Pv 25 — Ubbarī Sutta: The Queen Ubbarī

English translation by Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery (Sutta Friends).

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Text

There was a wealthy king named Brahmadatta in the city inhabited by the Pañcāla people. The king had lived a long life and soon died. The king had a wife named Ubbarī who often went to his grave and wept saying, “Where are you, Brahmadatta?”

One day, a virtuous ascetic who meditated in the forest visited the cemetery and questioned the people who were gathering there.

Ascetic:

Flowers and incense have been offered to this grave. Who is buried underneath? Why is this woman crying?

People:

Great ascetic, this grave belongs to King Brahmadatta. The woman is his wife crying over her dead husband calling, “Where are you my Brahmadatta?”

Ascetic:

Eighty-six thousand people also named Brahmadatta have been cremated on this same spot. Which one are you crying for?

Ubbarī:

Great ascetic, my husband is the son of King Cūḷani, and also the leader and king of the city Pañcāla. My husband gave me everything I wanted. I am weeping for my husband Brahmadatta.

Ascetic:

All the kings were also named Brahmadatta, and they were also the son of Cūḷani. All of them ruled over the city of Pañcāla. It was also you who were all those kings' wife. Why do you only cry for your last husband and forget the previous ones?

Ubbarī:

Great ascetic, was I born only as a woman for such a long time in this journey of Samsara?

Ascetic:

No, you have been born as a woman, man, and animal. The beginning of this long journey cannot be seen.

Ubbarī:

My heart was burning with sadness over the death of my husband like when ghee is poured onto a fire. But now, all my sorrow has been extinguished as if I had been sprayed with water. I was struck with an arrow of grief, but you, great ascetic, have removed it from me. Having heard your advice, I have become tranquil and cool with the arrow of sorrow removed. I no longer grieve or weep.

She listened very closely to the words of the ascetic. Taking a bowl and robes, she became a nun. She practiced the meditation of loving kindness in order to be born in the brahma world.

She travelled between villages, towns, and cities and finally passed away in the village called Uruvelā. Having practiced thoughts of loving kindness and removed all desires to become a woman, she was reborn in the brahma world.