, thinking himself to be held in honour, ever venture to speak roughly to the suspicious king. If he gets his opportunity, let him take it; but let him not trust in kings; let him be on his guard as in the case of fire,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. If the ruler favours his son or his brother with a gift of some villages or towns or some people in his kingdom as clients, let him quietly wait in silence, nor speak of him as prudent or faulty.

If the king increases the pay of his elephant-driver or his life-guardsman, his chariot-soldier or his foot-soldier, through hearing some story of their exploits, let him not interfere to hinder it,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. The wise man will keep his belly small like the bow, but he will bend easily like the bamboo; let him not go contrary to the king, so he may dwell in a king's court. Let him keep his belly small like the bow, and let him have no tongue like the fish; let him be moderate in eating, brave and prudent; such an one may dwell in a king's court.

Let him not visit a woman too often, fearing the loss of his strength; the foolish man is a victim to cough, asthma, bodily pain and childishness. Let him not laugh too much, nor keep always silent; he should utter, when the due season comes, a concise and measured speech. Not given to anger, not ready to take offence, truthful, gentle, no slanderer, let him not speak foolish words,—such an one may dwell in a king's court.

Trained, educated, self-controlled, experienced in business, temperate, gentle, careful, pure, skilful,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Humble in behaviour towards the old, ready to obey, and full of respect, compassionate, and pleasant to live with,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him keep at a distance from a spy sent by a foreign king to intermeddle; let him look to his own lord alone, and own no other king.

Let him pay respect to monks and Brahmins who are virtuous and learned; let him carefully wait on them; such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him satisfy virtuous and

learned monks and Brahmins with food and drink,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him draw near and devotedly attend on virtuous and learned monks and Brahmins,—desiring thereby his own real good.

Let him not seek to deprive monks or Brahmins of any gift previously bestowed on them, and let him in no way hinder mendicants at a time of distributing alms. One who is righteous, endowed with wisdom, and skilled in all business arrangements, and well-versed in times and seasons,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. One who is energetic in business, careful and skilful, and able to conduct his affairs successfully,—such an one may dwell in a king's court.

Visiting repeatedly the threshingfloor, the house, the cattle and the field, he should have the corn carefully measured and stored in his granaries, and he should have it carefully measured for cooking in his home. (Let him not employ or promote) a son or a brother who is not stedfast in virtue; such children are no true members of one's own body, they are to be counted as if they were dead; let him cause clothing and food for sustenance to be given to them and let them sit while they take it. Let him employ in offices of authority servants and agents who are established in virtue and are skilful in business and can rise to an emergency.

One who is virtuous and free from greed and devoted to his king, never absent from him and seeking his interest,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. Let him know the king's wish, and hold fast to his thoughts, and let his action be never contrary to him,—such an one may dwell in a king's court. He will rub him with perfumes and bathe him, he will bend his head low when washing his feet; when smitten he will not be angry; such an one may dwell in a king's court.

He will make his salutation to a jar full of water, or offer his reverential greeting to a crow, yea, he will give to all petitioners and be ever prudent and preeminent,—he will give away his bed, his garment, his carriage, his house, his home, and shower down blessings like a cloud on all beings. This, Sirs, is the way to dwell in a king's court, this is how a man is to behave himself and so to conciliate the king's favour, and to obtain honour from his rulers."

Vi.

Three days went by as he thus discoursed to his sons, wives, friends and others. Then, knowing that the time was accomplished, early in the morning, after having eaten his meal of various dainties, he said, "I will take my leave of the king and depart with the young man"; so he went to the king's palace surrounded by a company of kinsmen and saluted the king and stood on one side, and uttered his words of wise practical counsel.

The Teacher has thus described it:

"Having thus counselled the company of his kindred, the wise one, surrounded by his friends, went up to the king. Having saluted his feet with his head and made a reverential

homage, Vidhura with his hands clasped thus addressed the king, “This youth, wishing to employ me according to his will, is leading me away; I will speak for the sake of my kindred,—hear what I say, O enemy-conqueror. Wilt thou be pleased to look to my sons and whatever property I may have besides in my house, so that when I am gone my company of kinsmen may not hereafter perish? As when the earth trembles that which is upon it likewise trembles, and as when the earth is firm it all remains firm, so I see that my kindred fall in my fall; this I perceive was my error.”

When the king heard this, he said, “O sage, thy going pleases me not; do not go; I will send for the young man on some pretext, then we will kill him and hush it up”; and in illustration of this he repeated a stanza:

“Thou canst not go, this is my resolve; having smitten and slain this Katiya fellow, do thou dwell here,—this is what seems best to me; do not go hence, O thou possessed of such vast wisdom.”

When the Great Being heard this he exclaimed, “Such an intention is not worthy of thee,” and then he added,

“Do not set thy mind on unrighteousness, be thou devoted to temporal and spiritual good; shame on an action which is ignoble and sinful, which when a man has done, he goes afterwards to hell.

This is not righteousness, this is not what ought to be done; a king, O lord of men, is the supreme authority of a poor slave, which sets him to kill or to burn or kills by its own act; I have no wrath against him and I depart.”

So saying the Great Being respectfully saluted the king and exhorted the king’s wives and his officers; and then went out from the palace while they, unable to retain their fortitude, burst out into a bitter cry; and all the inhabitants of the city exclaimed, “The sage is going with the young man, come, we will see him as he goes,” and they gazed upon him in the king’s court. Then they too said to one another, “Sorrow not for it, all material things are transitory, be zealous in almsgiving and other good works,” and then they returned and went each to his own house.

The Teacher has thus described it:

“Having embraced his eldest son and controlled the anguish in his heart, with eyes filled with tears he entered the palace.”

Now in the palace there were a thousand sons, a thousand daughters, a thousand wives, and seven hundred courtezans, and with these and the other servants and attendants and relations and friends lying prostrate everywhere the palace appeared like a sal grove with its trees strewed about by the fury of the great wind which heralds the end of the world.

The Teacher has thus described it:

“The sons and wives of Vidhura lie prostrate in the palace like sal-trees shaken and shattered by the wind.

A thousand wives, and seven hundred female slaves wailed stretching out their arms, in the palace of Vidhura. The ladies of the harem and the princes, the Vesiyas and Brahmins wailed stretching out their arms in the palace of Vidhura. Elephant-drivers, the soldiers of the body-guard, chariot-riders and foot-soldiers wailed stretching out their arms in the palace of Vidhura. The people of the country and the towns collected together wailed stretching out their arms in the palace of Vidhura.”

The Great Being, having comforted the vast assembly and performed all that remained to be done and exhorted the ladies of the harem and pointed out all that needed to be told, went to Punnaka and announced to him that he had done everything that was to be done.

The Teacher has thus described it:

“Having done all that was to be done within the house and having instructed all the people, his friends and counsellors and companions, his wives, sons and relations, and having arranged the outside work which demanded attention and informed them of the stores in the house, the treasure and the debts that were to be paid, he thus spoke to Punnaka, Thou hast dwelt three days in my house, I have done all that needed to be done in my home, I have instructed my sons and my wives, let us now act according to thy will, O Kaccana.”

Punnaka replied:

“If, O thou who attest of thine own will, thou hast instructed thy sons, thy wives, and thy dependents, then alas! thou standest here as one about to cross: this is a long journey before thee. Take hold, without fear, of the tail of thy noble steed, this is thy last sight of the world of the living.”

Then the Great Being said to him:

“Of whom shall I be afraid, when I have done no evil to him by body, speech or thought, whereby I could come to misfortune?”

So the Great Being, uttering a loud shout, fearless like an undismayed lion, said, “This is my robe—put it not off without my permission”; and then, guided by his own perfect resolution, and having girt his robes tightly, he disentangled the horse’s tail and seizing it firmly with both hands, he pressed the horse’s thighs with his two feet and said to him, “I have seized the tail, proceed, O youth, as thou wilt.” At that moment Punnaka gave a signal to the horse who was endowed with reason, and he forthwith bounded into the sky, carrying the seer.

The Teacher has thus described it:

“The prince of horses bearing Vidhura went up into the sky and soon reached the Black Mountain without coming in contact with the boughs of trees or the rocks.”

While Punnaka thus went off carrying the Great Being with him, the seer’s sons and the other spectators went to Punnaka’s dwelling; but when they found not the Great Being, they lamented with loud and repeated cries, falling down as if their feet had been cut off.

When they thus had seen and heard the Great Being, as he went up without any cause into the sky, and had thus uttered their lamentations, they all went wailing to the king’s gate, accompanied by all the citizens. The king, hearing the loud sound of lamentation, opened his window and asked why they lamented. They replied, “O sire, that was no Brahmin youth, but a Yakkha who has come in the guise of a Brahmin and carried off the seer; without him there is no life for us; if he does not return on the seventh day from this, we will collect timber in hundreds, yea, thousands of carts and will all enter the fire.”

When the king heard their words, he replied, “The sage with his honied speech will soon beguile the youth by his religious discourse and will make him fall down at his feet, and will ere long come back and bring smiles to your tearful faces,—sorrow not”; and he repeated a stanza:

“The seer is wise, and learned, and skilful; he will soon set himself free; fear not, he will come back.”

Meantime Punnaka, after he had set the Great Being on the top of the Black Mountain, thought to himself, “As long as this man lives there is no chance of prosperity for me; I will kill him, and take his heart’s flesh and I will then go to the Naga world and give it to Vimala, and having thus obtained his daughter Irandati I shall rise to the world of the gods.”

The Teacher has thus described it:

“When he had gone there he thought to himself, “Rational beings exist in various gradations; I have no possible use for his life,—I will kill him and take his heart.”

Then again he thought, “What if without killing him by my own hand I were to cause him to perish by shewing him some frightful shape?” So having assumed the form of a frightful demon, he went up to him and threw him down, and seizing him in his mouth made as if he were about to devour him; but not a hair of the Great being stood on end. Then he came up in the shape of a lion and of a furious elephant, he threatened to attack him with teeth and tusks; and when the other still shewed no fear, he assumed the appearance of a great serpent as big as a great trough-shaped canoe, and coming up to him hissing and coiling his body round him it covered his head with its hood, but the other shewed no signs of alarm. Then he said, “As he stands on the top of a mountain and falls down, I will shatter him into fragments by the fall,”—so he raised up a mighty wind; but it stirred not the end of one of his hairs. Then he set him on the top of a mountain and himself standing in the form of an elephant, he made it shake to and fro like a wild date palm tree, but even then he could not stir one hair of his head from its place. Then he said, “I will make his heart

burst by terror at some frightful sound"; so he entered the inside of the mountain, and uttering a tremendous roar filled heaven and earth with one mighty sound; but still the Great Being shewed no alarm; for he knew that he who had thus come in the form of a Yakkha and a lion and an elephant and a Naga, and had shaken the mountain with the wind and rain, and had entered into the mountain and uttered the great roar, was still only a man and nothing else. Then the Yakkha thought to himself, "I shall not be able to kill him by external attacks, I shall only destroy him by my own hand." So he set the Great Being on the top of a mountain and himself going to the mountain's foot rose up from the centre of the mountain as though he were inserting a white thread into a perforated gem, and with a roar he seized the Great Being violently and whirled him round, and flung him head downwards into the sky where there was nothing that he could lay hold of. It has thus been described:

"Having gone thither and entered within the mountain Katiyana of evil mind held him with his head downwards in the open expanse of the world. While he hung there as on the precipice of hell frightful to see and most difficult to traverse, he the best of all the Kurus in action thus addressed Punnaka undismayed: "Thou art base in thy nature, though thou assumest for a time a noble form, utterly licentious though wearing the guise of one restrained, thou art doing a cruel and monstrous deed,—there is nothing good in thy nature. What is thy reason for killing me, when thou wishest to see me thrown down this precipice? Thy appearance bespeaks thee as something superhuman, tell me what kind of a god thou art."

Punnaka answered:

"Thou hast heard perchance of the Yakkha Punnaka,—he is the minister of King Kuvera. There is an earth-ruling Naga called Varuna, mighty, pure, and endowed with beauty and strength; I desire his younger sister, the Naga maiden named Irandati; for the love of that fair damsel I have set my mind on killing thee, O sage."

The Great Being reflected, "This world is ruined by a thing being misunderstood, why should a wooer of a Naga maiden want my death? I will learn the whole truth of the matter," so he uttered a stanza:

"Be not deceived, O Yakkha; many people are destroyed by a thing being misunderstood; what has thy love for that fair maiden to do with my death? Come, let us hear the whole."

Then Punnaka said to him, "In my love for the daughter of that mighty Naga I consulted her kinsfolk, and when I sought her hand my father-in-law told me that they knew that I was moved by an honourable passion. "We will give thee the damsel endowed with beautiful body and eyes, fair-smiling and with her limbs perfumed with sandal wood, if thou bringest to me the sage's heart won in fair fight; the maiden is to be won by this prize, we ask no other gift besides. Thus I am not deceived,—listen, O thou doer of right actions; there is nothing misunderstood by me; the Nagas will give me the Naga maiden Irandati for thy heart won in fair fight. It is for this that I am set on killing thee, it is in this way that I have need of thy death. If I threw thee hence down into hell I would kill thee and take thy

heart."

When the Great Being heard this he reflected, "Vimala has no need of my heart. Varuna, after he had heard the discourse on the law and honoured me with his jewel must have gone home and described my power in discoursing concerning the law, and Vimala must have felt a great longing to hear my words. Punnaka must have been ordered by Varuna through a misconception, and he influenced by this his own misconception has brought about all this calamity. Now my character as a sage consists in my power to bring to light and to discover absolute truths. If Punnaka kills me, what good will it do? Come, I will say to him, Young man, I know the law as followed by good men; before I die, set me on the top of the mountain and hear the law of good men from me; and afterwards do what thou wilt"; and after having declared to him the law of good men I will let him take my life." So he uttered this stanza as he hung with his head downwards:

"Hold me up forthwith, O Katiyana, if thou needest my heart; I will declare to thee this day all the laws of the good man."

Then Punnaka reflected, "This law will never have been declared before to gods or men; I will forthwith hold him up and hear the law of good men"; so he lifted the Great Being up and set him on the summit of the mountain.

The Teacher has thus described it:

"Punnaka, having quickly placed the best of the performers of good actions among the Kurus upon the mountain's summit, asked the Teacher of lofty wisdom, as he sat looking at a pipul tree, "I have brought thee up from the precipice, I have need of thy heart this day,—tell me then to-day all the laws of the good man."

The Great Being said:

"I am saved by thee from the precipice; if thou needest my heart, I will declare to thee this day all the laws of the good man."

Then the Great Being said, "My body is dirty, I will bathe." The Yakkha consented, so he brought some water, and when he was bathing, he gave the Great Being some heavenly cloth and perfumes, etc., and after he was adorned and drest he gave him some heavenly food. When he had eaten, the Great Being caused the top of the Black Mountain to be covered with adornment, and prepared a richly decorated seat, and being seated thereon uttered a stanza, describing in it the duty of the good man with a Buddha's triumphant mastery:

"O youth, follow thou the path already traversed; put away from thee the soiled hand be not ever treacherous to thy friends, nor fall into the power of unchaste women."

The Yakkha, being unable to comprehend these four rules expressed so concisely, asked in detail:

“How does one follow the path already traversed? How does one burn the wet hand? Who is the unchaste woman? Who is treacherous to his friend? Tell me the meaning at my request.”

The Great Being replied:

“Let a man follow his actions, who invites him even to a seat, when he comes as a stranger and never seen before; him the wise call one who follows in the path already traversed.

In whosesoever house a man dwells even for one night, and receives there food and drink, let him not conceive an evil thought against him in his mind; he who is treacherous to his friend burns the innocent hand. Let not a man break a bough of that tree under whose shadow he sits or lies,—the wretch is treacherous to his friend. Let a man give this earth filled with riches to the woman whom he has chosen, yet she will despise him if she gets the opportunity; let him not fall into the power of unchaste women. Thus does a man follow the path already traversed; thus does he burn the wet hand; this is the unchaste woman; this is one that is treacherous to his friend; such a man is righteous, abandon thou unrighteousness.”

Thus did the Great Being declare to the Yakkha with a Buddha’s triumphant mastery the four duties of a good man, and when he heard them Punnaka reflected, “In these four propositions the sage is only asking his own life; for he verily welcomed me though I was before unknown; I dwelt in his house three days, receiving great honour from him; I, doing him this wrong, do it for a woman’s sake; I am moreover in every way treacherous to my friends; if I shall do injury to the sage, I shall not follow the duty of a good man; what need have I of the Naga maiden? I will carry him forthwith to Indapatta and gladden the weeping faces of its inhabitants and I will seat him in the convocation hall there.” Then he spoke aloud:

“I dwelt three days in thy house, I was served with food and drink, thou wast my friend, I will let thee go, O seer of excellent wisdom, thou shalt depart at thy will to thine own home. Yea, let all that concerns the Naga race perish, I have had enough of the Naga maiden; by thine own well-spoken words thou art set free, O seer, from my threatened blow to-day.”

The Great Being replied, “O youth, send me not away to my own home but carry me to the Naga dwelling,” and he uttered this stanza:

“Come, Yakkha, carry me to thy father-in-law, and act as is best towards me; I will shew to him a royal Naga palace which he has never seen before.

Punnaka said:

“The wise man should not look on that which is not for a man’s wellbeing; why then, O seer of excellent wisdom, dost thou wish to go amongst thy enemies?”

The Great Being answered:

“Verily I know it all; the wise man ought not to look upon it; but I have never at any time committed evil, and therefore I fear not the coming of death.”

“Moreover by my discourse concerning the law such a cruel being as thyself was won over and softened, and now thou sayest, “I have had enough of the Naga maiden, go thou to thine own home”; it is now my task to soften the Naga king, carry me thither forthwith.” When he heard this, Punnaka consented, saying:

“Come, thou shalt see with me that world of unequalled glory where the Naga king dwells amidst dance and song like King Vessavana in Nalini. Filled with troops of Naga maidens, gladdened constantly with their sports day and night, abounding with garlands and covered with flowers, it shines like the lightning in the sky. Filled with food and with drink, with dance and song and instruments of music; filled with maidens richly attired, it shines with dresses and ornaments.”

Then Punnaka placed him, the best doer of good actions among the Kurus, on a seat behind him and carried the illustrious sage to the palace of the Naga king. When he reached that place of unrivalled glory, the sage stood behind Punnaka; and the Naga king, beholding the concord between them, thus addressed his son-in-law as he had done before.

“Thou didst go before to the world of men, seeking for the sage’s heart; hast thou returned here with success, bringing the sage of unequalled wisdom?”

Punnaka replied:

“He whom thou desirest is come, he is my guardian in duty, won by righteous means; behold him as he speaks before thee,—intercourse with the good brings happiness.”

The Naga king uttered a stanza as he saw the Great Being:

“This mortal, beholding me whom he had never seen before and pierced with the fear of death, does not speak to me in his terror; this is not like a wise man.”

The Great Being thus addressed the Naga king while he conceived this idea, even though he had not directly said that he would not pay him respect,—as the Great Being knew by his omniscience how best to deal with all creatures:

“I am not terrified, O Naga, nor am I pierced with the fear of death; the victim should not address his executioner, nor should the latter ask his victim to address him.”

Then the Naga king uttered a stanza in the Great Being’s praise:

“It is as thou sayest, O sage,—thou speakest the truth; the victim should not address his executioner nor should the latter ask his victim to address him.”

Then the Great Being spoke kindly to the Naga king:

“This splendour and glory and this might and Naga birth of thine, are subject to death and not immortal; I ask thee this question, O Naga king, how didst thou obtain this palace? Was it gained without a cause or as the development of a previous condition? was it made by thyself or given by the gods? Explain to me this matter, O Naga king, how thou didst win this palace.”

The Naga king replied:

“It was not gained without a cause, nor was it the development of a previous condition; it was not made by myself nor given by the gods; this palace of mine was gained by my own virtuous deeds.”

The Great Being answered:

“What holy vow was it, what practice of sanctity? Of what good action was this the fruit,—this splendour and glory and might and Naga birth of thine and this great palace, O Naga ?”

The Naga king replied:

“I and my wife in the world of men were both full of faith and bountiful; my house was made into a drinking-hall, and priests and Brahmins were cheered there. Garlands and perfumes and ointments, lamps and couches and resting-places, raiment and beds and food and drink, I virtuously gave away there as free gifts. That was my vow and practice of sanctity, this is the fruit of that good conduct, this splendour and glory and Naga birth and this great palace, O seer.”

The Great Being said:

“If thou hast thus gained this palace, thou knowest about the fruit of holy actions and rebirth; therefore practise virtue with all diligence that thou mayest live again in a palace.”

The Naga king replied:

“There are no priests or Brahmins here to whom we may give food and drink, O holy one; tell me this thing I pray, how may I again live in a palace?”

The Great Being said:

“There are snakes who have been born here, sons and wives and dependents; commit no sin towards them in word or deed at any time. Thus follow thou, O Naga, innocence in word and deed,—so shalt thou dwell here all thy life in a palace and then depart hence to

the world of the gods."

The Naga king, having heard the religious discourse of the Great Being, thought to himself, "The sage cannot stay long away from his home; I will shew him to Vimala and let her hear his good words, and so calm her longing desire, and I will gratify King Dhananjaya and then it will be right to send the sage home"; so he said:

"Verily that best of kings is mourning in thy absence, whose intimate minister thou art; having once regained thee, though now distressed and sick, a man will regain happiness."

The Great Being praised the Naga:

"Thou dost indeed utter the holy words of the good, a peerless piece of right doctrine; in such crises of life as these the character of men like me is made known."

Then the Naga king still more delighted uttered a stanza:

"Say, wast thou taken for nothing? Say, did he conquer thee in the game? He says that he won thee fairly—how didst thou come into his power?"

The Great Being replied:

Punnaka conquered in the game with dice him who was my lord and king; he being conquered gave me to the other; so I was won fairly and not by wrong."

The great Naga, delighted and overjoyed, when he heard these noble words of the sage, seized the lord of lofty wisdom by the hand and thus went into the presence of his wife, "He for whom, O Vimala, you grew pale and food lost its savour in your eyes, this sun, for the sake of whose heart this trouble came upon you,—listen well to his words, you will never see him again."

Vimala, when she saw the lord of great wisdom, folded the ten fingers of her hands in reverence, and thus addressed the best of the Kurus with her whole soul full of delight:

"This mortal, beholding me whom he had never seen before and pierced with the fear of death, does not speak to me in his terror; this is not like a wise man."

"I am not terrified, O Nagi, nor am I pierced with the fear of death; the victim should not address his executioner, nor should the latter ask his victim to address him "

Thus the Naga maiden asked the sage the same question which the Naga Varuna had asked him before; and the sage by his answer satisfied her as he had before satisfied Varuna.

The sage, seeing that the Naga king and the Naga maiden were both pleased with his answers, undaunted in soul and with not one hair erect with fear, thus addressed Varuna: "Fear not, O Naga, here I am; whatever use this body may be to thee, whatever it can do by

its heart and its flesh, I myself will carry out according to thy will."

The Naga king replied:

"The heart of sages is their wisdom,—we are delighted to-day with thy wisdom; let him whose name implies perfection take his bride to-day and let him put thee in possession to-day of the Kurus."

Having thus spoken, Varuna gave Irandati to Punnaka and he in his joy poured out his heart to the Great Being.

The Great Being has thus described the matter:

"Punnaka, delighted and overjoyed, having won the Naga maiden Irandati, with his whole soul full of joy, thus addressed him who was the best of the Kurus in action: "Thou hast made me possessed of a wife, I will do what is due to thee, O Vidhura; I give this pearl of jewels and I will put thee to-day in possession of the Kurus."

Then the Great Being praised him in another stanza:

"May thy friendship with thy loved wife be indissoluble, and do thou in thy joy with a happy heart give me the jewel and carry me to Indapatta." Then Punnaka placed the best of the Kurus in action on a seat before him and carried him, the lord of supreme wisdom, to the city Indapatta. Swift as the mind of man may travel, his speed was even swifter still; and Punnaka bore the best of the Kurus to the city Indapatta.

Then he said to him: "Behold before thee the city Indapatta and its pleasant mango groves and districts; I am possessed of a wife, and thou hast obtained thine own home."

Now on that very day at morning-tide the king saw a dream, and this was what he saw. At the door of the king's palace there stood a great tree whose trunk was wisdom, and whose branches and boughs were like the virtues, and its fruits the five sacred products of the cow, and it was covered with elephants and horses richly caparisoned; and a great multitude with folded hands were worshipping it with all reverence. Then a black man, clothed with red cloth, and wearing earrings of red flowers, and bearing weapons in his hand, came up and cut the tree down by the roots in spite of the expostulations of the multitude, and dragged it off and went away, and then came back and planted it again in its old place and departed. Then the king as he comprehended the dream said to himself, "The sage Vidhura and no one else is like the great tree; that youth and no other, who carried off the sage, is like the man who cut the tree down by the roots in spite of the expostulations of the multitude; and verily he will come back and set him at the door of the Hall of Truth and depart. We shall behold the seer again to-day." So he joyfully ordered the whole city to be decorated and the Hall of Truth to be got ready and a pulpit in a pavilion adorned with jewels; and himself surrounded by a hundred kings, with their counsellors, and a multitude of citizens and country people, he consoled them all by saying, "Fear not, you will see the sage again to-day "; and he seated himself in the Hall of Truth, looking for

the sage's return. Then Punnaka brought the sage down and seated him in the middle of the assembly at the door of the Hall of Truth, and then departed with Irandati to his own celestial city.

The Teacher has thus described it:

"Punnaka of noble race, having set down him, the best of the Kurus in action, in the middle of the religious assembly, mounted his own noble steed and sped in the sky through the air. When the king beheld him, he, filled with delight, sprang up and embraced him with his arms, and without a moment's fear seated him on a throne before him in the midst of the congregation."

Then after exchanging friendly greeting with him he welcomed him affectionately and uttered a stanza:

"Thou guidest us like a ready-furnished chariot, the Kurus rejoice at seeing thee; answer me and tell me this,—how was it that that young man let thee go?"

The Great Being replied:

"He whom thou callest a young man, O great king, is no common man, O best of heroes; if thou hast ever heard of the Yakkha Punnaka, it was he, the minister of King Kuvera. There is a Naga king named Varuna, mighty, endowed with strength and a noble presence,—now Punnaka loves his younger daughter, the Naga maiden Irandati. He laid his plan for my death for the sake of that fair maiden whom he loved,—he thus obtained his wife, and I was allowed to depart and the jewel was won.

"The Naga king, being pleased with my solution of his question as to the four ends of men, paid me the honour of giving me a jewel; and when he returned to the Naga world, his queen Vimala asked him where the jewel was. He described my skill in discoursing concerning the law, and she, being desirous of hearing such a discourse, feigned a longing for my heart. The Naga king, not understanding her real wish, said to his daughter Irandati, "Thy mother has a longing for Vidhura's heart, find out a noble who is able to bring it for her." As she was seeking one, she saw the Yakkha Punnaka who was the son of Vessavana's sister, and, as she knew that he was in love with her, she sent him to her father, who said to him, "If thou art able to bring me Vidhura's heart thou shalt obtain her." So he, having brought from the mountain Vepulla the gem which might well belong to a universal monarch, played dice with me and having won me by his play he remained three days in my house. Then he made me lay hold of his horse's tail, and dashed me against the trees and mountains in Himavat, but he could not kill me. Then he rushed forward on a whirlwind in the seventh sphere of the winds and he set me on the top of the Black Mountain sixty leagues high; there he assailed me as a lion and in other shapes, but he could not kill me. Then at last at his request I told him how I could be killed. Then I proceeded to tell him the duties of the good man, and when he heard them he was highly pleased and wished to bring me hither. Then I took him and went to the Naga world and I told the law to the king and to Vimala, and all the court was highly pleased; and after I had

stayed there six days the king gave Irandati to Punnaka. He was delighted when he gained her, and honoured me with many jewels as his present. Then at the king's command he mounted me on a magic horse created by his will, and seating himself in the middle seat and Irandati behind, he brought me here and put me down in the middle of the court, and then went away with Irandati to his own city. Thus, O king, for the sake of that fair maiden whom he loved he laid his plan for my death and thus through me he obtained his wife. When the king had heard my discourse on the law, he was pleased and let me depart and I received from Punnaka this jewel which grants all desires and which is worthy of a universal emperor; accept it, O monarch," and so saying he gave the jewel to the king. Then the king, in the morning, being desirous to tell the citizens the dream which he had seen, related to them the history as follows:

"There grew a tree before my gates, its trunk was wisdom and its boughs the moral virtues; it ripened into all that was natural and developed, its fruits were the five products of the cow, and it was covered with elephants and cattle. But while it resounded with dance, song, and musical instruments a man came and cut it up from the roots and carried it away; it then came to this palace of ours,—pay your homage to this tree.

Let all who are joyful by my means shew it to-day by their actions; bring your presents in abundance, and pay your homage to this tree.

Whatever captives there may be in my realm, let them set them all loose from their captivity; as this tree has been delivered from its captivity, so let them release others from bondage.

Let them spend this month in holiday, hanging up their ploughs; let them feast the Brahmins with flesh and rice; let them drink in private, and still seem total abstainers, with their full cups flowing over. Let them invite their friends on the highway, and keep a strict watch in the kingdom so that none may injure his neighbour,—pay your homage to this tree."

When he had thus spoken,

"The queens, the princes, the Vesiyas, and the Brahmins brought to the sage much food and drink.

"Riders on elephants, body-guards, riders in chariots, foot-soldiers, brought to the sage much food and drink. The people of the country and the city gathered together in crowds brought to the sage much food and drink. The vast assembly were filled with joy, beholding the seer after he had come: when the sage had come a triumphant waving of cloths took place."

After a month the festival came to an end: the Great Being, as fulfilling a Buddha's duties, taught the great assembly the law, counselled the king and so fulfilled his span of life and so became destined for heaven. Abiding in his teaching, and following their king all the inhabitants of the Kuru kingdom gave gifts and performed good works and at the end of

their lives went to swell the hosts of heaven.

The Master, having brought his lesson to an end, said, “Not now only but formerly also did the Buddha, having obtained complete wisdom, shew himself skilful in adapting means to ends. Then he identified the Birth: “At that time the sage’s father and mother were the royal family, the eldest queen was Rahula’s mother, the eldest son was Rahula, Varuna the Naga king was Sariputta, the garula king was Moggallana, Sakka was Anuruddha, the king Dhananjaya was Ananda, and the wise Vidhura was myself.”

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

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