Ja 547 — Vessantara Jātaka

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

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol6/ja547.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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

Edited by E. B. Cowell

Original edition: Cambridge University Press, volume 6, 1907

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

“Ten boons,” etc. This story the Master told while dwelling near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Grove, about a shower of rain.

When the Master turning the precious Wheel of the Law came in due course to Rajagaha, where he spent the winter, with Elder Udayi leading the way, and attended by twenty thousand saints, he entered Kapilavatthu: whereupon the Sakya princes gathered together to see the chief of their clan. They inspected the Blessed One’s abode, saying, “A delightful place this Banyan Grove, worthy of Sakka.” Then they made all due provision for guarding it; and making ready to meet him with fragrant posies in their hands, they sent first all the youngest boys and girls of the township drest in their best, next the princes and princesses, and amongst these themselves did honour to the Master with fragrant flowers and powders, escorting the Blessed One as far as the Banyan Park; where the Blessed One took his seat, surrounded by twenty thousand saints upon the Buddha’s goodly seat, which was appointed for him. Now the Sakiyas are a proud and stiff-necked race; and they, thinking within themselves, “Siddhattha’s boy is younger than we; he is our younger brother, our nephew, our grandson,” said to the younger princes: “You do him obeisance; we will sit behind you.” As they sat there without doing obeisance to him, the Blessed One, perceiving their intent, thought to himself: “My kinsfolk do me no obeisance; well, I will make them do so.” So he caused to arise in him that ecstasy which is based on transcendent faculty, rose up into the air, and as though shaking off the dust of his feet upon their heads, performed a miracle like the twofold miracle at the foot of the knot-mango tree. The king, seeing this wonder, said, “Sir, on the day of your birth, when I saw your feet placed upon the head of Brahmin Kaladevala who had come to do you obeisance, I did obeisance to you, and that was the first time. On the day of the Plowing Festival, when you sate on the royal seat under the shade of a rose-apple tree, when I saw that the shadow of the tree moved not, I did obeisance to your feet; and that was the second time. And now again, I see a miracle which never I saw before, and do obeisance to your feet: this is the third time.” But when the king had thus done obeisance, not one

Sakiya could sit still and refrain, they did obeisance one and all.

The Blessed One, having thus made his kinsfolk do him obeisance, came down from the air and sat upon the appointed seat; when the Blessed One was there seated, his kinsfolk were made wise, and sat with peace in their hearts. Then a great cloud arose, and burst in a shower of rain: down came the rain red and with a loud noise, and those who desired to be wet were wetted, but he who did not, had not even a drop fallen upon his body. All who saw it were astonished at the miracle, and cried one to another—"Lo a marvel! to a miracle! to the power of the Buddhas, on whose kinsfolk such a shower of rain is falling!" On hearing this, the Buddha said: "This is not the first time, Brethren, that a great shower of rain has fallen upon my kinsfolk"; and then, at their request, he told a story of the past.

Once upon a time, a king named Sivi, reigning in the city of Jetuttara in the kingdom of Sivi, had a son named Sanjaya. When the lad came of age, the king brought him a princess named Phusati, daughter of king Madda, and handed over the kingdom to him, making Phusati his queen consort. Her former connexion with the world was as follows. In the ninety-first age from this, a Teacher arose in the world named Vipassi. Whilst he was dwelling in the deer-park of Khema, near the city of Bandhumati, a certain king sent to King Bandhuma a golden wreath worth a hundred thousand pieces of money, with precious sandal wood. Now the king had two daughters; and being desirous to give this present to them, he gave the sandal wood to the elder and the golden wreath to the younger. But both declined to use these gifts for themselves; and with the intent to offer them in respect to the Master, they said to the king: "Father, we will offer to the Dasabala this sandal wood and this golden wreath." To this the king gave his consent. So the elder princess powdered the sandal wood, and filled with the powder a golden box; and the younger sister caused the golden wreath to be made into a golden necklet, and laid it in a golden box. Then they both proceeded to the hermitage in the deer-park; and the elder sister, reverently sprinkling the Dasabala's golden body with the sandal wood powder, scattered the rest in his cell, and said this prayer: "Sir, in time to come, may I be the mother of a Buddha like you." The younger reverently placed upon the Dasabala's golden body the gold-lace necklet which had been made out of the golden wreath, and prayed, "Sir, until I attain sainthood, may this ornament never part from my body." And the Master granted their prayers.

Both these, after their life was past, came into being in the world of gods. The elder sister, passing from the world of gods to the world of men and back again, at the end of the ninety-first age became Queen Maya mother of the Buddha. The younger sister passing to and fro in like manner, in the time of the Dasabala Kassapa became the daughter of King Kiki; and being born with the semblance of a necklet upon her neck and shoulders, beautiful as though drawn by a painter, she was named Uracchada. When she was a girl of sixteen years, she heard a pious utterance of the Master, and attained to the fruit of the First Path, and so the very same day she attained sainthood, and then entered the Order, and entered Nirvana.

Now King Kiki had seven other daughters, whose names were:

“Samani, Samana, the holy Sister Gutta,

Bhikkhudasika, and Dhamma and Sudhamma,

And of the sisters the seventh Samghadasi.”

In this manifestation of the Buddha, these sisters were—

“Khema, Uppalavanna, the third was Patacara,

Gotama, Dhammadinna, and sixthly Mahamaya,

And of this band of sisters the seventh was Visakha.”

Now of these Phusati became Sudhamma; who did good deeds and gave alms, and by fruit of the offering of sandal wood done to Buddha Vipassi, had her body as it were sprinkled with choice sandal wood. Then passing to and fro between the worlds of men and of gods, eventually she became chief queen of Sakka king of the gods. After her days there were done, and the five customary signs were to be seen, Sakka king of the gods, realizing that her time was exhausted, escorted her with great glory to the pleasaunce in Nandana grove; then as she reclined on a richly adorned seat, he, sitting beside it, said to her: “Dear Phusati, ten boons I grant you: choose.” With these words, he uttered the first stanza in this Great Vessantara Birth with its thousand stanzas:

“Ten boons I give thee, Phusati, O beauteous lady bright:

Choose thou whatever on the earth is precious in thy sight.”

Thus came she to be established in the world of gods by the preaching in the Great Vessantara.

But she, not knowing the circumstances of her re-birth, felt faint, and said the second stanza:

“Glory to thee, O king of gods! what sin is done by me,

To send me from this lovely place as winds blow down a tree?”

And Sakka perceiving her despondency uttered two stanzas:

“Dear art thou still as thou hast been, and sin thou hast not done:

I speak because thy merit now is all used up and gone.

Now thy departure is at hand, the hour of death draws nigh:

Ten boons I offer thee to choose; then choose, before thou die.”

Hearing these words of Sakka, and convinced that she must die, she said, choosing the boons :

“King Sakka, lord of beings all, a boon hath granted me:

I bless him: craving that my life in Sivi’s realm may be.

Black eyes, black pupils like a fawn, black eyebrows may I have,

And Phusati my name: this boon, O bounteous one, I crave.

A son be mine, revered by kings, famed, glorious, debonair,

Bounteous, ungrudging, one to lend a ready ear to prayer.

And while the babe is in my womb let not my figure go,

Let it be slim and graceful like a finely fashioned bow.

Still, Sakka, may my breasts be firm, nor white-haired may I be;

My body all unblemished, may I set the death-doomed free.

Mid herons’ cries, and peacocks’ calls, with waiting women fair,

Poets and bards to sing our praise, shawls waving in the air,

When rattling on the painted door the menial calls aloud,

“God bless King Sivi! come to meat!” be I his queen avowed.”

Sakka said:

“Know that these boons, my lady bright, which I have granted thee,

In Sivi kingdom, beauteous one, all ten fulfilled shall be.”

“So spake the monarch of the gods, the great Sujampati,

Called Vasava, well pleased to grant a boon to Phusati.”

When she had thus chosen her boons, she left that world, and was conceived in the womb of King Madda’s queen; and when she was born, because her body was as it were sprinkled with the perfume of sandal wood, on her name-day they called her by the name Phusati. She grew up amidst a great company of attendants until in her sixteenth year she surpassed all other in beauty. At that time Prince Sanjaya, son of the King of Sivi, was to be

invested with the White Umbrella; the princess was sent for to be his bride, and she was made Queen Consort at the head of sixteen thousand women; wherefore it is said—

“Next born a princess, Phusati was to the city led

Jetuttara, and there anon to Sanjaya was wed.”

Sanjaya loved her lief and dearly. Now Sakka pondering remembered how that nine of his ten boons given to Phusati were fulfilled. “But one is left unfulfilled,” he thought, “a goodly son; this I will fulfil for her.” At that time the Great Being was in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, and his time was done; perceiving which Sakka approached him, and said, “Venerable Sir, you must enter the world of men; without delay you must be conceived in the womb of Phusati, Queen Consort of the King of Sivi.”

With these words, asking the consent of the Great Being and the sixty thousand sons of the gods who were destined to re-birth, he went to his own place. The Great Being came down and was re-born there, and the sixty thousand gods were born in the families of sixty thousand courtiers. Phusati, when the Great Being was conceived in her womb, finding herself with child, desired six alms-halls to be built, one at each of the four gates, one in the middle of the city, and one at her own door; that each day she might distribute six hundred thousand pieces. The king, learning how it was with her, consulted the fortune-tellers, who said, “Great King, in thy wife’s womb is conceived a being devoted to almsgiving, who will never be satisfied with giving.” Hearing this he was pleased, and made a practice of giving as before said.

From the time of the Bodhisat’s conception, there was no end one might say to the king’s revenue; by the influence of the king’s goodness, the kings of all India sent him presents.

Now the queen while with child remained with her large company of attendants, until ten months were fulfilled, and then she wished to visit the city. She informed the king, who caused the city to be decorated like to a city of the gods: he set his queen in a noble chariot, and made procession about the city rightwise. When they had reached the midst of the Vessa quarter, the pains of travail seized upon her. They told the king, and then and there he caused a lying-in chamber to be made and made her go there; and then she brought forth a son; wherefore it is said—

“Ten months she bore me in her womb; procession then they made;

And Phusati in Vessa Street of me was brought to bed.”

The Great Being came from his mother’s womb free from impurity, open-eyed, and on the instant holding out his hand to his mother, he said, “Mother, I wish to make some gift; is there anything?” She replied, “Yes, my son, give as you will,” and dropped a purse of a thousand pieces into the outstretched hand. Three times the Great Being spoke as soon as born: in the Ummagga Birth, in this Birth, and in his last Birth. On his name-day, because he was born in the Vessa Street, they gave him the name Vessantara; wherefore it is said:

“My name not from the mother’s side nor from the father’s came;

As I was born in Vessa Street, Vessantara’s my name.”

On his very birthday, a female flying elephant brought a young one, esteemed to be of lucky omen, white all over, and left it in the royal stables. Because this creature came to supply a need of the Great Being, they named it Paccaya. The king appointed four times sixty nurses for the Great Being, neither too tall nor too short, and free from all other fault, with sweet milk; he appointed also nurses for the sixty thousand children born with him, and so he grew up surrounded by this great company of sixty thousand children. The king caused to be made a prince’s necklace with a hundred thousand pieces of money, and gave it to his son; but he, being of four or five years of age, gave it away to his nurses, nor would he take it back when they wished to give it. They told this to the king, who said, “What my son has given is well given; be it a Brahmin’s gift,” and had another necklace made. But the prince still in his childhood gave this also to his nurses, and so nine times over.

When he was eight years old, as he reclined on his couch, the boy thought to himself: “All that I give comes from without, and this does not satisfy me; I wish to give something of my very own. If one should ask my heart, I would cut open my breast, and tear it out, and give it; if one ask my eyes, I would pluck out my eyes and give them; if one should ask my flesh, I would cut off all the flesh of my body and give it.” And thus he pondered with all his being and the depths of his heart; this earth, forty thousand quadrillions of leagues in extent, and two hundred thousands of leagues in depth, quaked thundering like a great mad elephant; Sineru chief of mountains bowed like a sapling in hot steam, and seemed to dance, and stood leaning towards the city of Jetuttara; at the earth’s rumbling the sky thundered with lightning and rain; forked lightning flashed; the ocean was stirred up: Sakka king of the gods clapt his arms, Mahabrahma gave a sign of approval, high as Brahma’s World all was in uproar; wherefore it is said also:

“When I was yet a little boy, but of the age of eight,

Upon my terrace, charity and gifts I meditate.

If any man should ask of me blood, body, heart, or eye,

Or blood or body, eye or heart I’d give him, was my cry.

And as with all my being I pondered with thoughts like these

The unshaken earth did shake and quake with mountains, woods and trees.”

By the age of sixteen, the Bodhisatta had attained a mastery of all sciences. Then his father, desiring to make him king, consulted with his mother; from the family of King Madda they brought his first cousin, named Maddi, with sixteen thousand attendant women, and made her his Queen Consort, and sprinkled him with the water of coronation.

From the time of his receiving the kingdom he distributed much alms, giving each day six hundred thousand pieces of money.

By and by Queen Maddi brought forth a son, and they laid him in a golden hammock, for which reason they gave him the name of Prince Jali. By the time he could go on foot the queen bore a daughter, and they laid her in a black skin, for which reason they gave her the name of Kanhajina. Each month the Great Being would visit his six alms-halls six times, mounted upon his magnificent elephant.

Now at that time there was drought in the kingdom of Kalinga: the corn grew not, there was a great famine, and men being unable to live used robbery. Tormented by want, the people gathered in the king's courtyard and upbraided him. Hearing this the king said, "What is it, my children?" They told him. He replied, "Good, my children, I will bring the rain," and dismissed them. He pledged himself to virtue, and kept the holy-day vow, but he could not make the rain come; so he summoned the citizens together, and said to them, "I pledged myself to virtue, and seven days I kept the holy-day vow, yet I could not make the rain come: what is to be done now?" They replied, "If you cannot bring the rain, my lord, Vessantara in the city of Jetuttara, King Sanjaya's son, is devoted to charity; he has a glorious elephant all white, and wherever he goes the rain falls; send brahmins, and ask for that elephant, and bring him hither." The king agreed; and assembling the brahmins he chose out eight of them, gave them provisions for their journey, and said to them, "Go and fetch Vessantara's elephant." On this mission, the brahmins proceeded in due course to Jetuttara city; in the alms-hall they received entertainment; sprinkled their bodies with dust and smeared them with mud; and on the day of the full moon, to ask for the king's elephant, they went to the eastern gate at the time the king came to the alms-hall. Early in the morning, the king, intending a visit to the alms-hall, washed himself with sixteen pitchers of perfumed water, and broke his fast, and mounted upon the back of his noble elephant richly adorned proceeded to the eastern gate. The brahmins found no opportunity there, and went to the southern gate, standing upon a mound and watched the king giving alms at the eastern gate. When he came to the southern gate, stretching out their hands they cried, "Victory to the noble Vessantara!" The Great Being, as he saw the brahmins, drove the elephant to the place whereon they stood, and seated upon its back uttered the first stanza:

"With hairy armpits, hairy heads, stained teeth, and dust on poll,

O brahmins, stretching forth your hands, what is it that you crave?"

To this the brahmins replied:

"We crave a precious thing, O prince that dost thy people save:

That choice and saving elephant with tusks like any pole."

When the Great Being heard this, he thought, "I am willing to give anything that is my own, from my head onwards, and what they ask is something without me; I will fulfil their wish";

and from the elephant's back, he replied:

"I give, and never shrink from it, that which the brahmins want,

This noble beast, for riding fit, fierce tusked elephant";

and thus consenting:

"The king, the saviour of his folk, dismounted from its back,

And glad in sacrificing, gave the brahmins what they lack."

The ornaments on the elephant's four feet were worth four hundred thousand, those on his two sides were worth two hundred thousand, the blanket under his belly a hundred thousand, on his back were nets of pearls, of gold, and of jewels, three nets worth three hundred thousand, in the two ears two hundred thousand, on his back a rug worth a hundred thousand, the ornament on the frontal globes worth a hundred thousand, three wrappings three hundred thousand, the small ear-ornaments two hundred thousand, those on the two tusks two hundred thousand, the ornament for luck on his trunk a hundred thousand, that on his tail a hundred thousand, not to mention the priceless ornaments on his body two and twenty hundred thousand, a ladder to mount, by one hundred thousand, the food-vessel a hundred thousand, which comes to as much as four and twenty hundred thousand: moreover the jewels great and small upon the canopy, the jewels in his necklace of pearls, the jewels in the goad, the jewels in the pearl necklace about his neck, the jewels on his frontal globes, all these without price, the elephant also without price, making with the elephant seven priceless things—all these he gave to the brahmins; besides five hundred attendants with the grooms and stablemen: and with that gift the earthquake came to pass, and the other portents as related above.

To explain this, the Master spoke:

"Then was a mighty terror felt, then bristling of the hair;

When the great elephant was given the earth did quake for fear.

Then was a mighty terror felt, then bristling of the hair;

When the great elephant was given, trembled the town for fear.

With a resounding mighty roar the city all did ring

When the great elephant was given by Sivi's foster-king."

The city of Jetuttara all did tremble. The brahmins, we are told, at the southern gate received the elephant, mounted upon his back, and amidst a thronging multitude passed through the midst of the city. The crowd, beholding them, cried out, "O brahmins, mounted upon our elephant, why are ye taking our elephant?" The brahmins replied, "The

great king Vessantara has given the elephant to us: who are you?" and so with contumelious gestures to the crowd, through the city they passed and out by the northern gate by aid of the deities. The people of the city, angry with the Bodhisat, uttered loud reproaches.

To explain this, the Master said:

"Upon that loud and mighty sound, so terrible to hear,

When the great elephant was given the earth did quake for fear.

Upon that loud and mighty sound, so terrible to hear,

When the great elephant was given trembled the town to hear.

So loud and mighty was the sound all terrible did ring,

When the great elephant was given by Sivi's foster-king."

The citizens, trembling at heart for this gift, addressed themselves to the king. Therefore it is said:

"Then prince and brahmin, Vesiya and Ugga, great and small,

Mahouts and footmen, charioteers and soldiers, one and all,

The country landowners, and all the Sivi folk come by.

Seeing the elephant depart, thus to the king did cry:

"Thy realm is ruined, sire: why should Vessantara thy son

Thus give away our elephant revered by every one?

Why give our saviour elephant, pole-tusked, goodly, white,

Which ever knew the vantage-ground to choose in every fight?

With jewels and his yak-tail fan; which trampled down all foes;

Long-tusked, furious, white as Mount Kelasa with his snows;

With trappings and white parasol, fit riding for a king,

With leech and driver, he has given away this precious thing."

After saying this, they said again:

“Whoso bestoweth food and drink, with raiment, fire and fleet,

That is a right and proper gift, for brahmins that is meet.

O Sanjaya, thy people’s friend, say why this thing was done

By him, a prince of our own line, Vessantara, thy son?

The bidding of the Sivi folk if ye refuse to do,

The people then will act, methinks, against your son and you.”

Hearing this, the king suspected that they wished to slay Vessantara; and he said:

“Yea, let my country be no more, my kingdom no more be,

Banish I will not from his realm a prince from fault quite free,

Nor will obey the people’s voice: my true-born son is he.

Yea, let my country be no more, my kingdom no more be,

Banish I will not from his realm a prince from fault quite free,

Nor will obey the people’s voice: my very son is he.

No, I will work no harm on him; all noble is he still;

And it would be a shame for me, and it would cause much ill.

Vessantara, my very son, with sword how could I kill?”

The people of Sivi replied:

“Not chastisement doth he deserve, nor sword, nor prison cell,

But from the kingdom banish him, on Vamka’s mount to dwell.”

The king said:

“Behold the people’s will! and I that will do not gainsay.

But let him bide one happy night before he go away.

After the space of this one night, when dawns the coming day,

Together let the people come and banish him away.”

They agreed to the king's proposal for just the one night. Then he let them go away, and thinking to send a message to his son, he commissioned an agent, who accordingly went to Vessantara's house and told him what had befallen.

To make this clear, the following stanzas were said:

"Rise, fellow, hie away post-haste, and tell the prince my word.

"The people all, and citizens, in wrath, with one accord,

Uggas and princes, Vesiyas and brahmins too, my son,

Mahouts and lifeguards, charioteers, and footmen, every one,

All citizens, all country folk, together here have run,—

After the space of this one night, when dawns the coming day,

They will assemble one and all and banish thee away."

This fellow sent by Sivi's king swift on his errand pressed,

Upon an armed elephant, perfumed, and finely drest,

Head bathed in water, jewelled rings in ears,—and on he rode

Till to that lovely town he came, Vessantara's abode.

Then he beheld the happy prince abiding in his land,

Like Vasava the king of gods; round him the courtiers stand.

Thither in haste the fellow went, and to the prince said he—

"I bear ill tidings, royal sir: O be not wroth with me!"

With due obeisance, weeping sore, he said unto the king:

"Thou art my master, sire, and thou dost give me every thing:

Bad news I have to tell thee now: do thou some comfort bring.

The people all and citizens, in wrath, with one consent,

Uggas and princes, Vesiyas and brahmins, all are bent,

Mahouts and lifeguards, charioteers, the footmen every one,

All citizens and country folk together now have run,

After the space of this one night, when dawns the coming day,

Determined all to come in crowds and banish thee away."

The Great Being said:

"Why are the people wroth with me? for no offence I see.

Tell me, good fellow, wherefore pray they wish to banish me?"

The agent said:

"Uggas and Vesiyas, charioteers, and brahmins every one,

Mahouts and lifeguards, charioteers and footmen, thither run,

All angry at thy giving gifts, and therefore banish thee."

Hearing this, the Great Being, in all content, said:

"My very eye and heart I'd give: why not what is not mine,

Or gold or treasure, precious stones, or pearls, or jewels fine?

Comes any one to ask of me, I'd give my hand, my right,

Nor for a moment hesitate: in gifts is my delight.

Now let the people banish me, now let the people kill,

Or cut me sevenfold, for cease from gifts I never will."

On hearing this, the agent again spoke, no message of the king's or of the people's, but another command out of his own mind:

"This is the Sivi people's will; they bade me tell you so:

Where Kontimara by the hill Aranjara doth flow,

Thither depart, where banished men, good sir, are wont to go."

This he said, we are told, by inspiration of a deity.

Hearing this, the Bodhisatta replied: "Very well, I shall go by the road that those go who have offended; but me the citizens do not banish for any offence, they banish me for the

gift of the elephant. In this case I wish to give the great gift of the seven hundreds, and I pray the citizens to grant me one day's delay for that. To-morrow I will make my gift, the next day I will go":

"So I by that same road shall go as they who do offend:

But first to make a gift, one night and day I pray them lend."

"Very good," said the agent, "I will report this to the citizens," and away he went.

The man gone, the Great Being summoning one of his captains said to him, "To-morrow I am to make the gift called the gift of the seven hundreds. You must get ready seven hundred elephants, with the same number of horses, chariots, girls, cows, men slaves and women slaves, and provide every kind of food and drink, even the strong liquor, everything which is fit to give." So having arranged for the great gift of the seven hundreds, he dismissed his courtiers, and alone departed to the dwelling of Maddi; where seating himself on the royal couch, he began to address her.

The Master thus described it:

"Thus did the king to Maddi speak, that lady passing fair:

"All that I ever gave to thee, or goods or grain, beware,

Or gold or treasure, precious stones, and plenty more beside,

Thy father's dower, find a place this treasure all to hide."

Then out spake Maddi to the king, that princess passing fair:

"Where shall I find a place, my lord, to hide it? tell me where?"

Vessantara said:

"In due proportion on the good thy wealth in gifts bestow,

No other place than this is safe to keep it, well I know."

She consented, and withal he exhorted her in this wise:

"Be kind, O Maddi, to thy sons, thy husband's parents both,

To him who will thy husband be do service, nothing loth.

And if no man should wish to be thy husband, when I'm gone,

Go seek a husband for thyself, but do not pine alone."

Then Maddi thought, “Why I wonder does Vessantara say such a thing to me?” And she asked him, “My lord, why do you say to me what you ought not to say?” The Great Being replied, “Lady, the people of Sivi, angry with me for the gift of the elephant, are banishing me from the realm: to-morrow I am to make the gift of the seven hundreds, and next day I depart from the city.” And he said:

“To-morrow to a forest drear, beset with beasts of prey,

I go: and whether I can live within it, who can say?’

Then spake the princess Maddi, spake the lady passing fair:

“It is not so! a wicked word! to say it do not dare!

It is not meet and right, my king, that thou alone shouldst fare:

Whatever journey thou shalt go, I also will be there.

Give me the choice to die with thee, or live from thee apart,

Death is my choice, unless I can live with thee where thou art.

Kindle a blazing fiery flame the fiercest that can be,—

There I would rather die the death than live apart from thee.

As close behind an elephant his mate is often found

Moving through mountain pass or wood, o’er rough or level ground,

So with my boys I’ll follow thee, wherever thou mayst lead,

Nor shalt thou find me burdensome or difficult to feed.”

With these words she began to praise the region of Himalaya as if she had seen it:

“When you shall see your pretty boys, and hear their prattle ring

Under the greenwood, you’ll forget that ever you were king.

To see your pretty boys at play, and hear their prattle ring

Under the greenwood, you’ll forget that ever you were king.

When you shall see your pretty boys, and hear their prattle ring

In our fair home, you will forget that ever you were king.

To see your pretty boys at play, and hear their prattle ring

In our fair home, you will forget that ever you were king.

To see your boys all gay-bedeckt, the flowers to watch them bring

In our fair home, you will forget that ever you were king.

To see your boys at play all gay, the flowers to watch them bring

In our fair home, you will forget that ever you were king.

When you behold your dancing boys their wreaths of flowers bring

In our fair home, you will forget that ever you were king.

When you behold them dance and play, and wreaths of flowers bring

In our fair home, you will forget that ever you were king.

The elephant of sixty years, all lonely wandering

The woodland, will make you forget that ever you were king.

The elephant of sixty years, at even wandering

And early, will make you forget that ever you were king.

When you behold the elephant his herd of subjects bring,

The elephant of sixty years, and hear his trumpeting,

To hear the sound you will forget that ever you were king.

The woodland glades, the roaring beasts, and every wished-for thing

When you behold, you will forget that ever you were king.

The deer that come at eventide, the varied flowers that spring,

The dancing frogs—you will forget that ever you were king.

When you shall hear the rivers roar, the fairy creatures sing,

Believe me, you will clean forget that ever you were king.

When you shall hear the screech-owl’s note in mountain cave dwelling,

Believe me, you will clean forget that ever you were king.

Rhinoceros and buffalo, that make the woodland ring,

Lion and tiger—you'll forget that ever you were king.

When on the mountain top you see the peacock dance and spring

Before the peahens, you'll forget that ever you were king.

To see the egg-born peacock dance and spread his gorgeous wing

Before the peahens, you'll forget that ever you were king.

The peacock with his purple neck, to see him dance and spring

Before the peahens—you'll forget that ever you were king.

When in the winter you behold the trees all flowering

Waft their sweet odours, you'll forget that ever you were king.

When in the winter you behold the plants all flowering,

The bimbajala, kutaja, and lotus, scattering

Abroad their odours, you'll forget that ever you were king.

When in the winter you behold the forest flowering

And blooming lotus, you'll forget that ever you were king."

Thus did Maddi sing the praises of Himavat in these stanzas, as though she were dwelling therein. Here endeth the Praise of Himavat.

Now Queen Phusati thought: "A harsh command has been laid upon my son: what will he do? I will go and find out." In a covered carriage she went, and taking up her position at the door of their chamber, she overheard their converse and uttered a bitter lamentation.

Describing this, the Master said:

"She heard the princess and her son, the talk that passed between,

Then bitterly she did lament, that great and glorious queen.

"Better drink poison, better leap from off a cliff, say I,

Or better bind a strangling noose about my neck and die:

Why banish they Vessantara my unoffending son?

So studious and free from greed, giving to all who came,

Respected by his rival kings, of great and glorious fame,

Why banish they Vessantara, my unoffending son?

His parents' prop, who did respect his elders every one,

Why banish they Vessantara, my unoffending son?

Beloved by the king and queen, by all his kith and kin,

Beloved by his friends, the realm and all that are therein,

Why banish they Vessantara, my unoffending son?"

After this bitter lament, she consoled her son and his wife, and went before the king and said:

"Like mangoes fallen to the ground, like money waste and spent,

So falls thy kingdom, if they will banish the innocent.

Like a wild goose with crippled wing, when all the water's gone,

Deserted by thy courtiers, thou wilt live in pain alone.

I tell thee true, O mighty king: let not thy good go by,

Nor banish him, the innocent, because the people cry."

Hearing which, the king answered:

"Thy son, the people's banner, if I send to exile drear,

My royal duty I obey, than life itself more dear."

On hearing this, the queen said, lamenting:

"Once hosts of men escorted him, with goodly banners flown,

Like forests full of flowering trees: to-day he goes alone.

Bright yellow robes, Gandhara make, once round about him shone,

Or glowing scarlet, as he went: to-day he goes alone.

With chariot, litter, elephant he went in former days:

To-day the King Vessantara afoot must tramp the ways.

He once by sandal-scent perfumed, awaked by dance and song,

How wear rough skins, how axe and pot and pingo bear along?

Why will they not bring yellow robes, why not the garb of skin,

And dress of bark, the mighty woods that he may enter in?

How can a banisht king put on the robe of bark to wear,

To dress in bark and grass how will the princess Maddi bear?

Maddi, who once Benares cloth and linen used to wear,

And fine kodumbara, how bark and grasses will she bear?

She who in litter or in car was carried to and fro,

The lovely princess, now to-day on foot how can she go?

With tender hands and tender feet in happiness she stood:

How can the lovely princess go trembling into the wood?

With tender hands and tender feet she lived in happy state:

The finest slippers she could wear would hurt her feet of late;

To-day how can the lovely one afoot now go her gait?

Once she would go begarlanded amidst a thousand maids:

How can the beauteous one alone now walk the forest glades?

Once if she heard the jackal howl she would be all dismayed:

How can the timid beauteous one now walk the forest glade?

She who of Indra’s royal race would ever shrink afraid,

Trembling like one possest, to hear the hoot some owl had made,

How can the timid beauteous one now walk the forest glade?

Like as a bird beholds the nest empty, the brood all slain,

So when I see the empty place long shall I burn in pain.

Like to a bird that sees the nest empty, the brood all slain,

Thin, yellow I shall grow to see my dear son ne’er again.

Like to a bird that sees the nest empty, the brood all slain,

I’ll run distracted, if I see my dear son ne’er again.

As when an eagle sees its nest empty, its young brood slain,

So when I see the empty place long shall I live in pain.

As when an eagle sees its nest empty, its young brood slain,

Thin, yellow I shall grow to see my dear son ne’er again.

As when an eagle sees its nest empty, its young brood slain,

I’ll run distracted, if I see my dear son ne’er again.

Like ruddy geese beside a pond from which the water’s gone,

Long shall I live in pain, to see no more my dearest son.

Like ruddy geese beside a pond from which the water’s gone,

Thin, yellow I shall grow to see no more my dearest son.

Like ruddy geese beside a pond from which the water’s gone,

I’ll fly distracted, if I see no more my dearest son.

And if you banish from the realm my unoffending son,

In spite of this my sore complaint, methinks my life is done.”

Explaining this matter, the Master said:

“Hearing the queen bewailing sore, straight all together went

The palace dames, their arms outstretcht, to join in her lament.

And in the palace of the prince, prone lying all around

Women and children lay like trees blown down upon the ground.

And when the night was at an end, and the sun rose next day,

Then King Vessantara began his gifts to give away.

“Food to the hungry give, strong drink to those who drink require,

Give clothes to those who wish for clothes, each after his desire.”

“Let not one suitor hither come go disappointed back,

Shew all respect, and food or drink to taste let no man lack.”

And so they gathered thick and fast with joy and merry play,

As Sivi’s great and fostering king prepared to go away.

They did cut down a mighty tree that full of fruit did stand,

When the innocent Vessantara they banished from the land.

They did cut down a wishing-tree, with every boon at hand,

When the innocent Vessantara they banished from the land.

They did cut down a wishing-tree, with choicest boons at hand,

When the innocent Vessantara they banished from the land.

Both old and young, and all between, did weep and wail that day,

Stretching their arms out, when the king prepared to go away,

Who fostered Sivi’s realm.

Wise women, eunuchs, the king’s wives, did weep and wail that day,

Stretching their arms out, when the king prepared to go away,

Who fostered Sivi’s realm.

And all the women in the town did weep and wail that day,

When Sivi's great and fostering king prepared to go away.

The brahmans and ascetics too, and all who begged for need,

Stretching their arms out, cried aloud, "It is a wicked deed!"

To all the city while the king his bounty did present,

And by the people's sentence, fared forth into banishment.

Seven hundred elephants he gave, with splendour all bedight,

With girths of gold, caparisoned with trappings golden bright,

Each ridden by his own mahout, with spiked hook in hand:

Lo now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land!

Seven hundred horses too he gave, bedeckt in bright array,

Horses of Sindh, and thorobreds, all fleet of foot are they,

Each ridden by a henchman bold, with sword and bow in hand:

Lo now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land!

Seven hundred chariots all yoked, with banners flying free,

With tiger skin and panther hide, a gorgeous sight to see,

Each driven by mailed charioteers, all armed with bow in hand:

Lo now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land!

Seven hundred women too he gave, each standing in a car,—

With golden chains and ornaments bedeckt these women are,

With lovely dress and ornaments, with slender waist and small,

Curved brows, a merry smile and bright, and shapely hips withal:

Lo now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land!

Seven hundred kine he also gave, with silver milkpails all:

Lo now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land!

Seven hundred female slaves he gave, as many men at call:

Lo now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land!

Cars, horses, women, elephants he gave, yet after all,

Lo now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land!

That was a thing most terrible, that made the hair to stand,

When now the King Vessantara goes banished from the land !"

Now a deity told the news to the kings of all India: how Vessantara was giving great gifts of high-born maidens and the like. Therefore the Khattiyas by the divine power came in a chariot, and returned with the high-born maidens and so forth that they had received. Thus did Khattiyas, brahmans, Vessas, and Suddas, all receive gifts at his hands before they departed. He was still distributing his gifts when evening fell; so he returned to his dwelling, to greet his parents and that night to depart. In gorgeous chariot he proceeded to the place where his parents dwelt, and with him Maddi went, in order to take leave of his parents with him. The Great Being greeted his father and announced their coming.

To explain this, the Master said:

"Give greeting to King Sanjaya the righteous: bid him know

That since he now doth banish me, to Vamka hill I go.

Whatever beings, mighty king, the future time shall know,

With their desires unsatisfied to Yama's house shall go.

For wrong I did my people, giving bounty from my hand,

By all the people's sentence I go banished from the land.

That sin I now would expiate i' the panther-haunted wood:

If you will wallow in the slough, yet I will still do good."

These four stanzas the Great Being addressed to his father: and then he turned to his mother, asking her permission to leave the world with these words:

"Mother, I take my leave of you: a banished man I stand.

For wrong I did my people, giving bounty from my hand,

By all the people's sentence I go banished from the land.

That sin I now would expiate i' the panther-haunted wood:

If you will wallow in the slough, yet I will still do good."

In reply, Phusati said:

"I give you leave to go, my son, and take my blessing too:

Leave Maddi and the boys behind, for she will never do;

Fair rounded limbs and slender waist, why need she go with you?"

Vessantara said:

"Even a slave against her will I would not take away:

But if she wishes, let her come; if not, then let her stay."

On hearing what his son said, the king proceeded to entreat her.

Explaining this, the Master said:

"And then unto his daughter-in-law the king began to say:

"Let not your sandal-scented limbs bear dust and dirt, I pray,

Wear not bark-fibre wraps instead of fine Benares stuff;

Blest princess, go not! forest life indeed is hard enough."

Then princess Maddi, bright and fair, her father-in-law addrest:

"To be without Vessantara I care not to be blest."

Then Sivi's mighty fostering king thus spake to her again:

"Come, Maddi, listen while the woes of forests I explain.

The swarms of insects and of gnats, of beetles and of bees

Would sting you in that forest life, unto your great disease.

For dwellers on the river banks hear other plagues that wait:

The boa-constrictor (poisonless 'Tis true, but strong and great),

If any man or any beast come near, will take firm hold,

And drag them to his lurking-place enwrapt in many a fold.

Then there are other dangerous beasts with black and matted hair;

They can climb trees to catch a man: this beast is called a bear.

Along the stream Sotumbara there dwells the buffalo;

Which with his great sharp-pointed horns can give a mighty blow.

Seeing these herds of mighty kine wander the forest through,

Like some poor cow that seeks her calf say what will Maddi do?

When crowds of monkeys in the trees gather, they will affright

You, Maddi, in your ignorance with their uncomely sight.

Once on a time the jackal's howl would bring great fear to you:

Now dwelling on the Vamka hill, Maddi, what will you do?

Why would you go to such a place? Even at high midday,

When all the birds are stilled to rest, the forest roars away."

Then beauteous Maddi to the king spake up and answered so:

"As for these things so terrible, which you have tried to shew,

I willingly accept them all; I am resolved to go.

Through all the hill and forest grass, through clumps of bulrush reed,

With my own breast I'll push my way, nor will complain indeed.

She that would keep a husband well must all her duties do;

Ready to roll up balls of dung, ready for fasting too,

She carefully must tend the fire, must mop up water still,

But terrible is widowhood: great monarch, go I will.

The meanest harries her about; she eats of leavings still:

For terrible is widowhood—great monarch, go I will.

Knocked down and smothered in the dust, haled roughly by the hair—

A man may do them any hurt, all simply stand and stare.

O terrible is widowhood! great monarch, go I will.

Men pull about the widow’s sons with cruel blows and foul,

Though fair and proud of winning charm, as crows would peck an owl.

O terrible is widowhood! great monarch, go I will.

Even in a prosperous household, bright with silver without end,

Unkindly speeches never cease from brother or from friend.

O terrible is widowhood! great monarch, go I will.

Naked are rivers waterless, a kingdom without king,

A widow may have brothers ten, yet is a naked thing.

O terrible is widowhood! great monarch, go I will.

A banner is the chariot’s mark, a fire by smoke is known,

Kingdoms by kings, a wedded wife by husband of her own.

O terrible is widowhood! great monarch, go I will.

The wife who shares her husband’s lot, be it rich or be it poor,

Her fame the very gods do praise, in trouble she is sure.

My husband I will follow still, the yellow robe to wear,

To be the queen of all the earth without, I would not care.

O terrible is widowhood! great monarch, go I will.

Those women have no heart at all, they’re hard and cannot feel,

Who when their husbands are in woe, desire to be in weal.

When the great lord of Sivi land goes forth to banishment,

I will go with him; for he gives all joy and all content.”

Then up and spake the mighty king to Maddi bright and fair:

“But leave your two young sons behind: for what can they do there,

Auspicious lady? we will keep and give them every care.”

Then Maddi answered to the king, that princess bright and fair:

“My Jali and Kanhajina are dearest to my heart:

They’ll in the forest dwell with me, and they will ease my smart.”

Thus answer made the monarch great, thus Sivi’s foster-king:

“Fine rice has been their food and well-cooked viands hitherto:

If they must feed on wild-tree fruit, what will the children do?

From silver dishes well adorned or golden hitherto,

They ate: but with bare leaves instead what will the children do?

Benares cloth has been their dress, or linen hitherto:

If they must dress in grass or bark, what will the children do?

In carriages or palanquins they’ve ridden hitherto

When they must run about on foot, what will the children do?

In gabled chambers they would sleep safe-bolted hitherto:

Beneath the roots of trees to lie, what will the children do?

On cushions, rugs or broidered beds they rested hitherto:

Reclining on a bed of grass, what will the children do?

They have been sprinkled with sweet scents and perfumes hitherto:

When covered all with dust and dirt, what will the children do?

When peacock’s feathers, yak’s tail fans have fanned them hitherto,

Bitten by insects and by flies, what will the children do?”

As they conversed thus together, the dawn came, and after the dawn up rose the sun. They brought round for the Great Being a gorgeous carriage with a team of four Sindh horses, and stayed it at the door. Maddi did obeisance to her husband's parents, and, bidding farewell to the other women, took leave, and with her two sons went before Vessantara and took her place in the carriage.

Explaining this matter, the Master said:

"Then Maddi answered to the king, that lady bright and fair:

"Do not lament for us, my lord, nor be perplexed so:

The children both will go with us wherever we shall go."

With these words Maddi went away, that lady bright and fair:

Along the highroad, and the two children her path did share.

Then King Vessantara himself, his vow performed as bound,

Does reverence to his parents both, and passes rightwise round.

Then, mounting in the chariot swift, drawn by its team of four,

With wife and children off he sped where Vamka's peak did soar.

Then drove the King Vessantara where most the crowd did swell,

And cried—"We go! a blessing on my kinsfolk—fare ye well!"

Addressing these words to the crowd, the Great Being admonished them to be careful, to give alms and do good deeds. As he went, the Bodhisat's mother, saying, "If my son desires to give, let him give," sent to him two carts, one on each side, filled with ornaments, laden with the seven precious things. In eighteen gifts he distributed to beggars he met on the road all he had, including even the mass of ornaments which he wore on his own body. When he had got away from the city, he turned round and desired to look upon it; then according to his wish the earth cleft asunder to the measure of the chariot, and turning round, brought the chariot to face the city, and he beheld the place where his parents dwelt. So then followed earthquakes and other wonders; wherefore it is said:

"When from the city he came forth, he turned again to look:

And, therefore, like a banyan tree great Mount Sineru shook."

And as he looked, he uttered a stanza to induce Maddi to look also:

“See, Maddi, see the lovely place from which we now have come—

The king of Sivi s dwelling-house and our ancestral home!”

Then the Great Being looking towards the sixty thousand courtiers, who were born when he was, and the rest of the people, made them turn back; and as he drove on with the carriage, he said to Maddi: “Lady, look out and see if any suitors are walking behind.” She sat watching. Now four brahmins, who had been unable to be present at the gift of the Seven Hundreds, had come to the city; and finding that the distribution was over, ascertained that the prince had gone. “Did he take anything with him?” they asked. “Yes: a chariot.” So they resolved to ask for the horses. These men Maddi saw approaching. “Beggars, my lord!” said she; the Great Being stayed the chariot. Up they came and asked for the horses: the Great Being gave them.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“Then did four brahmins catch him up, and for the horses plead:

He gave the horses on the spot—each beggar had one steed.”

The horses disposed of, the yoke of the chariot remained suspended in the air; but no sooner were the brahmins gone than four gods in the guise of red deer came and caught it. The Great Being who knew them to be gods uttered this stanza:

“See, Maddi, what a wondrous thing—a marvel, Maddi, see!

These clever horses, in the shape of red deer, drawing me!”

But then as he went up came another brahmin and asked for the chariot. The Great Being dismounted his wife and children, and gave him the chariot; and when he gave the chariot, the gods disappeared.

To explain the gift of the chariot, the Master said:

“A fifth came thereupon, and asked the chariot of the king:

He gave this also, and his heart to keep it did not cling.

Then made the King Vessantara his people to dismount,

And gave the chariot to the man who came on that account.”

After this, they all went on afoot. Then the Great Being said to Maddi:

“Maddi, you take Kanhajina, for she is light and young,

But Jali is a heavy boy, so I’ll bring him along.”

Then they took up the two children, and carried them on their hips.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“He carrying his boy, and she her daughter, on they went,

Talking together on the road in joy and all content.”

When they met anyone coming to meet them along the road, they asked the way to Vamka hill, and learnt that it was afar off. Thus it is said:

“Whenever they met travellers coming along the way,

They asked directions for their road, and where Mount Vamka lay.

The travellers all wept full sore to see them on the way,

And told them of their heavy task: “The road is long,” they say.”

The children cried to see fruit of all kinds on the trees which grew on both sides of the road. Then by the Great Being’s power, the trees bowed down their fruit so that their hands could reach it, and they picked out the ripest and gave it to the little ones. Then Maddi cried out, “A marvel!” Thus it is said:

“Whene’er the children did behold trees growing on the steep

Laden with fruit, the children for the fruit began to weep.

But when they saw the children weep, the tall trees sorrowful

Bowed down their branches to their hands, that they the fruit might pull.

Then Maddi cried aloud in joy, that lady fair and bright,

To see the marvel, fit to make one’s hair to stand upright.

One’s hair might stand upright to see the marvel here is shewn:

By power of King Vessantara the trees themselves bend down!”

From the city of Jetuttara, the mountain named Suvannagiritala is five leagues distant; from thence the river Kontimara is five leagues away, and five leagues more to Mount Aranjaragiri, five leagues again to the brahman village of Dunnivittha, thence ten leagues to his uncle’s city: thus from Jetuttara the journey was thirty leagues. The gods shortened the journey, so that in one day they came to his uncle’s city. Thus it is said:

“The Yakkhas made the journey short, pitying the children’s plight,

And so to Ceta kingdom they arrived before the night.”

Now they left Jetuttara at breakfast time, and in the evening they came to the kingdom of Ceta and to his uncle’s city.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“Away to Ceta they proceed, a journey great and long,

A kingdom rich in food and drink, and prosperous, and strong.”

Now in his uncle’s city dwelt sixty thousand Khattiyas. The Great Being entered not into the city, but sat in a hall at the city gate. Maddi brushed off the dust on the Great Being’s feet, and rubbed them; then with a view to announce the coming of Vessantara, she went forth from the hall, and stood within sight. So the women who came in and out of the city saw her and came round.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“Seeing the auspicious lady there the women round her throng.

“The tender lady! now afoot she needs must walk along.

In palanquin or chariot once the noble lady rode:

Now Maddi needs must go afoot; the woods are her abode.”

All the people then, seeing Maddi and Vessantara and the children arrived in this unbecoming fashion, went and informed the king; and sixty thousand princes came to him weeping and lamenting.

To explain this, the Master said:

“Seeing him, the Ceta princes came, with wailing and lament.

“Greet thee, my lord: we trust that you are prosperous and well,

That of your father and his realm you have good news to tell.

Where is your army, mighty king? and where your royal car?

With not a chariot, not a horse, you now have journeyed far:

Were you defeated by your foes that here alone you are?”

Then the Great Being told the princes the cause of his coming:

“I thank you, sirs; be sure that I am prosperous and well;

And of my father and his realm I have good news to tell.

I gave the saviour elephant, pole-tusked, goodly white,

Which ever knew the vantage-ground to choose in every fight;

His jewels, and his yak’s tail fan; which trampled down the foes,

Long-tusked, furious, white as Mount Kelasa with his snows;

With trappings and white parasol, fit riding for a king,

With leech and driver: yes, I gave away this precious thing.

Therefore the people were in wrath, my father took it ill:

Therefore he banished me, and I now go to Vamka hill.

I pray you, tell me of a place to be my dwelling still.”

The princes answered:

“Now welcome, welcome, mighty king, and with no doubtful voice:

Be lord of all that here is found, and use it at your choice.

Take herbs, roots, honey, meat, and rice, the whitest and the best:

Enjoy it at your will, O king, and you shall be our guest.”

Vessantara said:

“Your proffered gifts I here accept, with thanks for your goodwill.

But now the king has banished me; I go to Vamka hill.

I pray you, tell me of a place to be my dwelling still.”

The princes said:

“Stay here in Ceta, mighty king, until a message go

To tell the king of Sivi land what we have come to know.”

Then they behind him in a throng escorting him did go,

All full of joy and confidence: this I would have thee know."

The Great Being said:

"I would not have you send and tell the king that I am here:

He is not king in this affair: he has no power, I fear.

The palace folk and townsfolk all in wrath came gathering,

All eager that because of me they might destroy the king."

The princes said:

"If in that kingdom came to pass so terrible a thing,

Surrounded by the Ceta folk stay here, and be our king.

The realm is prosperous and rich, the people strong and great:

Be minded, sir, to stay with us and govern this our state."

Vessantara said:

"Hear me, O sons of Ceta land! I have no mind to stay,

As I go forth a banished man, nor here hold royal sway.

The Sivi people one and all would be ill pleased to know

That you had sprinkled me for king, as banished forth I go.

If you should do it, that would be a most unpleasant thing,

To quarrel with the Sivi folk: I like not quarrelling.

Your proffered gifts I here accept, with thanks for your goodwill.

But now the king has banished me: I go to Vamka hill.

I pray you, tell me of a place to be my dwelling still."

Thus the Great Being, in spite of so many requests, declined the kingdom. And the princes paid him great honour; but he would not enter within the city; so they adorned that hall where he was, and surrounded it with a screen, and preparing a great bed, they kept

careful watch round about. One day and one night he abode in the hall well-guarded; and next day, early in the morning, after a meal of all manner of fine-flavoured food, attended by the princes, he left the hall, and sixty thousand Khattiyas went with him for fifteen leagues, then standing at the entering in of the wood, they told of the fifteen leagues which yet remained of his journey.

“Yes, we will tell you how a king who leaves the world may be

Good, peaceful by his sacred fire, and all tranquillity.

That rocky mountain, mighty king, is Gandhamadana,

Where with your children and your wife together you may stay.

The Ceta folk, with faces all bewept and streaming eyes,

Advise you to go northward straight where high its peaks uprise.

There you shall see Mount Vipula (and blessing with thee go),

Pleasant with many a growing tree that casts cool shade below.

When you shall reach it, you shall see (a blessing with thee still)

Ketumati, a river deep and springing from the hill.

Full of all fish, a safe resort, its deep flood flows away:

There you shall drink, and there shall bathe, and with your children play.

And there, upon a pleasant hill, cool-shaded, you will see,

Laden with fruit as honey sweet, a noble banyan tree.

Then you will see Mount Nalika, and that is haunted ground:

For there the birds in concert sing and woodland sprites abound.

There further still towards the north is Mucalinda Lake,

On which the lilies blue and white a covering do make.

Then a thick forest, like a cloud, with grassy sward to tread,

Trees full of flowers and of fruit, all shady overhead,

Enter: a lion seeking prey wherewith he may be fed.

There when the forest is in flower, a shower of song is heard,

The twitter here and twitter there of many a bright-winged bird.

And if those mountain cataracts you follow to their spring,

You'll find a lily-covered lake with blossoms flowering,

Full of all fish, a safe resort, deep water without end,

Foursquare and peaceful, scented sweet, no odour to offend:

There build yourself a leafy cell, a little to the north,

And from the cell which you shall make in search of food go forth."

Thus did the princes tell him of his fifteen-league journey, and let him go. But to prevent any fear of danger in Vessantara, and with a view to leave no hold for any adversary, they gave directions to a certain man of their country, wise and skilful, to keep an eye upon his goings and comings; whom they left at the entering in of the forest, and returned to their own city.

And Vessantara with his wife and children proceeded to Gandhamadana; that day he abode there, then setting his face northwards he passed by the foot of Mount Vipula, and rested on the bank of the river Ketumati, to eat a goodly repast provided by the forester, and there they bathed and drank, presenting their guide with a golden hairpin. With mind full of calmness he crossed the stream, and resting awhile under the banyan which stood on a flat space on the mountain, after eating its fruit, he rose up and went on to the hill called Nalika. Still moving onwards, he passed along the banks of Lake Mucalinda to its northeastern corner: whence by a narrow footpath he penetrated into the thick forest, and passing through, he followed the course of the stream which rose out of the mountain until he came to the foursquare lake.

At this moment, Sakka king of the gods looked down and beheld that which had happened. "The Great Being," he thought, "has entered Himavat, and he must have a place to dwell in." So he gave orders to Vissakamma: "Go, pray, and in the dells of Mount Vamka, build a hermitage on a pleasant spot." Vissakamma went and made two hermitages with two covered walks, rooms for the night and rooms for the day; alongside of the walks he plants rows of flowering trees and clumps of banana, and makes ready all things necessary for hermits. Then he writes an inscription, "Whoso wishes to be a hermit, these are for him," and driving away all unhuman creatures and all harsh-voiced beasts and birds, he went to his own place.

The Great Being, when he beheld a path, felt sure that it must lead to some hermits' settlement. He left Maddi and the two children at the entrance of the hermitage, and went in; when seeing the inscription, he recognized that Sakka's eye was upon him. He opened

the door and entered, and putting off his bow and sword, with the garments which he wore, he donned the garb of a hermit, took up the staff, and coming forth entered the covered walk and paced up and down, and with the quietude of a Pacceka Buddha approached his wife and children. Maddi fell at his feet in tears; then with him entering the hermitage, she went to her own cell and donned the ascetic dress. After this they made their children to do the like. Thus the four noble hermits dwelt in the recesses of Mount Vamka.

Then Maddi asked a boon of the Great Being. “My lord, do you stay here with the children, instead of going out in search of wild fruits; and let me go instead.” Thenceforward she used to fetch the wild fruits from the forest and feed them all three. The Bodhisatta also asked her for a boon. “Maddi, we are now hermits; and woman is the canker of chastity. Henceforward then, do not approach me unseasonably.” She consented.

By the power of the Great Being’s compassion, even the wild animals, all that were within three leagues of their borders, had compassion one of another. Daily at dawn, Maddi arises, provides water for their drinking and food to eat, brings water and tooth-brush for cleansing the mouth, sweeps out the hermitage, leaves the two children with their father, basket, spade, and hook in hand hies to the forest for wild roots and fruits, with which she fills her basket: at evening she returns, lays the wild fruits in the cell, washes the children; then the four of them sit at the door of the cell and eat their fruits. Then Maddi takes her two children, and retires to her own cell. Thus they lived in the recesses of the mountain for seven months.

At that time, in the kingdom of Kalinga, and in a Brahmin village named Dunnivittha, lived a brahmin Jujaka. He by quest of alms having obtained a hundred rupees deposited them with a certain brahmin family, and went out to get more wealth. As he was long away, the family spent that money; the other came back and upbraided them, but they could not return the money, and so they gave him their daughter named Amittatapana. He took the maiden with him to Dunnivittha, in Kalinga, and there dwelt. Amittatapana tended the brahmin well. Some other brahmins, young men, seeing her dutifulness, reproached their own wives with it: “See how carefully she tends an old man, whilst you are careless of your young husbands!” This made the wives resolve to drive her out of the village. So they would gather in crowds at the river side and everywhere else, reviling her.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“Once in Kalinga, Jujaka a brahmin spent his life,

Who had Amittatapana, quite a young girl, to wife.

The women who with waterpots down to the river came

Cried shame upon her, crowding up, and roundly cursed her name.

“A “foe” indeed your mother was, a “foe” your father too,

To let an old decrepit man wed a young wife like you.

Your people brewed a secret plot, a bad, mean, cruel plan,

To let a fine young girl be wed to an old decrepit man.

A hateful thing your life must be, as youthful as you are,

With an old husband to be wed; nay, death were better far.

It surely seems, my pretty one, your parents were unkind

If for a fine young girl they could no other husband find.

Your fire-oblation, and your ninth were offered all for naught

If by an old decrepit man so young a wife was caught.

Some brahmin or ascetic once no doubt you have reviled,

Some virtuous or learned man, some hermit undefiled,

If by an old decrepit man so young a wife was caught.

Painful a spear-thrust, full of pain the serpent's fiery bite:

But a decrepit husband is more painful to the sight.

With an old husband there can be no joy and no delight,

No pleasant talk: his very laugh is ugly to the sight.

When men and maidens, youth with youth, hold intercourse apart

They make an end of all the woes that harbour in the heart.

You are a girl whom men desire, you're young and you are fair:

How can an old man give you joy? Go home and tarry there!"

When she heard their mockery, she went home with her waterpot, weeping. "Why are you weeping?" the husband asked; and she replied in this stanza:

"I cannot fetch the water home, the women mock me so:

Because my husband is so old they mock me when I go."

Jujaka said:

“You need not fetch the water home, you need not serve me so:

Do not be angry, lady mine: for I myself will go.”

The woman said:

“You fetch the water? no, indeed! that’s not our usual way.

I tell you plainly, if you do, with you I will not stay.

Unless you buy a slave or maid this kind of work to do,

I tell you plainly I will go and will not live with you.”

Jujaka said:

“How can I buy a slave? I have no craft, no corn, no pelf:

Come, be not angry, lady mine: I’ll do your work myself.”

The woman said:

“Come now, and let me tell to you what I have heard them say.

Out yonder in the Vamka hill lives King Vessantara:

Go, husband, to Vessantara and ask him for a slave;

The prince will certainly consent to give you what you crave.”

Jujaka said:

“I am an old decrepit man; the road is rough and long;

But do not worry, do not weep—and I am far from strong:

But be not angry, lady mine: I’ll do the work myself.”

The woman said:

“You’re like a soldier who gives in before the fight: but why?

And do you own that you are beat before you go and try?

Unless you buy a slave or maid this kind of work to do,

I tell you plainly, I will go, I will not live with you.

That will be a most unpleasant thing, a painful thing for you.

When happy in another's arms you shall behold me soon,

Drest gaily at the season's change, or changes of the moon.

And as in your declining years my absence you deplore,

Your wrinkles and your hoary hairs will double more and more."

Explaining this, the Master said:

"And now the brahmin full of fears to his wife's will gives way;

So then tormented by his love, you might have heard him say:

"Get me provision for the road: make me some honey-cake,

Prepare some bannocks too, and set the barley-bread to bake.

And then an equal pair of slaves with me I'll bring away,

Who without wearying shall wait upon you night and day."

Quickly she prepared the provision, and informed him that it was done. Meanwhile he repairs the weak places about his cottage, secures the door, brings in wood from the forest, draws water in the pitcher, fills all the pots and pans, and donning the garb of the ascetic he leaves her with the words, "Be sure not to go out at improper times, and be careful until I return." Then putting on his shoes, he puts his bag of provisions over his shoulder, walks round his wife rightwise, and departs with streaming eyes.

Explaining this, the Master said:

"This done, the brahmin dons his shoes; then rising presently,

And walking round her towards the right he bids his wife good-bye.

So went he, dressed in holiness, tears standing in his eyes:

To the rich Sivi capital to find a slave he hies."

When he came to that city, he asked the assembled people where Vessantara was.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“When further he had come, he asked the people gathered round—

“Say, where is King Vessantara? where can the prince be found?”

To him replied the multitude who were assembled round:

“By such as you he’s ruined; for by giving, giving still,

He’s banisht out of all the realm and dwells in Vamka hill.

By such as you he’s ruined; for by giving, giving still,

He took his wife and children and now dwells in Vamka hill.”

“So you have destroyed our king, and now come here again! Stand still, will you,” and with sticks and clods, kicks and fisticuffs, they chased him away. But he was guided by the gods into the right road for Vamka hill.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“So he, upbraided by his wife, in greedy passion’s sway,

Paid for his error in the wood where beasts and panthers prey.

Taking his staff and begging-bowl and sacrificial spoon,

He sought the forest where abode the giver of every boon.

Once in the forest, came the wolves thronging around his way:

He leapt aside, and went confused far from the path astray.

This brahmin of unbridled greed, finding himself astray,

The way to Vamka now quite lost, began these lines to say.

“Who’ll tell me of Vessantara, the prince all conquering,

Giver of peace in time of fear, the great and mighty king?

Refuge of suitors, as the earth to all that living be,

Who’ll tell me of Vessantara, the great and mighty king?

All who seek favours go to him as rivers to the sea:

Who’ll tell me of Vessantara, the great and mighty king?

Like to a safe and pleasant lake, with water fresh and cool,

With lilies spread, whose filaments cover the quiet pool:

Who'll tell me of Vessantara, the great and mighty king?

Like a great fig-tree on the road, which growing there has made

A rest for weary wayfarers who hasten to its shade:

Who'll tell me of Vessantara, the great and mighty king?

Like banyan, sal, or mango-tree, which on the road has made

A rest for weary wayfarers that hasten to its shade:

Who'll tell me of Vessantara, the great and mighty king?

Who will give ear to my complaint, the forest all around?

Glad I should be, could anyone tell where he may be found!

Who will give ear to my complaint, the forest all around?

Great blessing it would be, if one could tell where he may be found."

Now the man who had been set to watch, who was ranging the woods as a forester, heard this lamentable outcry; and thought he— "Here is a brahmin crying out about Vessantara's dwelling-place; he cannot be here for any good purpose. He will ask for Maddi or the children, no doubt. Well, I will kill him." So he approached the man, and as he drew his bow, threatened him with the words—"Brahmin, I will not spare your life!"

Explaining this, the Master said:

"The hunter ranging in the wood heard this lament, and said:

"By such as you he's ruined; for by giving, giving still,

He's banisht out of all the realm and dwells in Vamka hill.

By such as you he's ruined; for by giving, giving still,

He took his wife and children and now dwells in Vamka hill.

A good-for-nothing fool you are, if leaving home you wish

To seek the prince in forests, like a crane that seeks a fish.

Therefore, my worthy man, I will not spare your life; and so

My arrow now shall drink your blood when shot from out my bow.

I'll split your head, tear out your heart and liver in a trice,

Like birds to spirits of the road I'll make you sacrifice.

I'll take your flesh, I'll take your fat, I'll take your heart and head,

And you shall be a sacrifice as soon as you are dead.

You'll be a welcome sacrifice, a goodly offering;

And then you'll not destroy the wife and children of the king."

The man, on hearing these words, was frightened to death, and made a false reply.

"The ambassador's inviolate, and no man may him kill:

This is a very ancient rule; so listen, if you will.

The people have repented them, his father misses him,

His mother pines away for grief—her eyes are waxing dim.

I come as their ambassador, Vessantara to bring:

Hear me, and tell me if you know where I may find the king."

Then the man was pleased to hear that he was come to fetch Vessantara; he fastened up his dogs, and called the brahmin down, and seating him upon a pile of twigs he recited this stanza:

"I love the envoy and the prince: and here I give to you

A gift of welcome—leg of deer and pot of honey too;

Our benefactor how to find I'll tell you what to do."

So saying, the man gave the brahmin food, with a gourd of honey and a roast leg of deer, and set him on his way, raising his right hand to point out the place where the Great Being lived: and he said—

"Sir brahmin, yonder rocky mount is Gandhamadan hill

Where lives the King Vessantara with wife and children still.

With brahmin’s dress, with hook and spoon, the ascetic’s matted hair,

Skinclad he lies upon the ground and tends the fire with care.

See yonder, trees with many fruits, green on the mountain side,

While the dark mountain-peaks uplift till in the clouds they hide.

There shrubs, and creepers, horsear, sal, and many another tree

Sway in the wind like drunken men for anyone to see.

High up above the rows of trees the birds in concert sing,

Najjuha, cuckoo, flocks of them, from tree to tree flitting.

Thronging among the leafy twigs they bid the stranger come,

Welcome the guest, delighting all who make the woods their home,

Where with his children now abides Vessantara the king.

With brahmin’s dress, with hook and spoon, the ascetic’s matted hair,

Skinclad he lies upon the ground, and tends the fire with care.”

Moreover he said, in praise of the hermitage:

“Mango, rose-apple, jackfruit, sal, all kinds of myrobolan,

Bo, golden tindook, many more, including the banyan;

Plenty of figs, all growing low, all ripe, as sweet as sweet,

Dates, luscious grapes, and honeycomb, as much as you can eat.

The mango-trees are some in flower, some with the fruit just set,

Some ripe and green as any frog, while some are unripe yet.

A man may stand beneath the trees and pluck them as they grow:

The choicest flavour, colour, taste, both ripe and unripe shew.

It makes me cry aloud to see that great and wondrous sight,

Like heaven where the gods abide, the garden of delight.

Palmyra, date-palm, coconut grow in that forest high,

Festoons of flowers garlanded as when the banners fly,

Blossoms of every hue and tint like stars that dot the sky.

Ebony, aloe, trumpet-flower, and many another tree,

Acacias, berries, nuts, and all as thick as thick can be.

Hard by there is a lake bespread with lilies blue and white,

As in the garden of the gods, the Garden of Delight.

And there the cuckoos make the hills re-echo as they sing,

Intoxicated with the flowers which in their season spring.

See on the lilies drop by drop the honey-nectar fall,

And feel the breezes blowing free from out the south and west,

Until the pollen of the flowers is waften over all.

Plenty of rice and berries ripe about the lake do fall,

Which fish and crabs and tortoises dart seeking with a zest,

And honey drips like milk or ghee from the flowers one and all.

A frequent breeze blows through the trees where every scent is found,

And seems to intoxicate with flowers the forest all around.

The bees about the scented flowers fly thronging with their hum,

There fly the many-coloured birds together, all and some,

Cooing and chirping in delight, each with his mate they come.

“O pretty chicky, happy chap!” they twitter and they tweet—

O lovey dovey, deary dear, my pretty little sweet !”

Festoons of flowers garlanded as when the banners fly,

Blossoms of every hue and tint, sweet odours wafted by,

Where with his children now abides Vessantara the king.

With brahmin's dress, with hook and spoon, the ascetic's matted hair,

Skinclad he lies upon the ground and tends the fire with care."

Thus did the countryman describe the place where Vessantara lived; and Jujaka delighted saluted him in this stanza:

"Accept this piece of barley-bread all soaked with honey sweet,

And lumps of well-cookt honey-cake: I give it you to eat."

To this the countryman answered:

"I thank you, but I have no need: keep your provision still;

And take of my provision; then go, brahmin, where you will.

Straight onward to a hermitage the pathway there will lead,

Where Accata a hermit dwells, black-tooth'd, with dirty head,

With brahmin dress, with hook and spoon, the ascetic's matted hair,

Skinclad he lies upon the ground and tends the fire with care:

Go thither, ask the way of him, and he will give you speed."

When this he heard, the brahmin walked round Ceta towards the right,

And went in search of Accata, his heart in high delight.

Then Bharadvaja went along until he came anigh

Unto the hermit's place, to whom he spake thus courteously:

"O holy man, I trust that you are prosperous and well,

With grain to glean and roots and fruit abundant where you dwell.

Have you been much by flies and gnats and creeping things annoyed,

Or from wild beasts of prey have you immunity enjoyed?"

The ascetic said:

“I thank you, brahmin—yes, I am both prosperous and well,

With grain to eat and roots and fruit abundant where I dwell.

From flies and gnats and creeping things I suffer not annoy,

And from wild beasts of prey I here immunity enjoy.

In all the innumerable years I’ve lived upon this ground,

No harmful sickness that I know has ever here been found.

Welcome, O brahmin! bless the chance directed you this way,

Come enter with a blessing, come, and wash your feet I pray.

The tindook and the piyal leaves, and kasumari sweet,

And fruits like honey, brahmin, take the best I have, and eat,

And this cool water from a cave high hidden on a hill,

O noble brahmin, take of it, drink if it be your will.”

Jujaka said:

“Accepted is your offering, and your oblation, sir.

I seek the son of Sanjaya, once banisht far away

By Sivi’s people: if you know where he abides, please say.”

The ascetic said:

“You seek the King of Sivi, sir, not with a good intent:

Methinks your honour’s real desire upon his wife is bent:

Kanhajina for handmaiden, Jali for serving-man,

Or you would fetch the mother with her children, if you can,

The prince has no enjoyments here, no wealth or food, my man.”

On hearing this, Jujaka said:

“I wish no ill to any man, no boon I come to pray:

But sweet it is to see the good, pleasant with them to stay.

I never saw this monarch, whom his people sent away:

I came to see him: if you know where he abides, please say."

The other believed him. "Good, I will tell you; only stay with me here to-day." So he entertained him with wild fruits and roots; and next day, stretching out his hand, he shewed him the road. (He then recites the verses given above, p. 274, "Sir brahmin—with care," and adds:)

"The foliage of the pepper-tree in that fair spot is seen,

No dust is ever blown aloft, the grass is ever green.

The grasses like a peacock's neck, soft-cotton to the touch,

Grow never more than inches four, but always just so much.

Kapittha, mango, rose-apple, and ripe figs dangling low,

All trees whose fruit is good to eat in that fine forest grow.

There sweet and clean and fragrant streams as blue as beryl flow,

Through which disporting up and down the shoals of fishes go.

A lake lies in a lovely spot, with lilies blue and, white,

Hard by, like that which is in heaven i' the Garden of Delight.

Three kinds of lilies in that lake present them to the sight,

With varied colours: some are blue, some blood-red, others white."

Thus he praised the foursquare lake of lilies, and went on to praise Lake Mucalinda:

"As soft as linen are the flowers, those lilies blue and white,

And other herbs grow there: the lake is Mucalinda hight.

And there in number infinite the full-blown flowers you see,

In summer and in winter both as high as to the knee.

Always the many-coloured flowers blow fragrant on the breeze,

And you may hear drawn by the scent the buzzing of the bees.

All round about the water’s edge are standing in a row

The ebony, the trumpet-flower, and tall kadamba-trees.

Six-petals and many another tree with flowers all a-blow,

And leafy bowers all standing round about the lake one sees.

There trees of every shape and size, there flowers of every hue,

All shrubs and bushes, high and low are spread before the view:

The breezes sweetly waft the scent from flowers white, blue, and red,

That grow about the hermitage wherein the fire is fed.

Close round about the water’s edge grow many plants and trees,

Which tremble as they echo to the murmurs of the bees.

The scent of all the lovely blooms that grow about that shore

Will last you if you keep them for a week, or two, or more.

Three kinds of gourds, all distinct, grow in this lake, and some

Have fruit as big as waterpots, others big as a drum.

Mustard, green garlic, lilies blue to pick, and flowers full-blown,

Jasmine, sweet sandal, creepers huge about the trees are grown.

Sweet jasmine, cotton, indigo, and plants of many a name,

Cress, trumpet-flower, grow all around like tongues of golden flame.

Yea, every kind of flower that grows in water or on land,

In and about this lovely lake lo and behold they stand.

There crocodiles and water-beasts abide of every sort,

Red deer and other animals for water do resort.

Turmeric, camphor, panick-seed, the liquorice-plant, and all

Most fragrant seeds and grasses grow with stalks exceeding tall.

There lions, tigers, elephants a seeking for a mate,

Deer red and dappled, jackals, dogs, and fawns so swift of gait,

Yaks, antelopes, and flying fox, and monkeys great and small,

Bears, bulls, and other mighty beasts come flocking one and all:

Rhinoceros, mungoose, squirrel, boar, dog, jackal, buffalo,

Loris, hare, speckled panther, wolf and lizard, there they go:

Spiders and snakes and hairy things, and every kind of bird,

Which as they chirp and twitter round all make their voices heard:

Hawk, woodcock, heron, piper, owl, the cuckoo with his flute,

Partridge, geese, ospreys, pheasants, cranes, and redbacks, follow suit.

There sweetly singing to their mates the gorgeous-coloured things,

White-tufted, blue-neckt, peacock-hued flutter their pretty wings.

Why should I try their thousand names in detail to rehearse?

Imagine every kind of bird, and add them to my verse.

There a melodious company their thousand songs they make

And fill the air with pleasant noise round Mucalinda Lake.

The wood is full of elephants, of antelopes and deer,

Where hanging down from all the trees great creepers do appear.

There mustard grows, and sugar-cane, and many kinds of rice,

And beans and other plants and herbs, all comers to suffice.

Yonder the footpath leads you straight unto his settling-ground

Where never hunger, never thirst, and no distaste is found,

Where with his children now abides Vessantara the king:

With brahmin's dress, with hook and spoon, the ascetic's matted hair,

Skinclad he lies upon the ground, and tends the fire with care."

When this he heard, the brahmin walked around him towards the right,

And went to seek Vessantara, his heart in high delight.

Jujaka went on by the road pointed out to him by Accata the Hermit, and arrived at the foursquare lake. "It is now late evening," he thought: "Maddi will by now be returned from the forest, and women are always in the way. To-morrow, when she has gone into the forest, I will go to Vessantara, and ask him for the children, and before she comes back I will be away." So he climbed a flat-topt hill not far off, and lay down in a pleasant spot. Now at dawn of the next morning, Maddi had a dream, and her dream was after this fashion: A black man clothed in two yellow robes, with red flowers in his two ears, came and entered the hut of leaves, clutched Maddi by the hair of her head and dragged her out, threw her down on the ground backwards, and amidst her shrieks tore out her two eyes, cut off two arms, cut open her breast, and tearing out the heart dripping with blood carried it away. She awoke in affright, thinking—"An evil dream have I seen; I have no one here but Vessantara to interpret my dream, so I will ask him about it." Then going to the hut of the Great Being, she knocked at the door. "Who's there?" "I, my lord, Maddi." "Lady, why have you come here unseasonably, and broken our compact?" "My lord, it is not from desire that I come; but I have had an evil dream." "Tell it to me then, Maddi." She told it as it had appeared: the Great Being understood what the dream meant. "The perfection of my giving," he thought, "is to be fulfilled: this day comes a suitor to ask for my children. I will console Maddi and let her go." So he said, "Your mind must have been disturbed by uneasy sleep or by indigestion; fear nothing." With this deceit he consoled her, and let her go. And when the night grew light, she did all that had to be done, embraced and kissed the children, and said, "Last night I had a bad dream; be careful, my dears!" Then she gave them in charge of the Great Being, begging him to take care of them, took her basket and tools, wiped her tears, and away to the woods for fruits and roots.

But Jujaka, thinking that she would now be gone, came down from the hill and went up the footpath towards the hermitage. And the Great Being came out of his hut, and seated himself upon a slab of stone like a golden image. "Now the suitor will come!" he thought, like a drunkard, thirsting for a draught, and sat watching the road by which he would come, his children playing about his feet. And as he looked down the road, he saw the brahmin coming; taking up as it were the burden of his giving, for seven months laid down, he cried in joy—"Brahmin, pray draw near!" and to the boy Jali he addressed this stanza:

"Jali, arise and stand: behold a brahmin in my sight!

'Tis the old time come back again, and fills me with delight!"

Hearing this, the boy says:

“Yes, yes, my father, I behold the brahmin whom you see;

He comes as though a boon to ask; our guest he needs must be.”

And with these words, to shew him honour, the boy rose up from his seat, and went to meet the brahmin, offering to relieve him of his baggage. The brahmin looked at him, and thought, “This must be Jali, the son of Vessantara: from the very first I will speak harshly to him.” So he snapt his fingers at him, crying—“Go away, go away!” The boy thought, “A harsh man this, to be sure!” and looking at his body, he perceived in him the eighteen blemishes of a man. But the brahmin came up to the Bodhisatta, and politely greeting him, said

“O holy man, we trust that you are prosperous and well,

With grain to glean and roots and fruit abundant where you dwell.

Have you been much by flies and gnats and creeping things annoyed,

Or from wild beasts of prey have you immunity enjoyed?”

The Bodhisatta answered politely

“I thank you, brahmin, and reply: we prosper and are well

With grain to glean and roots and fruit abundant where we dwell.

From flies and gnats and creeping things we suffer no annoy,

And from wild beasts of prey we here immunity enjoy.

Seven months we have lived happy in this forest, and have not

Once seen a brahmin, as we now see you, godlike, I wot,

With vilva-staff and tinder-box, and with the waterpot.

Welcome, O brahmin! blest the chance directed you this way;

Come, enter with a blessing, come and wash your feet, I pray.

The tindook and the piyal leaves, the kasumari sweet,

And fruits like honey, brahmin, take the best I have, and eat.

And this cool water from a cave high hidden on a hill,

O noble brahmin, take of it, drink if it be your will."

After these words, the Great Being thought: "Not without cause is this brahmin come to this great forest; I will ask him the reason without delay "; and he recited this stanza:

"Now tell me what may be the cause, what can the reason be,

That brings you to this mighty wood? I pray you tell it me."

Jujaka said:

"As a great water-flood is full, and fails not any day,

So you, from whom I come to beg—give me your children, pray!"

On hearing this, the Great Being was delighted in heart; and said, like one who sets in the outstretched hand a purse of a thousand pieces of money :

"I give, and shrink not: you shall be their master. But my queen

Went out this morning for our food; at evening she'll be seen.

Stay here this night: the morning light shall see you on your way.

She'll wash them and perfume them both, and garland them with flowers.

Stay here this night: the morning light shall see you on your way.

Deckt out with flowers they both shall be, with scents and perfumes sweet;

Take them away, and plenty take of fruits and roots to eat."

Jujaka said:

"No, mighty monarch, I would go; I do not wish to stay:

I'll go, lest some impediment should thwart me in the way.

Women no generous givers are, to thwart they always try,

They know all sorts of cunning spells, and always go awry.

Let him who gives a gift in faith not see his mother's face,

Or she will find impediments: O king, I'd go apace.

Give me your children; let them not behold their mother's face:

For he that gives a gift in faith, his merit grows apace.

Give me your children; let them not behold their mother's face:

He who gives wealth to such as I, to heaven he goes apace."

Vessantara said:

"If you wish not to see my wife,—a faithful wife is she!

Let Jali and Kanhajina their grandsire go and see.

When these fair children, sweet of speech, shall come within his sight,

He'll give you wealth in plenty, full of joy and high delight."

Jujaka said:

"I fear the spoiling of my goods: O prince, I prithee hear!

The king may deal me punishment, may slay, or sell, I fear;

Sans wealth and servants, how my wife would mock at me, and jeer!"

Vessantara said:

When these fair children, sweet of speech, shall come within his sight,

The foster-king of Sivi folk, who always does the right,

Will give you wealth in plenty, filled with pleasure and delight."

Jujaka said:

"No, no, I will not do this thing which you would recommend:

I'll take the children, on my wife as servants to attend."

The children, hearing these harsh words, slunk behind the hut, and away they ran from behind the hut, and hid close to a clump of bushes. Even there they seemed to see themselves caught by Jujaka: trembling, they could not keep still anywhere, but ran hither and thither, until they came to the bank of the square lake; where, wrapping the bark garments tightly about them, they plunged into the water and stood there concealed, their heads hidden under the lily leaves.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“So Jali and Kanhajina hither and thither ran,

In deep distress to hear the voice of the pursuing man.”

And Jujaka, when he saw nothing of the children, upbraided the Bodhisatta: “Ho Vessantara! when you gave me the children just now, as soon as I told you that I would not go to the city of Jetuttara, but would make the children my wife’s attendants, you made them some sign, and caused them to run away, sitting there like innocence itself! Such a liar there is not in the world, I’m thinking.” The Great Being was moved. “They have run away, no doubt,” he thought, and said aloud, “Do not trouble about it, sir, I’ll fetch them.” So he arose and went behind the hut; perceiving that they must have fled to the woods, he followed their footprints to the lakeside, and then seeing a footprint where they went down into the water, he perceived that they must have gone into the water: so he called, “Jali, my boy!” reciting these two stanzas:

“Come hither, my beloved son, my perfect state fulfil;

Come now and consecrate my heart, and follow out my will.

Be thou my ship to ferry me safe o’er existence’ sea,

Beyond the worlds of birth and gods I’ll cross and I’ll be free.”

“Come, Jali, my boy!” cried he; and the lad hearing his voice thought thus—“Let the brahmin do with me what he will, I, will not quarrel with my father!” He raised his head, parted the lily-leaves, and came out of the water, throwing himself upon the Great Being’s right foot; embracing the ankle he wept. Then the Great Being said: “My boy, where is your sister?” He answered, “Father, all creatures take care of themselves in time of danger.” The Great Being recognized that the children must have made a bargain together, and he cried out, “Here, Kanha!” reciting two stanzas:

“Come hither, my beloved girl, my perfect state fulfil,

Come now and consecrate my heart, and follow out my will.

Be thou my ship to ferry me safe o’er existence’ sea,

Beyond the worlds of men and gods I’ll cross and lift me free!”

She also thought, “I will not quarrel with my father “; and in a moment out she came, and falling on her father’s left foot clasped his ankle and wept. Their tears fell upon the Great Being’s feet, coloured like a lily-leaf; and his tears fell on their backs, which had the colour of golden slabs. Then the Great Being raised up his children and comforted them, saying, “My son Jali, don’t you know that I have gladly given you away? So do that my desire may attain fulfilment.” And then and there he put a price on the children, as one puts a price on cattle. To his son he said: “Son Jali, if you wish to become free, you must pay the brahmin a

thousand pieces of gold. But your sister is very beautiful; if any person of low birth should give the brahmin so and so much to make her free, he would break her birthright. None but a king can give all things by the hundred; therefore if your sister would be free let her pay the brahmin a hundred male and a hundred female slaves, with elephants, horses, bulls, and gold pieces, all a hundred each." Thus did he price the children, and comforted them, and took them back to the hermitage. Then he took water in his waterpot, and calling the brahmin to come near, he poured out the water, praying that he might attain omniscience. "Dearer than my son a hundredfold, a thousandfold, a hundred thousandfold is omniscience!" he cried, making the earth resound, and to the brahmin he gave this precious gift of his children.

Explaining this, the Master said:

"The foster-king of Sivi land then took his children both,

And gave this gift most precious to the brahmin, nothing loth.

Then was there terror and affright, and the great earth did quake,

What time the king with folded hands bestowed the children both;

Then was there terror and affright, and the great earth did shake,

When Sivi's king his children gave the brahmin, nothing loth."

When the Great Being had made the gift, he was joyful, thinking how good a gift he had made, as he stood looking upon the children. And Jujaka went into the jungle, and bit off a creeper, and with it he bound the boy's right hand to the girl's left, and drove them away beating them with the ends of the creeper.

Explaining this, the Master said:

"The cruel brahmin bit a length of creeper off; which done,

He with the creeper bound their hands, and dragged the children on.

And then the brahmin, staff in hand, holding the creeper tight,

Beat them and drove them on and on before their father's sight."

Where he struck them, the skin was cut, the blood ran, when struck they staggered against each other back to back. But in a rugged place the man stumbled and fell: with their tender hands the children slipt off the light bond, and ran away weeping to the Great Being.

Explaining this, the Master said:

"The children thus at liberty then from the brahmin fly;

The boy looks on his father's face, the tears are in his eye.

Then like a fig-leaf in the wind the little boy did quake,

Embracing threw his arms around his father's feet, and spake

"Father, will you dispose of us while mother is away?

O do not give us till she come! till she return, O stay!

And will you then dispose of us while mother is away?

O wait until she shall return, then give us if you will!

Then let the brahmin sell us both, then let the brahmin kill!

His foot is huge, his nails are torn, his flesh hangs sagging down,

Long underlip and broken nose, all trembling, tawny-brown,

Pot-bellied, broken-backed, with eyes that chew an ugly squint,

All spots and wrinkles, yellow-haired, with beard of bloody tint,

Yellow, loose-jointed, cruel, huge, in skins of goats bedight,

A crooked and inhuman thing, a most terrific sight;

A man, or monstrous cannibal? and canst thou tamely see

This goblin come into the wood to ask this boon of thee?

And is thy heart a piece of stone fast bound about with steel,

To care not when this greedy man, who can no pity feel,

Binds us, and drives us off like kine? At least I would appeal

That sister Kanha, who as yet no trouble knows, may stay,

Now crying like a sucking fawn lost from the herd away."

To this the Great Being answered not one word. Then the boy said, lamenting on account of his parents :

"I care not for the pain of death, that is the lot of all:

Ne’er more to see my mother’s face, ’Tis this that doth appal.

I care not for the pain of death, that is the lot of all:

Ne’er more to see my father’s face, ’Tis this that doth appal.

Long will my parents mourn and weep, long will they nurse their woe,

At midnight and at dawn their tears will like a river flow,

No more to see Kanhajina, whom they had cherished so.

Those clusters of rose-apple trees which droop around the lake,

And all the fruitage of the woods this day we do forsake.

Fig-tree and jack-fruit, banyan broad and every tree that grows,

Yea! all the fruitage of the woods this day we do forsake.

There stand they like a pleasant park, there cool the river flows,

The place where once we used to play, this day we do forsake.

The fruit that once we used to eat, the flowers we used to wear,

That yonder grow upon the hill, this day we do forsake.

And all the pretty little toys that once we played with there,

The horses, oxen, elephants, this day we do forsake.”

In despite of these lamentations, Jujaka came and drove him away with his sister.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“The children to their father said as they were led away:

“O father! wish our mother well, and happy be your day!

These oxen, horses, elephants wherewith we used to play,

Give them to mother, and they will somewhat her grief allay.

These oxen, horses, elephants wherewith we used to play,

When she looks on them, will anon somewhat her grief allay.”

Now great pain arose in the Great Being because of his children, and his heart grew hot within him: he trembled violently, like an elephant seized by a maned lion, like the moon swallowed in Rahu's jaws. Not strong enough to endure it, he went into the hut, tears streaming from his eyes, and wept pitifully.

Explaining this, the Master said:

"The warrior prince Vessantara thus gave his gift, and went,

And there within his leafy bower he sadly did lament."

What follow are the verses of the Great Being's lamentation.

"O when at morning or at eve for food my children cry,

Opprest by hunger or by thirst, who will their want supply?

How will their little trembling feet along the roadway go,

Unshod? who'll take them by the hand and lead them gently so?

How could the brahmin feel no shame, while I was standing by,

To strike my harmless innocents? a shameless man say I!

No man with any sense of shame would treat another so,

Were it a servant of my slave, and I brought very low.

I cannot see him, but he scolds and beats my children dear,

While like a fish caught in a trap I'm standing helpless here."

These thoughts came into the Great Being's mind, through his affection for the children; he could not away with the pain to think how the brahmin cruelly beat his children, and he resolved to go in chase of the man, and kill him, and to bring the children back. But no, he thought: that was a mistake; to give a gift, then to repent because the children's trouble would be very great, that was not the way of the righteous. And the two following stanzas contain the reflexions which throw light on that matter.

"He bound his sword upon his left, he armed him with his bow;

I'll bring my children back again; to lose them is great woe.

But even if my children die 'Tis wicked to feel pain :

Who knows the customs of the good, yet asks a gift again?”

Meanwhile Jujaka beat the children as he led them along. Then the boy said lamenting:

“How true that saying seems to be which men are wont to tell:

Who has no mother of his own is fatherless as well.

Life’s nothing to us: let us die; we are his chattels now,

This cruel greedy violent man, who drives us like his cow.

These clusters of rose-apple trees, which droop around the lake,

And all the verdure of the woods, O Kanha, we forsake.

Fig-tree and jack-fruit, banyan tree, and every tree that grows,

Yea all the many kinds of fruit, O Kanha, we forsake.

There stand they like a pleasant park, there cool the river flows;

The place where once we used to play, O Kanha, we forsake.

The fruit that once we used to eat, the flowers we used to wear,

That yonder grow upon the hill, O Kanha, we forsake.

And all the little pretty toys that once we played with there,

The horses, oxen, elephants, O Kanha, we forsake.”

Again the brahmin fell down in a rough place: the cord fell from his hand, and the children, trembling like wounded fowls, ran away without stopping back to their father.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“Now Jali and Kanhajina, thus by the brahmin led,

Somehow got free, and then away and on and on they fled.”

But Jujaka quickly got up, and followed them, cord and stick in hand, spitting like the fire at the world’s end; “Very clever you are indeed,” said he, “at running away”; and he tied their hands and brought them back.

Explaining this, the Master said:

“And so the brahmin took his cord, and so his staff he took,

And brought them back with beating, while the king was forced to look.”

As they were led away, Kanhajina turned back, and lamented to her father. Explaining this, the Master said:

“Then spake Kanhajina and said: “My father, prithee see—

As though I were a home-born slave this brahmin thrashes me!

Brahmins are men of upright life: no brahmin he can be.

A goblin sure in brahmin-shape, that leads us off to eat.

And can you stay and see us led to be a goblin’s meat?”

As his young daughter lamented, trembling as she went, dire grief arose in the Great Being: his heart grew hot within him; his nose was not large enough, so from his mouth he sent forth hot pantings; tears like drops of blood fell from his eyes. Then he thought: “All this pain comes from affection, and no other cause; I must quiet this affection, and be calm.” Thus by power of his knowledge he did away with that keen pang of sorrow, and sat still as usual.

Ere they had yet reached the entering in of the mountains, the girl went on lamenting:

“Sore are these little feet of mine, hard in the way we go,

The brahmin drives us on and on, the sun is sinking low.

On hills and forests, and on those that dwell in them, we call,

We reverently bow to greet the spirits, one and all

That haunt this lake; its plants and roots and creepers, and we pray

To wish our mother health: but us the brahmin drives away.

If she would follow after us, let her make no delay.

Straight leads unto the hermitage this path by which we go;

And if she will but follow this, she soon will find us so.

Thou gatherer of wild fruits and roots, thou of the knotted hair,

To see the empty hermitage will cause thee great despair.

Long stayed our mother on her quest, great store she must have found,

Who knows not that a cruel man and greedy hath us bound,

A very cruel man, who now like cattle drives us round.

Ah, had our mother come at eve, and had they chanced to meet,

Had she given him a meal of fruit with honey mixt, to eat,—

He would not drive us cruelly, when he his meal had hent:

Cruel he drove us, and our feet loud echoed as we went!"

So for their mother longing sore the children did lament.

Now whereas the king gave his dearly beloved children to the brahmin, the earth did resound with a great uproar that reached even to Brahma's heaven and pierced the hearts of the deities which dwelt in Himavat: who, hearing the children's lamentation as the man drove them along, thought with themselves, "If Maddi come betimes to the hermitage, not seeing her children she will ask Vessantara about it; great will be her longing when she hears that they have been given away; she will run after them, and will get into great trouble: so they instructed three of the gods to take upon them the shape of a lion and a tiger and a pard, and to obstruct her way, not to let her go back for all her asking until the setting of the sun, that she might only get back by moonlight, guarding her safe from the attacks of lions and other wild beasts.

Explaining this, the Master said:

"A Lion, Tiger, and a Pard, three creatures of the brake,

Which heard this lamentation loud, thus each to other spake:

"Let not the princess back return at eve from seeking food,

Lest the wild beasts should slay her in our kingdom of the wood.

If lion, pard, or tiger should the auspicious mother slay,

O where would then Prince Jali be, O where Kanhajina

The parent and the children both do you preserve this day."

They agreed, and obeyed the words of the gods. Becoming a lion, a tiger, and a pard, they lay down near the road by which she must go Now Maddi was thinking to herself, "Last night I saw a bad dream; I will collect my fruits and roots and get me betimes to the

hermitage." Trembling she searched for the roots and fruits: the spade fell from her hand, the basket fell from her shoulder, her right eye went a-throbbing, fruit-trees appeared as barren and barren trees as fruitful, she could not tell whether she were on head or heels. "What can be the meaning," she thought, "of this strangeness to-day!" and she said—

"Down falls my spade, a throbbing now in my right eye I feel,

The fruitful trees unfruitful seem, all round me seems to reel!"

And when she turned at evening time to go, the day's work done,

Wild beasts beset her homeward path at setting of the sun.

"The hermitage is far, methinks, the sun is sinking low

And all the food they have to eat is what I bring, I know.

And there my prince sits all alone within the leafy hut,

The hungry children comforting: and I returning not.

It is the time of evening meal, O woe is me! 'Tis late:

Thirsting for water or for milk my children me await;

They come to meet me, standing like calves looking for their dam;

Like wild-goose chicks above the lake—O wretched that I am!

This is the sole and only path, with ponds and pits around:

And I can see no other road now I am homeward bound.

O mighty monarchs of the woods, O royal beasts, I cry,

Be brothers now in righteousness, and let me safe go by!

I am a banisht prince's wife, a prince of glory fair;

As Sita did for Rama, so I for my husband care.

When you go home at evening time, your children you can see:

So Jali and Kanhajina be given once more to me!

Here are abundant roots and fruits, much food I have to chew:

The half I offer now to you: O let me safely go!

A king my father, and a queen my mother—hear my cry!

Be brothers now in righteousness, and let me safe go by!”

Then the gods, observing the time, saw that it was time to let her go; and they rose up and departed. The Master explained it thus:

“The beasts that heard her thus lament with great exceeding woe,

In voice of sweet and gentle sound, went off and let her go.”

When the beasts had departed, she returned to the hermitage. Now it was the night of the full moon; and when she came to the end of the covered walk, where she had been used to see her children, and saw them not, she cried out:

“The children, dusty, close to home, are wont to meet me here

Like calves that seek the mother-cow, like birds above the mere.

Like little deer, with prickt-up ear, they meet me on the way:

With joy and happiness they skip and frolick in their play:

But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day.

As goat and lioness may leave their young, a bird her cage,

To seek for food, so have I done their hunger to assuage:

But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day.

Here are their traces, close by home, like snakes upon the hill,

The little heaps of earth they made all round, remaining still:

But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day.

All covered up with dust to me my children used to run,

Sprinkled with mud, but now indeed I can see neither one.

Like kids to welcome back their dam they ran from home away

As from the forest I returned; I see them not to-day.

Here they were playing, here this yellow vilva fruit let fall:

But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day.

These breasts of mine are full of milk, my heart will break withal:

But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day.

They used to cling about my hips, one hanging from my breast:

How they would meet me, dust-begrimed, at time of evening rest!

But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day.

Once on a time this hermitage became our meeting-ground:

But now I see no children here, the whole place spins around.

My children must be dead! the place so silent has become—

The very ravens do not caw, the very birds are dumb."

Lamenting in this fashion, she came up to the Great Being, and set down the basket of fruit. Seeing him sitting in silence, and no children with him, she said:

"Why art thou silent? how that dream comes to my thought again:

The birds and ravens make no sound, my children must be slain!

O sir, have they been carried off by some wild beast of prey?

Or in the deep deserted wood have they been led astray?

O do the pretty prattlers sleep? on errands do they fare?

O have they wandered out afar in frolic or in play?

I cannot see their hands and feet, I cannot see their hair:

Was it a bird that swooped? or who has carried them away?"

To this the Great Being made no reply. Then she asked, "My lord, why do you not speak to me? what is my fault?" and said:

"'Tis like the wound of arrow-shot, and still more bitter smart

(But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day!)

This is a second wound that thou hast struck me to the heart,

That I my children cannot see, that thou hast nought to say.

And so, O royal prince! this night since thou wilt not reply,

I think my days are done indeed, and thou wilt see me die."

The Great Being thought that he would assuage his pain for the children by harsh speech, and recited this stanza:

"O Maddi, royal princess born, whose glory is so great,

Thou wentst for food in early morn: why comest thou so late?"

She replied:

"Did you not hear the lion and the tiger loudly roar

When by the lake their thirst to slake they stood upon the shore?

As in the woods I walked, there came the sign I knew so well:

My spade fell from my hand, and from my arm the basket fell.

Then hurt, alarmed, I worshipt all the quarters, one by one,

Praying that good might come of this, my hands outstretcht in prayer:

And that no lion and no pard, hyena, wolf or bear,

Might tear or harry or destroy my daughter or my son.

A lion, tiger, and a pard, three ravening beasts, laid wait

And kept me from my homeward path: so that is why I'm late."

This was all that the Great Being said to her until sunrise: after which Maddi uttered a long lament:

"My husband and my children I have tended day and night,

As pupil tends a teacher, when he tries to do the right.

In goatskins clothed, wild roots and fruits I from the forest brought,

And every day and every night for your convenience sought.

I brought you yellow vilva fruit, my little girl and boy,

And many a ripe woodland fruit, to play and make you joy.

This lotus root and lotus stalk, of golden yellow hue,

Join with your little ones, O prince, and eat your portion too.

Give the white lily to your girl, to Jali give the blue,

And see them dance in garlands deckt: O call them, Sivi, do!

O mighty monarch! lend an ear while with delightful sound

Kanhajina sings sweetly, and enters our settling-ground.

Since we were banisht, joy and woe in common shared has been:

O answer! my Kanhajina and Jali hast thou seen?

How many holy brahmins I must have offended sore,

Of holy life, and virtuous, and full of sacred lore,

That Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day!”

To this lament the Great Being answered not one word. As he said nothing, trembling she sought her children by the light of the moon; and wheresoever they used to play, under the rose-apple trees or where not, she sought them, weeping the while, and saying:

“These clusters of rose-apple trees, that droop around the mere,

And all the fruitage of the woods—my children are not here!

Fig-tree and jack-fruit, banyan broad, and every tree that grows,

Yea, all the fruitage of the woods—my children are not here!

There stand they like a pleasant park, there cool the river flows,

The place where once they used to play—but now they are not here.

The fruit that once they used to eat, the flowers they used to wear

That yonder grow upon the hill—the children are not there!

And all the little toys that once they played with, there are those,

The oxen, horses, elephants—the children are not there!

Here are the many hares and owls, the dark and dappled deer,

With which the children used to play, but they themselves not here!

The peacocks with their gorgeous wings, the herons and the geese,

With which the children used to play, but they themselves not here!"

Not finding her darling children in the hermitage, she entered a clump of flowering plants and looked here and there for them, saying:

"The woodland thickets, full of flowers that every season blow,

Where once the children used to play, but they themselves not here!

The lovely lakes that listen, when the ruddy geese give call,

When lotus white and lotus blue and trees like coral grow,

Where once the children played, but now no children are at all."

But nowhere could she see the children. Then returning to the Great Being, whom she beheld with his face cast down, she said to him:

"The kindling wood you have not split, the fire you have not lit,

Nor brought the water as before: why do you idly sit?

When I return unto my den my toil is done away,

But Jali and Kanhajina I cannot see to-day!"

Still the Great Being sat silent; and she distrest at his silence, trembling like a wounded fowl, went again round the places which she had searched before, and returning said:

"O husband mine, I cannot see by whom their death has come:

The very ravens do not caw, the very birds are dumb."

Still the Great Being said no word. And she, in her longing for the little ones, a third time searched the same places quick as the wind: in one night the space which she traversed in seeking them was fifteen leagues. Then the night gave place to dawn, and at sunrise she came again to the Great Being, and stood before him lamenting. The Master explained it thus:

“When she had traversed in the search each forest and each hill,

Back to her husband she returned, and stood lamenting still.

“In hills, woods, caves I cannot see by whom their death has come:

The very ravens do not caw, the very birds are dumb.”

Then Maddi, dame of high renown, princess of royal birth,

Lamenting with her arms outstretcht fell down upon the earth.”

“She’s dead!” thought the Great Being, and trembled. “Ah, this is no place for Maddi to die! Had she died in Jetuttara city, great pomp there would have been, two kingdoms would have quaked. But I am alone in the forest, and what can I do?” Great trouble came upon him; then recovering himself somewhat, he determined to do what he could. Rising up he laid a hand on her heart, and felt it to be still warm: he brought water in a pitcher, and although for seven months past he had not touched her body, in his distress he could no longer keep to the ascetic’s part, but with tears in his eyes he raised her head and laid it upon his lap, sprinkling it with water, and chafing her face and bosom as he sat. Then Maddi after a little while regains her senses, and, rising up in confusion, does obeisance to the Great Being, and asks, “My lord Vessantara, where are the children gone?” “I have given them,” says he, “to a brahmin.” The Master thus explained it:

“He sprinkled her with water as she fell down faint as dead,

And when she had come back again to consciousness, he said”—

She asked him, “My dear, if you had given the children to a brahmin, why did you let me go weeping about all night, without saying a word?” The Great Being replied:

“I did not speak at once, because I shrank to cause you pain.

A poor old brahmin came to beg, and so, of giving fain,

I gave the children: do not fear, O Maddi! breathe again.

O Maddi, do not grieve too sore, but set your eyes on me:

We’ll get them back alive once more, and happy shall we be.

Good men should ever give when asked, sons, cattle, wealth, and grain.

Maddi, rejoice! a greater gift than children cannot be.”

Maddi replied:

“I do rejoice! a greater gift than children cannot be.

By giving set your mind at rest; pray do the like again:

For you, the mighty fostering king of all the Sivi land,

Amidst a world of selfish men gave gifts with lavish hand.”

To this the Great Being answered: “Why do you say this, Maddi? If I had not been able to set my mind at peace by giving my children, these miracles would not have happened to me”; and then he told her all the earth-rumblings and what else had happened. Then Maddi rejoicing described the miracles in these words:

“The earth did rumble, and the sound the highest heaven fills,

The lightning flared, the thunder woke the echoes of the hills!

Then Narada and Pabbata both greatly did rejoice,

Yea, all the Three and Thirty Gods with Indra, at that voice.

Thus Maddi, dame of royal birth, princess of high degree,

Rejoiced with him: a greater gift than children none can be.”

Thus the Great Being described his own gift; and thus did Maddi repeat the tale, affirming that he had given a noble gift, and there she sat rejoicing in the same gift: on which occasion the Master repeated the stanza, “Thus Maddi,” etc.

As they were thus talking together, Sakka thought: “Yesterday Vessantara gave his children to Jujaka, and the earth did resound. Now suppose a vile creature should come and ask him for Maddi herself, the incomparable, the virtuous, and should take her away with him leaving the king alone: he will be left helpless and destitute. Well, then, I will take the form of a brahmin, and beg for Maddi. Thus I will enable him to attain the supreme height of perfection; I shall make it impossible that she should be given to anyone else and then I will give her back.” So at dawn, to him goes Sakka. The Master explained it thus:

“And so when night was at an end, about the peep of day,

Sakka in brahmin’s form to them first early made his way.

“O holy man, I trust that you are prosperous and well,

With grain to glean, and roots and fruit abundant where you dwell.

Have you been much by flies and gnats and creeping things annoyed,

Or from wild beasts of prey have you immunity enjoyed?”

The Great Being replied:

“Thank you, brahmin—yes, I am both prosperous and well,

With grain to glean, and fruits and roots abundant where I dwell.

From flies and gnats and creeping things I suffer no annoy,

And from wild beasts of prey I here immunity enjoy.

I’ve lived here seven sad months, and you the second brahmin found,

Holding a goat-staff in his hand, to reach this forest-ground.

Welcome, O brahmin! blest the chance directed you this way;

Come enter with a blessing, come, and wash your feet, I pray.

The tindook and the piyal leaves, and kasumari sweet,

And fruits like honey, brahmin, take the best I have, and eat.

And this cool water from a cave high hidden on a hill,

O noble brahmin! take of it, drink if it be your will.”

As thus they talked pleasantly together he asked of his coming:

“And now what reason or what cause directed you this way?

Why have you sought the mighty woods? resolve me this, I pray.”

Then Sakka replied: “O king, I am old, but I have come here to beg your wife Maddi; pray give her to me,” and he repeated this stanza:

“As a great water-flood is full and fails not any day,

So you, from whom I come to beg—give me your wife, I pray.”

To this the Great Being did not reply—“Yesterday I gave away my children to a brahmin, how can I give Maddi to you and be left alone in the forest!” No, he was as though putting a purse of a thousand pieces in his hand: indifferent, unattached, with no clinging of mind, he made the mountain re-echo with this stanza:

“Weary am I, nor hide I that: yet in my own despite,

I give, and shrink not: for in gifts my heart doth take delight."

This said, quickly he drew water in a pitcher, and poured it upon his hand, and made over Maddi to the brahmin. At that moment, all the portents which had occurred before were again seen and heard. The Master thus explained it:

"Then he took up a water-jar, the king of Sivi land,

And taking Maddi, gave her straight into the brahmin's hand.

Then was there terror and affright, then the great earth did quake,

What time he rendered Maddi for his visitor to take.

The face of Maddi did not frown, she did not chafe or cry,

But looked on silent, thinking, He knows best the reason why.

"Both Jali and Kanhajina I let another take,

And Maddi my devoted wife, and all for wisdom's sake.

Not hateful is my faithful wife, nor yet my children are,

But perfect knowledge, to my mind, is something dearer far."

Then the Great Being looked upon Maddi's face to see how she took it; and she, asking him why he looked upon her, cried aloud with a lion's voice in these words:

"From maidenhood I was his wife, he is my master still:

Let him to whomso he desire or give, or sell, or kill."

Then Sakka, seeing her excellent resolution, gave her praise; and the Master explained it thus:

"Thereat spake Sakka, seeing how her wishes did incline:

"Conquered is every obstacle, both human and divine.

The earth did rumble, and the sound the highest heaven fills,

The lightning flares, the thunder wakes the echoes of the hills.

Now Narada and Pabbata to hear this mighty voice,

Yea, all the Three and Thirty Gods at this hard feat rejoice.

’Tis hard to do as good men do, to give as they can give,

Bad men can hardly imitate the life that good men live.

And so, when good and evil go to pass away from earth,

The bad are born in hell below, in heaven the good have birth.

This is the Noble Vehicle : both wife and child were given,

Therefore let him descend no more, but this bear fruit in heaven.”

When thus Sakka had expressed his approval, he thought, “Now I must make no more delay here, but give her back and go”; and he said:

“Sir, now I give you Maddi back, your fair and lovely wife,

A pair well-matched, and fitted for a most harmonious life.

Like the inevitable bond ’twixt water and a shell,

So you with Maddi; mind and heart are both according well.

Of equal birth and family on either parents’ side

Here in a forest hermitage together you abide,

That ye may go on doing good where in the woods you dwell.”

This said, he went on, offering a boon:

“Sakka the King of Gods am I, here come thy place to see:

Choose thou a boon, O royal sage, eight boons I give to thee.”

As he spoke, he rose into the air ablaze like the morning sun. Then the Bodhisatta said, choosing his boons:

“Sakka, the lord of all the earth, has given me a boon.

Prithee my father reconcile, let him recall me soon

And set me in my royal seat: this the first boon I crave.

May I condemn no man to death, not though he guilty be:

Condemned, may I release from death: this second boon I crave.

May all the people for their help look only unto me,

The young, the old, the middle-aged: this the third boon I crave.

May I not seek my neighbour's wife, contented with my own,

Nor subject to a woman's will: this the fourth boon I crave.

I prithee, Sakka, grant long life to my beloved son,

Conquering the world in righteousness: this the fifth boon I crave.

Then at the end of every night, at dawning of the day,

May food celestial be revealed: this the sixth boon I crave.

May means of giving never fail, and may I give alway

With hearty gladness and content: this the seventh boon I crave.

Hence freed, may I be straight advanced to heaven, then that I may

No more be born upon the earth: this the eighth boon I crave."

When Sakka, King of Gods, had heard his saying, thus said he:

"Ere long, the father whom you love, will wish his son to see."

With this address, Sakka went back to his own place. Explaining this, the Master said:

"The Mighty One, the King of Gods, this said, Sujampati,

After the giving of the boons straight back to heaven went he."

Now the Bodhisatta and Maddi lived happily together in the hermitage which Sakka had given them; but Jujaka, with the children, went on a journey of sixty leagues. The deities watched over the children; Jujaka when the sun went down used to tie up the children with osiers and leave them lying upon the ground, but himself in fear of cruel and wild beasts would climb up a tree and would sit in the fork of the boughs. Then a god would come to the children in the form of Vessantara, and a goddess in the form of Maddi; they would set free the children, and chafe their hands and feet, wash them and dress them, would give them food and put them to rest on a celestial couch: then at dawn they would lay them down again in their bonds, and would disappear. Thus by help of the gods the children went on their way unhurt. Jujaka also was guided by the gods, so that intending to go to the kingdom of Kalinga, in fifteen days he came to the city of Jetuttara. The same night, Sanjaya, king of Sivi, dreamt a dream, and his dream was on this fashion: As he was seated

in high durbar, a man came and gave him two blossoms into his hand, and he hung them one on either ear; and the pollen fell from them upon his chest. When he awoke in the morning, he asked his brahmins what it meant. They said, “Some knights of yours, sire, who have been long absent, will return.” So next morning, after feasting on many a dainty dish, he sat in his durbar, and the deities brought this brahmin and set him in the courtyard of the palace. In a moment the king saw the children, and said:

“Whose face is this that yellow shines, dry as though fire did scorch,

Like some gold bangle—one as though all shrivelled with a torch?

Both like in body, like in marks—who can these children be?

Like Jali is the boy, and like Kanhajina is she.

They’re like two little lion cubs that from their cave descend,

And like each other: and they seem all golden as they stand.”

After thus praising them in three stanzas the king sent a courtier to them, with instructions to bring them to him. Quickly he brought them; and the king said to the brahmin:

“Good Bharadvaja, tell me whence you have those children brought?”

Jujaka said:

“A fortnight since one gave them me, well pleased with what he wrought.”

The king said:

“By what soft speech or word of truth did you make him believe?

From whom these children, chiefest of all gifts, did you receive?”

Jujaka said:

“It was the King Vessantara, in forest lands who lives,

Gave them as slaves, who like the earth to all suitors freely gives.

’Twas King Vessantara who gave his own as slaves to me,

To whom all suitors go, as go all rivers to the sea.”

Hearing this, the courtiers spake in dispraise of Vessantara:

“Were he at home, it were ill done by any king that’s good:

How could he give his children then, when banisht in the wood?

O listen to me, gentles all, that here assembled stand,

How could the king his children give to serve another's hand?

Slaves male or female he might give, a horse, a mule, a car,

Or elephants: but how give those who his own children are?"

But the boy hearing this, could not stomach his father's blame; but as though raising with his arm Mount Sineru smitten by the windblast, he recited this stanza:

"How, grandsire, can he give, when none in his possession are,

Slaves male or female, elephants, a horse, a mule, a car?"

The king said:

"Children, I praise your father's gift: no word of blame I say.

But then how was it with his heart when he gave you away?"

The lad replied:

"All full of trouble was his heart, and it burned hot as well,

His eyes were red like Rohini, and down the teardrops fell."

Then spake Kanhajina and said:

"Father, this brahmin see—

With creepers, like his homeborn slave, my back he loves to beat.

This is no brahmin, father dear! for brahmins righteous be;

A goblin this in brahmin shape, who drives us off to eat.

How can you see us driven off with all this cruelty?"

The king, seeing that the brahmin did not let them go, recited a stanza:

"You children of a king and queen, royal your parents are:

Once you would climb upon my hip; why do you stand afar?"

The lad replied:

“We’re children of a king and queen, royal our parents are,

But now a brahmin’s slaves are we, and so we stand afar.”

The king said:

“My dearest children, speak not so; my heart is parcht with heat,

My body’s like a blazing fire, uneasy is this seat.

My dearest children, speak not so; you make me sorrow sore.

Come, I will buy you with a price, ye shall be slaves no more.

Come tell me truly as it is,—I will the brahmin pay—

What price your father set on you when he gave you away?”

The lad replied:

“A thousand pieces was my price: to set my sister free,

Of elephants and all the rest a hundred each fixed he.”

The king bade pay the price for the children.

“Up, bailiff, pay the brahmin quick, and let the price be told:

A hundred male and female slaves, and cattle from the fold,

A hundred elephants and bulls, a thousand pounds in gold.’

The bailiff paid the brahmin quick, at once the price was told:

A hundred male and female slaves, and cattle from the fold,

A hundred bulls and elephants, a thousand pounds in gold.”

Thereto he gave him a seven-storeyed palace; great was the brahmin’s pomp! He put away all his treasure, and went up into his palace, and lay down on his fine couch, eating choice meats.

The children were then washed and fed and drest; the grandfather took one on his hip, the grandmother took the other. To explain this, the Master said:

“The children bought, well washt and drest, richly adorned, and fed,

And set on their grandparents’ hips, the king then spake and said:

“Jali, your parents are we trust both prosperous and well,

With grain to glean and roots and fruits abundant where they dwell.

Have they been much by flies and gnats and creeping things annoyed,

And have they from wild beasts of prey immunity enjoyed?”

The lad replied:

“I thank thee, king, and answer thus: my parents both are well,

With grain to glean and roots and fruits abundant where they dwell.

From flies and gnats and creeping things they suffer not annoy,

And from wild beasts of prey they there immunity enjoy.

Wild bulbs and radishes she digs, catmint and herbs seeks she,

With jujubes, nuts, and vilva fruit she finds us food alway.

And when she brings wild fruits and roots, whatever they may be,

We all together come and eat by night and eke by day.

Our mother’s thin and yellow grown by seeking for our food,

Exposed to heat, exposed to wind in the beast-haunted wood.

Like to a tender lotus flower held in the hand which fades:

Her hair is thin with wandering amid the forest glades.

Beneath her armpits clotted dirt, her hair in topknot bound,

She tends the fire, and clothed in skins she sleeps upon the ground.”

Thus having described his mother’s hardships, he reproached his grandfather in these words:

“It is the custom in the world that each man loves his son;

But this in one case it would seem your honour has not done."

The king acknowledged his fault:

"It was ill done of me indeed to ruin the innocent,

When by the people's voice I drove my son to banishment.

Then all the wealth which I possess, all that I have in hand,

Be his; and let Vessantara come and rule in Sivi land."

The lad replied:

"Not for my word will he return, the chief of Sivi land:

Then go thyself and fill thy son with blessings from thy hand."

Then to his general-in-chief King Sanjaya thus said:

"My horses, chariots, elephants, and soldiers go prepare,

And let the people come around, the chaplains all be there.

The sixty thousand warrior lords armed and adorned so fair,

Drest up in blue or brown or white, with bloodred crests, be there.

Like as the spirit-haunted hills, where trees a plenty grow,

Are bright and sweet with plants divine, so here the breezes blow.

Bring fourteen thousand elephants, with trappings all of gold,

With drivers holding lance and hook: as many horse be told.

Sindh horses, all of noble breed, and very swift to go,

Each ridden by a henchman bold, and, holding sword and bow.

Let fourteen thousand chariots be yoked and well arrayed,

Their wheels well wrought of iron bands, and all with gold inlaid.

Let them prepare the banners there, the shields and coats of mail,

And bows withal, those men of war that strike and do not fail."

Thus the king described the constitution of his army; and he gave orders to level the road from Jetuttara away to Mount Vamka to a width of eight rods, and thus and thus to decorate it. He said:

“Strow laja flowers all about, and scented garlands strow,

Let there be pious offerings on the way that he shall go.

Each hamlet bring a hundred jars of wine for those who wish,

And set them down beside the road by which my son shall go.

Let flesh and cakes be ready there, soup garnisht well with fish,

And set them down beside the road by which my son shall go.

Wine, oil, and ghee, milk, millet, rice, and curds in many a dish,

Let them be set beside the road by which my son shall go.

Cooks and confectioners be there, and men to sing or play,

Dancers and tumblers, tomtom men, to drive dull care away.

The lutes give voice, the harsh-mouth’d conch, and let the people thrum

On timbrels and on tabours and on every kind of drum.”

Thus the king described the preparation of the road.

But Jujaka ate too much and could not digest it, so he died on the spot. The king arranged for his funeral: proclamation was made through the city by beat of drum, but no relative could be found, and his goods fell to the king again.

On the seventh day, all the host assembled. The king in great ceremony set out with Jali as his guide. This the Master explained as follows:

“Then did the mighty host set forth, the army of the land,

And went towards the Vamka hill, while Jali led the band.

The elephant of sixty years gave forth a trumpet sound,

Loud trumpeted the mighty beast what time his girth they bound.

Then rattled loud the chariot wheels, then neighed the horses loud,

As the great army marched along the dust rose in a cloud.

For every need provided well the host marcht with a will,

And Jali led the army on as guide to Vamka hill.

They entered in the forest wide, so full of birds and trees,

With every kind of flowering plant and any fruit you please.

There when the forest is in flower, a shower of song is heard,

The twitter here and twitter there of many a bright-winged bird.

A night and day they marcht, and came to the end of their long road,

And entered on the district where Vessantara abode “

On the banks of Lake Mucalinda, Prince Jali caused them to intrench a camp: the fourteen thousand chariots he set facing the road by which they came, and a guard here and there to keep off lions, tigers, rhinoceros, and other wild beasts. There was a great noise of elephants and so forth; this the Great Being heard, and scared to death thought he—“Have they killed my father and come hither after me!” Taking Maddi with him he climbed a hill and surveyed the army. Explaining this, the Master said:

“The noise of this approaching host Vessantara did hear;

He climbed a hill and looked upon the army, full of fear.

O listen, Maddi, how the woods are full of roaring sound,

The neighing of the horses hear, the banners see around.

Can they be hunters, who with pits or hunting-nets or knives

Seek the wild creatures in the woods with shouts to take their lives?

So we, exiled though innocent, in this wild forest land,

Expect a cruel death, now fallen into an enemy’s hand.”

When she had heard these words, she looked at the army, and convinced that it was their own army, she recited this stanza to comfort him:

“All will be well: thy enemies can do no hurt to thee,

No more than any flame of fire could overcome the sea.”

So the Great Being was reassured, and with Maddi came down from the hill and sat before his hut. This the Master explained:

“Then King Vessantara hereat descended from the hill,

And sat before his leafy hut and bad his heart be still.”

At that moment, Sanjaya sent for his queen, and said to her: “My dear Phusati, if we all go together it will be a great shock, so I will first go alone. When you feel that they must be quiet and reassured, you may come with a company.” After a little time he told Jali and Kanhajina to come. He turned his chariot to face the road by which he had come, and set a guard in this place and in that, mounted upon his caparisoned elephant, and went to seek his son. The Master explained it thus:

“He set his army in array, his car turned to the road,

And sought the forest where his son in loneliness abode.

Upon his elephant, his robe over one shoulder thrown,

Clasping his upraised hands, he went to give his son the throne.

Then he beheld the beauteous prince, fearless, composed in will,

Seated before his hut of leaves and meditating still.

Vessantara and Maddi then their father went to greet,

As they beheld him drawing nigh, eager his son to see.

Then Maddi made obeisance, laid her head before his feet,

Then he embraced them; with his hand he stroked them pleasantly.”

Then weeping and lamenting for sorrow, the king spoke kindly to them.

“I hope and trust, my son, that you are prosperous and well,

With grain to glean and fruits and roots abundant where you dwell.

Have you been much by flies and gnats and creeping things annoyed,

And have you from wild beasts of prey immunity enjoyed?”

The Great Being answered his father:

“My lord, the life we had to live a wretched life has been;

We had to live as best we could, to eat what we could glean.

Adversity breaks in a man, just as a charioteer

Breaks in a horse: adversity, O king, has tamed us here.

But ‘Tis our parents’ absence which has made our bodies thin,

Banisht, O king, and with the woods and forests to live in.”

After this he asked the fate of his children.

“But Jali and Kanhajina, your hapless heirs, whom now,

A brahmin cruel, merciless, drives on like any cow,

If you know anything of these the royal children, tell,

As a physician tries to make a man with snake-bite well.”

The king said:

“Both Jali and Kanhajina, your children, now are bought:

I paid the brahmin: therefore be consoled, my son, fear nought.”

The Great Being was consoled to hear this, and conversed pleasantly with his father.

“I hope, dear father, you are well, and trouble comes no more,

And that my mother does not weep until her eyes are sore.”

The king replied:

“Thank you, my son, I am quite well, and trouble comes no more,

So too your mother does not weep until her eyes are sore.”

The Great Being said:

“I hope the kingdom all is well, the countryside at peace,

The animals all strong to work, the rain clouds do not cease.”

The king replied:

“O yes, the kingdom all is well, the countryside at peace,

The animals all strong to work, the rain clouds do not cease.”

As they thus talked together, Queen Phusati, feeling sure that they must be all relieved from anxiety, came to her son with a great company.

The Master explained it thus:

“Now while they talked together thus, the mother there was seen

Approaching to the door afoot, barefooted though a queen.

Vessantara and Maddi then their mother went to greet,

And Maddi ran and laid her head before her mother’s feet.

The children safe and sound afar then Maddi did espy,

Like little calves that see their dam loud greetings they did cry.

And Maddi saw them safe and sound: like one possest she sped,

Trembling, and felt all full of milk the breasts at which they fed.”

At that moment the hills resounded, the earth quaked, the great ocean was troubled, Sineru, king of mountains, bent down: the six abodes of the gods were all one mighty sound. Sakka, king of the gods, perceived that six royal personages and their attendants lay senseless on the ground, and not one of them could arise and sprinkle the others with water; so he resolved to produce a shower of rain. This he did, so that those who wished to be wet were wet, and those who did not, not a drop of rain fell upon them, but the water ran off as it runs from a lotus-leaf. That rain was like rain that falls on a clump of lotus-lilies. The six royal persons were restored to their senses, and all the people cried out at the marvel, how the rain fell on the group of kinsfolk, and the great earth did quake. This the Master explained as follows:

“When these of kindred blood were met, a mighty sound outspake,

That all the hills reechoed round, and the great earth did quake.

God brought a mighty cloud wherefrom he sent a shower of rain,

When as the King Vessantara his kindred met again.

King, queen, and son, and daughter-in-law, and grandsons, all were there,

When they were met their flesh did creep with rising of the hair.

The people clapt their hands and loud made to the king a prayer:

They called upon Vessantara and Maddi, one and all:

“Be thou our lord, be king and queen, and listen to our call !”

Then the Great Being addressed his father:

“You and the people, countryfolk and townsfolk, banisht me,

When I upon my royal throne was ruling righteously.”

The king replied, to allay his son’s resentment:

“It was ill done of me indeed to ruin the innocent,

When by the people’s voice I drove my son to banishment.”

After reciting this verse, he added yet another, to ask for relief from his own sorrow:

“A father’s or a mother’s pain, or sister’s, to relieve,

A man should never hesitate his very life to give.”

The Bodhisat, who had been desirous of resuming his royalty, but had refrained from saying so much in order to inspire respect, now agreed; whereupon the sixty thousand courtiers, his birthmates, cried out—

“‘Tis time to wash, O mighty king—wash off the dust and dirt!”

But the Great Being replied, “Wait a little.” Then he entered his hut, and took off his hermit’s dress, and put it away. Next he came out of the hut, and said, “This is the place where I have spent nine months and a half in ascetic practices, where I attained the summit of perfection in giving, and where the earth did quake”: thrice he went about the hut rightwise and made the five-fold prostration before it. Then they attended to his hair and beard, and poured over him the water of consecration, while he shone in all his magnificence like the king of the gods. So it is said,

“Then did the King Vessantara wash off the dust and dirt.”

Great was his glory: every place quaked that he looked on, those skilled in auspicious words uttered them, they caught up all manner of musical instruments; over the mighty ocean there was a sound like the noise of thunder; the precious elephant they brought richly caparisoned, and girding himself with the sword of price he mounted the precious elephant, whilst the sixty thousand courtiers, his birthmates, compassed him around in

gorgeous array.

Maddi also they bathed and adorned and sprinkled with the water of consecration, and as they poured the water they cried aloud, “May Vessantara protect thee!” with other words of good omen. The Master explained it thus:

“With washen head and goodly robes and ornaments of state,

Girt with his awful sword he rode the elephant his mate.

And then the sixty thousand chiefs, so beauteous to view,

His birthmates, came about their lord and did obeisance due.

The women then bathed Maddi, and all together pray—

“Vessantara and Sanjaya preserve you all alway!”

Thus reestablished, and their past trouble remembering,

There in the pleasant master’s land they made a merry cheer.

Thus reestablished, and the past trouble remembering,

Happy and glad the lady went with her own children dear.”

So in happiness she said to her children:

“I only ate one meal a day, I slept upon the ground,

That was my vow for love of you until you should be found.

But now my vow is brought to pass, and now again I pray,

What good so ever we have done preserve you both alway,

And may the great king Sanjaya preserve you both alway

What good so ever has been done by father or by me,

By that truth grow thou never old, immortal do thou be.”

Queen Phusati said also, “Henceforth let my daughter-in-law be robed in these robes, and wear these ornaments!” These she sent her in boxes. This the Master explained thus:

“Garments of cotton and of silk, linen and cloth so fine

Her mother-in-law to Maddi sent which made her beauty shine.

Necklet and bracelet, frontlet-piece, foot-bangle, jewelled zone

Her mother-in-law to Maddi sent, wherewith her beauty shone.

And when the princess passing fair her jewellery surveyed,

She shone, as shines in Nandana the goddesses arrayed.

With washen head and ornaments and goodly robes to see,

She shone, like to some heavenly nymph before the Thirty-Three.

As when in Cittalata Grove the wind a plantain sways,

The princess of the beauteous lips looked lovely as that tree.

Like as a brilliant-feathered bird that flies the airy ways,

She with her pretty pouting lips and beauty did amaze.

They brought a fine young elephant, a mighty and a strong,

Which neither spear nor battle din could fright, whose tusks were long.

She mounts upon the elephant, so mighty and so strong,

Which neither spear nor battle din could fright, whose tusks were long."

So they two in great pomp proceeded to the camp. King Sanjaya and his innumerable host amused themselves in hill sports and woodland sports for a whole month. During that time, by the Great Being's glory, no hurt was done in all that great forest by wild beast or bird. The Master thus explained it:

"By glory of Vessantara, through all that mighty wood,

No beast or bird did any harm to the others, all did good.

And when he was to go away, they all with one consent,

Birds, beasts, and all the creatures of the wood, together went:

But silent were all pleasant sounds when he had left the wood."

After the month's merry-making, Sanjaya summoned his captain-in-chief, and said, "We have stayed a long time in the forest; is the road ready for my son's return?" He replied,

“Yes, my lord, it is time to go.” He sent word to Vessantara, and with his army departed, following with all his host the road which had been prepared from the heart of Vamka hill to the city of Jetuttara. This the Master explained as follows:

“The royal road was newly made, with flowers and bunting fair arrayed

From where he lived in forest glade down to the town Jetuttara.

His sixty thousand mates around, and boys and women places found,

Brahmins and Vesiyas, homeward bound unto the town Jetuttara.

There many an elephant mahout, the charioteers and men afoot,

With all the royal guard to boot were going to Jetuttara.

Warriors that skulls or pelties wore, of mailed men with swords good store,

To guard the prince went on before down to the town Jetuttara.”

The king traversed this journey of sixty leagues in two months. He then entered Jetuttara, decorated to receive him, and went up to the palace. This the Master explained:

“Then the fair city entered they, with walls and arches high,

With songs and dances, food and drink in plentiful supply.

Delighted were the country folk and people of the town

To welcome back to Sivi land their prince of high renown.

All waved their kerchiefs in the air to see the giver come;

Now is a gaol-delivery proclaimed by beat of drum.”

So King Vessantara set free all creatures, down to the very cats; and on the day that he entered the city, in the evening, he thought: “When day dawns, the suitors who have heard of my return will come, and what shall I give them?” At that moment Sakka’s throne grew hot: he considered, and saw the reason. He brought down a rain of the seven kinds of jewels like a thundershower, filling the back and front of the palace with them waist-high, and over all the city knee-deep. Next day, he allotted this or that place to various families and let them pick up the jewels; the rest he made to be collected and placed in his own dwelling with his treasure; and in his treasuries he had enough to distribute always in future. This the Master explained as follows:

“When as Vessantara came back, Sivi’s protector king,

The god a shower of precious gold upon the place did bring.

So when Vessantara the prince his generous gifts had given;

He died at last, and fully wise, he passed away to heaven."

When the Master had ended this discourse of Vessantara, with its thousand stanzas, he identified the Birth: "At that time, Devadatta was Jujaka, the lady Cinca was Amittatapani, Channa was Cetaputta, Sariputta was the ascetic Accuta, Anuruddha was Sakka, King Suddhodana was King Sanjaya, Mahamaya was Phusati, Rahula's mother was Queen Maddi, Rahula was Prince Jali, Uppalavanna was Kanhajina, the followers of Buddha were the rest of the people, and King Vessantara was I myself."

"Then sounded forth a mighty sound, a terrible great roar;

"For giving gifts they banish thee—now hast thou given more!"

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

Vol. 1, translated by Robert Chalmers, 1895.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.