Dhammapada

Vagga 21-26

Vol.III

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VAGGA 21-26

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HRISHIKESH SHARAN

Born in Bettiah, West Champaran, Bihar, India. Secured Post Graduate Degree in Physics from Patna University. Joined the Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise) in 1975. Obtained Law Degree from Kolkata University and Post Graduate Diploma in Operational Research (PGDOR) from the Operational Research Society of India. Led the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra Group as the Liaison Officer in 1994. Awarded Diploma in Creative Writing in Hindi from the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). After retirement as Director General in 2011, served as Ombudsman, Indirect Tax, Mumbai in the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Was appointed as the National Facilitator on Ethics and Values in Public Governance in 2015 by the Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India.

In 2007, he translated the 'Light of Asia' by Sir Edwin Arnold in Hindi (Poetry) as 'Jagadaradhya Tathagata'; in 2009 in Hindi (Prose) as 'Asia Ki Jyoti'; in 2012 in English prose by the same title 'Light of Asia' and in 2013 in Bhojpuri as 'Asia Ke Roshani'. In 2010, his work, the 'Dhammapada: Gatha aur Katha', consisting of 26 chapters of the Buddha's Teachings in Hindi was released on the Buddha Purnima Day. He is also author of 'Mantras of Mathematics' (2011). His latest publications are 'Siddhartha Ka Jivan: Sahasra Prashna aur Uttar' and Shakyamuni Buddha ki Sachitra Rangeen-Hindi Katha (A Pictorial Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha), both in Hindi Language.

For more than forty years, he has been pursuing the Life and the Message of the Buddha. Apart from travelling all over India and lecturing extensively, he has also delivered speeches in Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Singapore, Australia, Holland and Bhutan; speaking on 'Holistic Management' and 'The Life and the Message of the Buddha'. He has addressed a large number of students and teachers on 'Secrets of Success in Mathematics and Life'. Sri Sharan is a forceful motivational speaker and his mantra is: **'By doing extra, ordinary people start becoming extra-ordinary.'**

འཇམ་གླིང་འབྲུག་གཞུང་།

Royal Government of Bhutan

PRIME MINISTER

14 February, 2013.

Foreword

The ***Dhammapada*** or the collection of sayings of the Buddha in verse form, is one of the most widely read and best known Buddhist scriptures. According to the great Buddhist master Buddhaghosa, each teaching in the collection was a response to a specific question or situation that had arisen in the life of the monastic community. The Dhammapda, therefore, is a guide to enlightenment through the right and meaningful conduct of daily life. The translation of the Dhammapada will bring this immense body of wisdom within the reach of many to inspire, encourage and guide our society along the good path.

The teaching of the Dhammapada are timeless and remain as relevant today as ever before. The beauty and wisdom shine through from the very first verse of the first chapter Yamak Vagga :

> *"All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage....all that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him."*

Extremely relevant in this age of violence and terrorism is verse 5 that tell us:

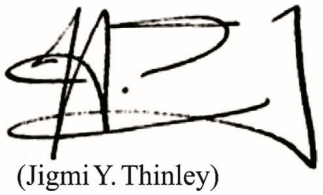
> *"Hatred does not cease by hatred. It ceases only by love, compassion, goodwill and friendship."*

Many conflicts between individuals, families, communities and nations would not have arisen had the Dhammapada been more widely known.

I applaud Shri Hrishikesh Sharan, National Lecturer and long time member of The Theosophical Society of India; and Member of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, for undertaking this mission.

May the merit accumulated from this noble undertaking bring immeasurable benefit to all beings in these turbulent times.

Tashi Delek !



(Jigmi Y. Thinley)

Dedicated with reverence to my
most respected,
Mataji - Pitaji
Dadiji - Dadaji
Naniji - Nanaji
and
All ancestors
Without whose blessings it was not
possible to publish it.

PREFACE

In 2010, my Hindi version of the Dhammapada: Gatha aur Katha, consisting of 26 chapters of the Buddha's teachings with nearly nine hundred coloured pictures and published by the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan was released on the Buddha Purnima Day at Kolkata by the Maha Bodhi Society. This monumental work has been widely welcomed by Hindi speaking readers. It is in great demand especially for its simplicity and get up though one set of four volumes weighs nearly two and half kilograms.

When my non-Hindi speaking friends and well wishers from India and abroad saw these books, they were very impressed and suggested that I write it in English as well. The Dhammapada has inspired millions of devotees all over the world for ages. It has touched my life also greatly. Therefore, I decided to write it in English. I hope that this work in English will also inspire English readers greatly and help them transform their lives.

The Dhammapada (The Words Of Truth) consists of 26 chapters. The chapters are named: The Twin Verses, Heedfulness, Mind, Flowers, Fools, The Wise, The Worthy, Thousands, Evil, Punishment, Old Age, The Self, The World, The Buddha, Happiness, Affection, Anger, Impurities, The Just, The Way, Miscellaneous, Woeful State, The Elephant, Craving, The Bhikkhu and The Brahmana. There are in total 423 melodious verses in Pali called Gathas which were uttered by the Enlightened One on 305 occasions for the benefit of the mankind in the course of his preaching tours till he attained the Maha Parinirvana at 80.

The Buddha is a Teacher par excellence. He has used very simple similes like cart's wheel and man's shadow so that his teachings can be understood by all. His disciples came from all sections of the society.

The teachings of the Buddha are not for intellectual entertainment. They are meant for practical action in life. The teachings are meant to bring inner transformation of the reader. So the Dhammapada should not be read only for the purpose of enjoying the stories or as a novel although the stories are also very engaging. The reader should read and re-read the Dhammapada with full devotion with the objective to change himself from within.

There are innumerable examples where the Buddha has pulled up disciples who only master the scriptures but do not practice them and experience the teachings in life. The theoretical knowledge has no meaning at all for the Buddha. He says in verses 19 and 20:

Verse 19: If one recites much of the sacred texts but does not act accordingly, then that heedless person is like a keeper of cows who counts the cows of another (does not get share in the milk products). He does not get share in the fruits of the Holy Life.

Verse 20: If one recites even little of the sacred texts but acts according to the Rules of the Dhamma, giving up lust, hatred and ignorance, truly knowing, with mind well

freed, attached to nothing here or in the other world; he shares the fruits of the Holy Life.

How much shall we be benefitted from the Dhammapada? It will depend on how seriously we take the teachings and follow them in our lives. The Buddha has shown us the way. Now the journey has to be undertaken by us only. He cannot undertake it on our behalf.

The Buddha in verses 51 and 52 of the Dhammapada says:

Verse 51: Just like beautiful flowers which have colour but no scent, so are the good words useless for one who does not practise it.

Verse 52: Just like beautiful flowers having colour and also scent, so are the good words useful for one who practises it.

I hope these teachings will inspire the reader to bring inner transformation. If there is even the least change in their lives, I shall consider my efforts to be amply rewarded.

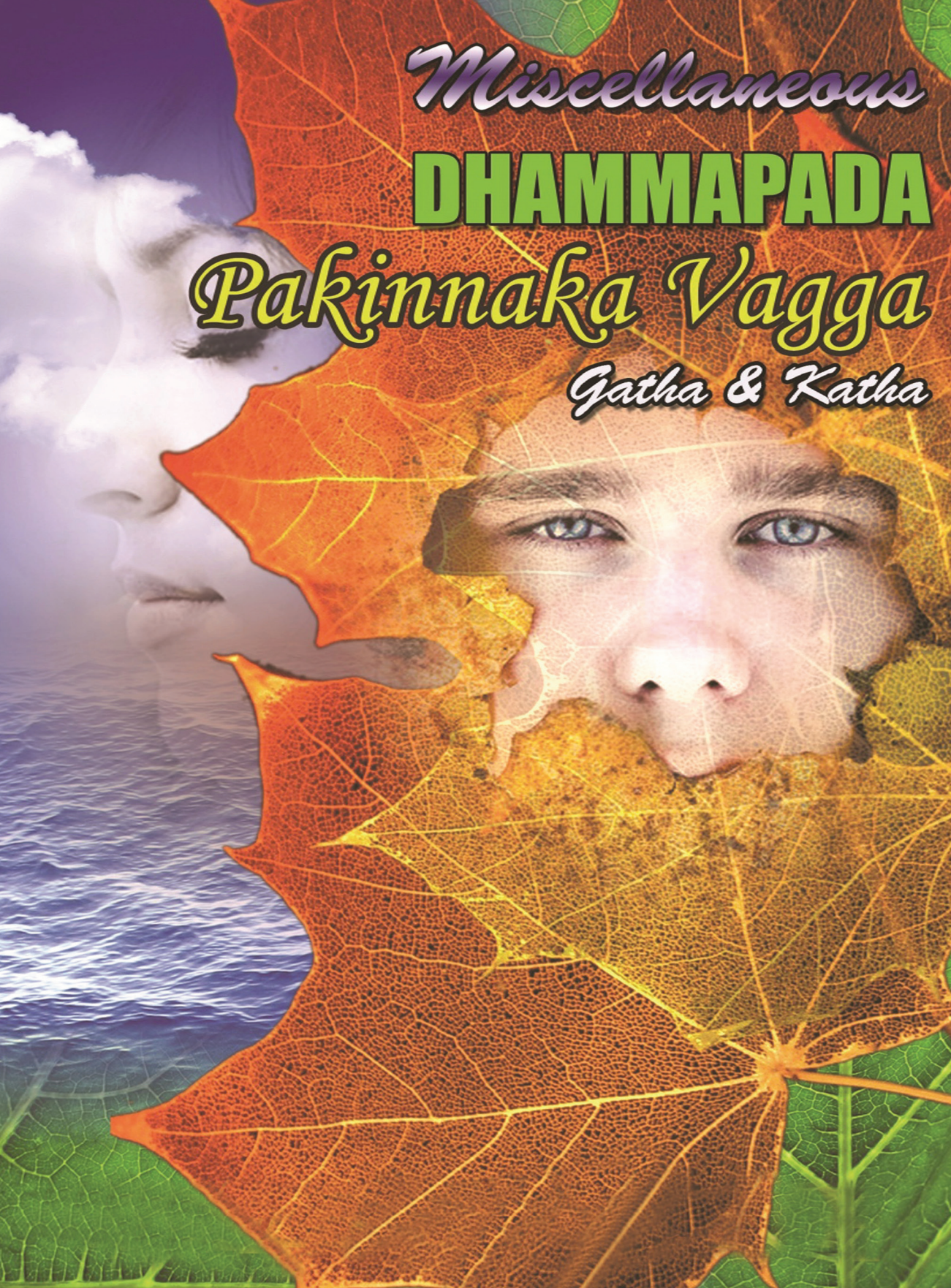
I have been constantly encouraged by my Kalyan Mitra Venerable Dr. Rewatha D. Thero of the Maha Bodhi Society of India to write the Dhamma books. The present work is also due to that encouragement. He has constantly guided me in life and I have no words to express my gratitude to him. His Excellency, Jigmi Y Thinley, the then Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan, has written the Foreword of this book and I am grateful to him for the same. I shall fail in my duty if I do not place on record my sense of appreciation for the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan which has been gracious enough to publish this book, as many of my other Dhamma books in the past. I was inspired to write this book by the great work, the 'Treasury of Truth' (Illustrated Dhammapada) by Ven. Dr. W. Sarada Maha Thero. I am indebted to him. Bhante Gyananandji and his disciple Gyanvijayaji of Sri Lanka have been kind enough to provide the front and back covers of the chapters and I am obliged to them for the beautiful work done by them.

I shall also like to place on record the encouragement I received from my wife Minu; grand-daughter Sarea; sons-in-law, Nishank and Varun; daughters, Ruchi and Pratichi; Respected Induji, Mahendra Bhai Saab and Bibhakar Thakurji. Without their constant support and sustained assistance I could not have written this monumental work!

Saint Tulsidas, the writer of the great epic the Ramayana, addressing the God has written, **"One, who tries to know about You, becomes like You."** I wish that all who are making sincere efforts to understand the Buddha and his teachings become like him and attain freedom from the cycles of birth and death which is the ultimate goal of human life.

May the blessings of the Triple Gem (The Buddha, The Dhamma and The Sangha) shower on us all and inspire us to undertake that final journey towards Nirvana! May we all sincerely strive to attain the Nirvana!

Bhawatu Saab Mangalam!
Hrishikesh Sharan
New Delhi, India.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DHAMMAPADA
Pakinnaka Vagga
Gatha & Katha

Chapter XXI

PAKINNAKA VAGGA

Miscellaneous

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PAKINNAKA VAGGA

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Verse 290: Mattā sukha pariccāgā passe ce vipulaṃ sukhaṃ
Caje mattā sukhaṃ dhiro sampassaṃ vipulaṃ sukhaṃ.

Verse 290: If one finds immense happiness by sacrificing the limited one (worldly happiness), a wise one should give up the limited happiness for the sake of the great one.

Give up worldly happiness
Story of Vaishali famine

Place: Veluvana, Rajagriha

Once, there was severe drought and famine in Vaishali. There was total failure of crops. People died in large numbers due to starvation. This was followed by a number of diseases. The number of deaths was so high that it was even difficult to dispose the corpses. The foul smell due to deaths was so bad everywhere that it attracted the evil spirits from all directions.

In this hour of crisis the people of Vaishali sought help from all sources but it was all in vain. Therefore, they thought of approaching the Buddha. So, a delegation led by Mahali, the Lichchavi prince, visited Rajagriha where the Buddha was residing at that time, to invite him to visit Vaishali and help them in the hour of distress. The Tathagata knew from insight that his visit would be beneficial to many in Vaishali and, therefore, he agreed to go there.

Grand arrangements were made to receive the Buddha and the bhikkhus who accompanied him in large number. As soon as they reached Vaishali, it started raining very heavily and the entire city was cleaned. The Great Teacher was put up in a specially made guest house for him. Sakka, the king of devas, came with other devas and paid homage to the Buddha. As a result, the evil spirits fled away.

That same evening the Buddha recited the Ratana Sutta and also requested Ananda to recite it while he went round the city for almsfood. Ananda did as he was asked and as the protective verses were recited, many of the sick recovered back. The Buddha recited the same sutta everyday for seven days. At the end of seven days, everything returned to normal in Vaishali.

The Lichchavi princes and the people were overjoyed. They were full of gratitude for the Buddha.

Verse 291: Para dukkhūpadānena attano sukham icchati
Vera saṃsagga saṃsaṭṭho verā so na parimuccati.

Verse 291: He who wants his own happiness by causing sufferings to others, gets entangled in hatred and cannot free himself from hatred.

Hatred for hatred doesn't work
A woman who ate up the eggs

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

This story is similar to the story in Verse 5 of the first chapter, the Yamaka Vagga of the Dhammapada.

Once, a woman lived in a village near Sravasti. She had a hen but every time the hen laid an egg, the lady ate it up. As a result, the hen was very angry with her. In the next birth, the hen was born as a cat and the lady was born as a hen in the same house. The cat, in retaliation, ate away the eggs of the hen. In the next birth the hen became a leopard and the cat a deer. The leopard ate away the deer as well as its babies. This quarrel continued between them in subsequent births as well.

During the days of the Buddha, one was born as a woman and the other as a female ogress. The lady had a baby boy and one day she was returning from her parents' house with her husband and the son. They stopped at a place on the way and the husband went to take bath in the nearby pond. At that time the lady saw the female ogress taking the human form. The lady recognised her as her old enemy. She started advancing towards her to kill her son. The lady was greatly scared, took her son in her arms and ran straight inside the Jetavana monastery. The Buddha was delivering a talk at that time. She put her son at the feet of the Enlightened One and prayed to him to save her son's life. The ogress, who was in pursuit of the lady, did not dare to enter the monastery. The Buddha summoned for her and admonished both of them for their long enmity, **'If you both had not come to me today, your enmity would have continued endlessly in all the lives to come. Enmity does not end by enmity. It ends only by loving-kindness and compassion.'**

Both of them realised their mistakes and ended the quarrel between them.

Verse 292: Yaṃ hi kiccaṃ tadapaviddhaṃ akiccaṃ pana kayirati
Unnalānaṃ pamattānaṃ tesaṃ vaḍḍhanti āsavā.

Verse 292: What should have been done is left undone, what should not have been done, is done. For those who cross the bounds, their impurities increase.

Don’t increase the impurities
The bhikkhus of Bhaddiya

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke these two verses at the Jetavana monastery in respect of the bhikkhus of Bhaddiya who indulged in making the slippers and painting them.

Once, some monks who were staying at Bhaddiya started making slippers of various kinds--- made of wood, grass, palm leaf, lotus and blankets etc. They also made ornamental slippers and painted them. They had totally forgotten the rules of Vinaya, sila and meditative process. They did not follow the Vinaya practices and other duties of a bhikkhu. Seeing all this; the other bhikkhus who were disciplined and observed sila felt irritated and aggrieved.

Verse 293: Yesañ ca susamāraddhā niccaṃ kāyagatā sati
Akiccaṁ te na sevanti kicce sātaccakārino
Satānaṃ sampajānānaṃ atthaṃ gacchanti āsavā.

Verse 293: Those who always earnestly practise ‘mindfulness of the body’, who don’t do what is prohibited, and constantly do what should be done, for such mindful and reflective ones, their impurities come to an end.

Be mindful: Reduce defilements
The bhikkhus of Bhaddiya

The matter was brought to the notice of the Buddha, 'Sir! These bhikkhus staying in Bhaddiya are only interested in making and wearing ornamental slippers. They are totally neglecting their spiritual practices.'

On hearing this, the Buddha admonished the bhikkhus indulging in pramada (heedlessness), 'Bhikkhus, you have entered the Sangha for the purpose of attaining Arahanthood. Yet, you are now indulging only in making the slippers and decorating them. Why are you wasting away your time and energy in this manner?' The bhikkhus, as a result of this admonition, realised their mistake and changed their behaviour. Now, they worked seriously for their spiritual advancement.

Verse 294: Mātaraṃ pitaraṃ hantvā rājāno dve ca khattiye
Raṭṭhaṃ sānucaraṃ hantvā anigho yāti Brāhmaṇo.

Verse 294: Having killed mother (craving), father (egotism), two warrior kings (dual aspects of eternalism and nihilism), destroying the kingdom with its subjects (sense-organs and sense-objects) and the revenue officer (attachment); the Brahmana (the holy one) goes sorrowless.

Arahants go ungrieving
Bhikkhu kills his parents

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke these two verses at the Jetavana monastery with reference to bhikkhu Lakuntaka Bhaddiya, known so because of his short height.

The story goes that on one occasion some bhikkhus came to the Jetavana monastery and paid homage to the Enlightened One. While they were seated near the Buddha, bhante Lakuntaka Bhaddiya, who was conspicuous by his short height, happened to pass by their side, not far off from them. The Tathagata drew the attention of the bhikkhus towards him and addressed them, 'Bhikkhus, see that monk. He has killed both his parents—father as well as mother—and moves around happily without any regret.' He further continued, 'He has not only killed his parents, he has also killed the two brahmin kings. He has destroyed their country and assassinated the revenue officers as well.' The bhikkhus could not understand what the Buddha meant as they knew that the bhikkhu had not committed any such criminal act. So, they prayed to the Buddha to kindly clarify it.

The Buddha explained to them, 'I have tried to explain to you through metaphors. That short statured bhikkhu is an Arahat and, therefore, he is now above all mental impurities. He has already won over craving, egoism, wrong beliefs and attachment to sense objects. The terms 'father' and 'mother' are meant to indicate craving and egoism respectively. The Eternity-belief and Annihilation-belief are like two kings and attachment is like the revenue officer who collects the revenue on behalf of the king. The sense objects are like the kingdom.'

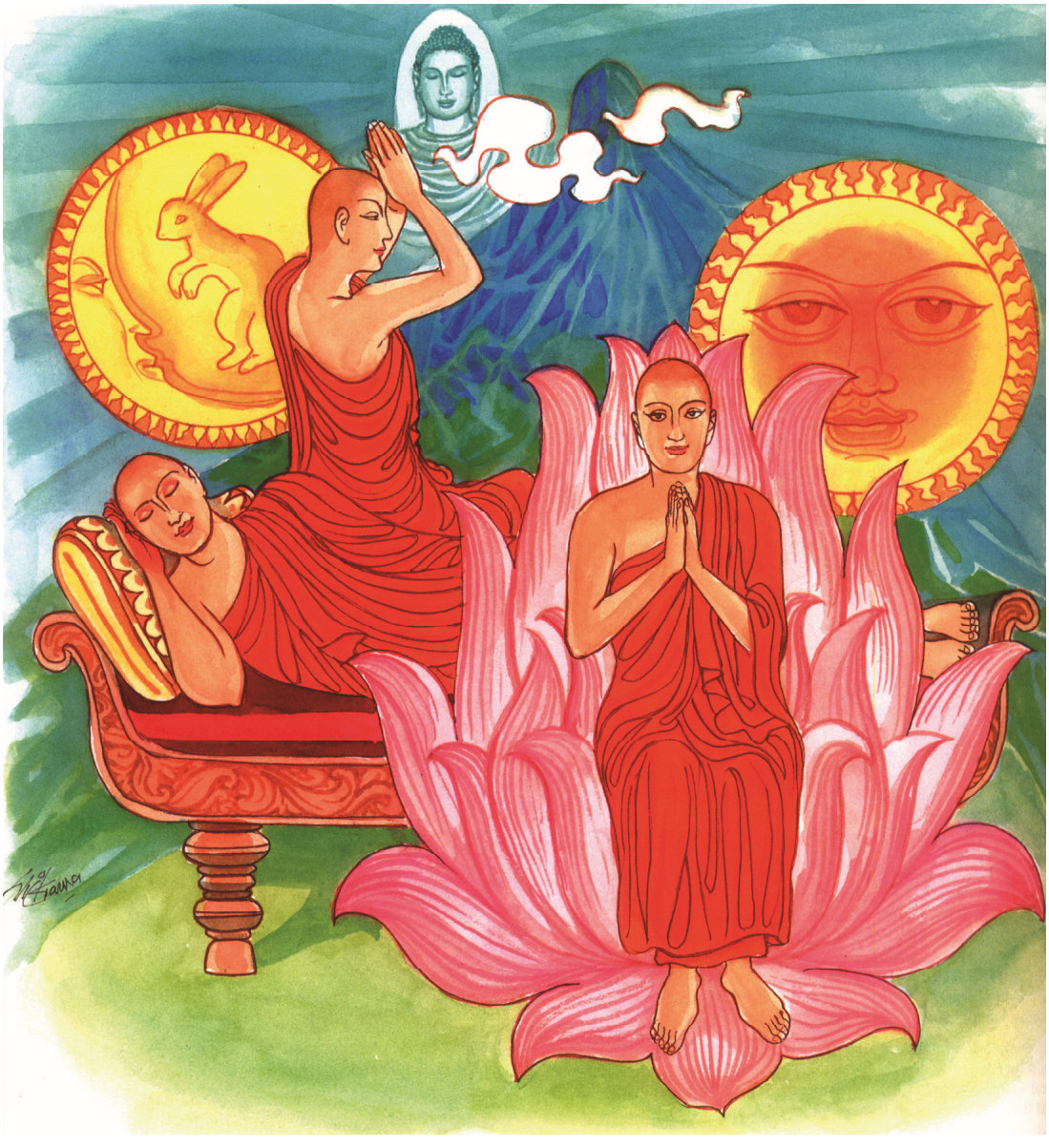
Verse 295: Mātaraṃ pitaraṃ hantvā rājāno dve ca sotthiye
Veyyaggha pañcamaṃ hantvā anigho yāti Brāhmaṇo.

Verse 295: Having killed mother and father, the two brahmin kings (of eternalism and nihilism) and destroyed the fifth one namely the tiger (hindrances to spiritual progress), the Brahmana goes sorrowless.

Arahants live woeless
Bhikkhu kills his parents

Through the use of metaphors, the Tathagata has very beautifully described the qualities of an Arahat. An Arahat rises above egotism, self-esteem and craving which have been compared with the mother and father respectively. The two warrior kings who have been slain are the two views of Eternalism and Nihilism which are opposed to the Buddhist thoughts. The clinging to life are servants. The kingdom is made up of twelve ayatans and that is completely destroyed. The ragas (attachments) are the subordinates which have also been assassinated. These attachments bind us to life. Thus having killed all these, the Arahat goes on and moves freely.

Why no penalty is imposed for killing so many? Just as a soldier in the army is not penalised for killing the enemies, rather he is rewarded by the king, so also an Arahat is granted the reward of freedom from the cycles of birth and death for killing these enemies of mankind.



Verse 296: Suppabuddham pabujjhanti sadā Gotama sāvakā
Yesaṃ divā ca ratto ca niccaṃ Buddha gatā sati.

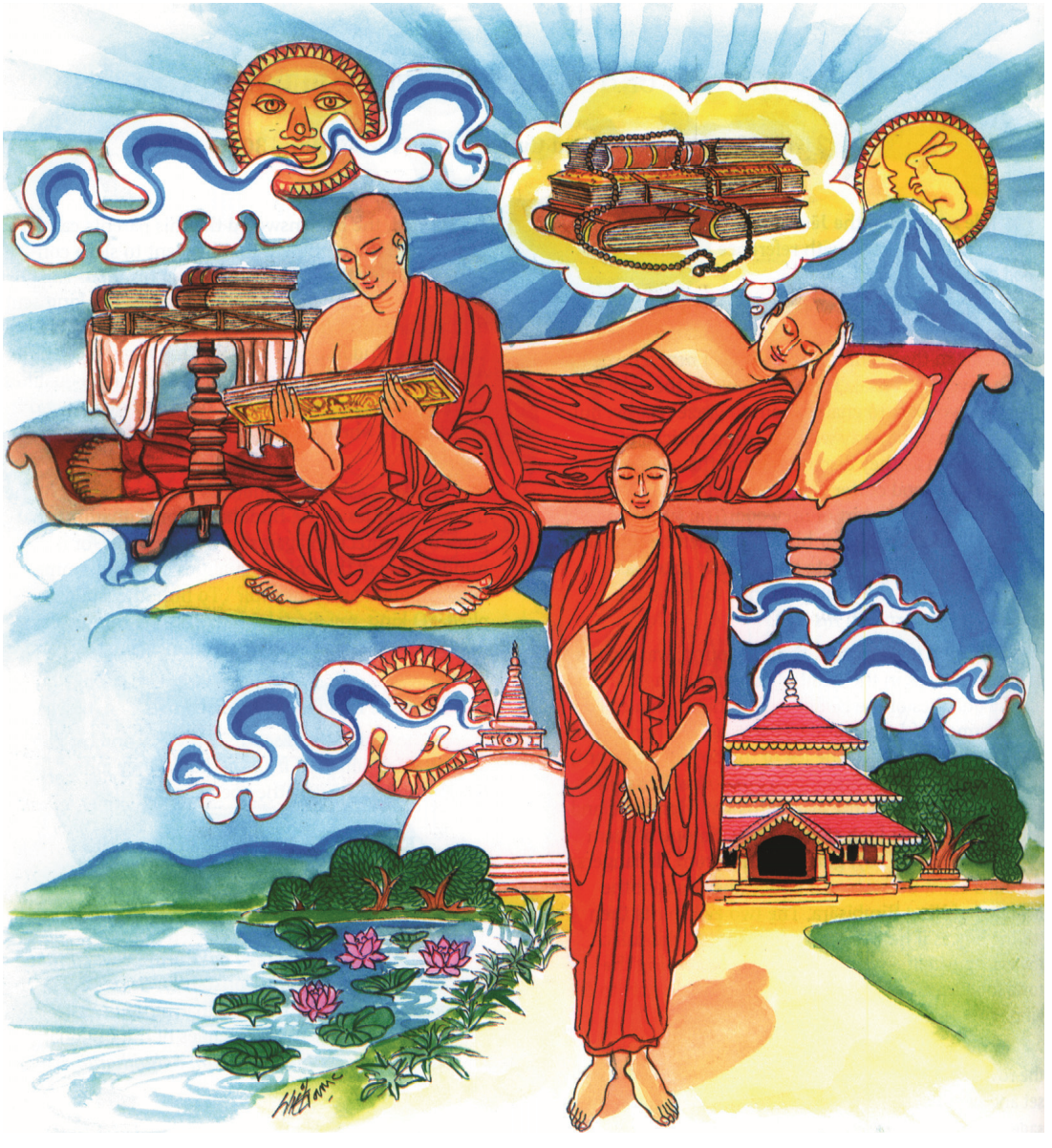
Verse 296: Ever well awake are the disciples of Gotama, who by day and night concentrate their minds on the Buddha.

Meditate on the Buddha
Story of the wood-cutter's son

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

The Buddha spoke these six verses in respect of a wood-cutter's son, who was always mindful of the unique qualities of the Enlightened One.

It so happened that once, in Rajagriha, a wood-cutter and his son went to the forest to cut some firewood. On their way back home in the evening, they happened to stop near a cremation ground to have their food. They took off yoke from the two oxen so that they could also take some rest and graze the grass nearby. But the oxen gradually moved away and away from the sight and went away, unnoticed. When the wood-cutter found that the oxen were missing, he left the place to look for them, suitably instructing the boy to take care of the bullock cart and the firewood. The oxen were not visible nearby and they had gone towards the city. So, the wood-cutter went towards the city. Before he could find out the oxen, it was already late and the city gates were closed. He was left behind in the city along with the pair of oxen. The small boy had, therefore, to stay alone all the time and spent night below the bullock cart.



Verse 297: Suppabuddham pabujjhanti sadā Gotama sāvakā
Yesaṃ divā ca ratto ca niccaṃ Dhamma gatā sati.

Verse 297: Ever well awake are the disciples of Gotama, who by day and night concentrate their minds on the Dhamma.

Meditate on the Dhamma
Story of the wood-cutter's son

The wood-cutter's son, though small in age, was always mindful and had the habit of contemplating on the unique qualities of the Buddha. That night, two evil spirits came from the cremation ground to frighten and harm the boy. One of them came to pull the leg of the boy. As he was trying to pull his leg, the boy cried out, 'Namo Buddhaya' (I pay homage to the Buddha). It was the common practice then, as it is even now, for the Buddhist parents to teach their children to invoke the name of the Buddha and seek his blessings for protection. Hearing these words of wisdom from the mouth of the boy, the evil spirits were frightened. They were scared of the consequences, if they at all harmed the boy. On the other hand, they thought that it would be good, if they took care of the boy, looked after him and protected him during the night. So, one of them remained at that spot near the boy to protect him and the other went to king Bimbisara's kitchen to bring food for him. He took the king's golden tray of food and brought it to the boy. They both fed the boy happily and then made him sleep below the bullock cart. They fed the boy as they would have fed their own son. At the royal kitchen, the spirit left a written message explaining what he had done to the royal food tray and this message was visible only to the king.

Verse 298: Suppabuddham pabujjhanti sadā Gotama sāvakā
Yesaṃ divā ca ratto ca niccaṃ Saṅgha gatā sati.

Verse 298: Ever well awake are the disciples of Gotama, who by day and night concentrate their minds on the Sangha.

Meditate on the Sangha
Story of the wood-cutter's son

In the morning, the king's servants found that the king's golden food tray was missing. They were very much frightened and upset. They searched it everywhere but could not find it. When the matter was reported to the king, he visited the royal kitchen and found the message written by the spirit. He, therefore, asked his men to look for the royal tray outside the city walls where the boy was sleeping below the bullock cart. The king's men reached there, as directed by the king and found the royal tray lying there. They also found that the boy was still sleeping below the bullock cart. Taking the boy as a thief, they brought him to the king.

Verse 299: Suppabuddham pabujjhanti sadā Gotama sāvakā
Yesaṃ divā ca ratto ca niccaṃ kāyagatā sati.

Verse 299: Ever well awake are the disciples of Gotama, who by day and night meditate on the impurities of the body.

Meditate on the body
Story of the wood-cutter's son

When the king questioned the boy, he replied, 'My parents came to feed me in the night. After I was fed, I went to sleep happily without any fear, thinking that my parents were near me and hence there was no cause to fear. I know only this much and not more.'

The parents of the boy were called to appear before the king. When the king heard from them what had happened that night, he went to see the Buddha along with the parents and the boy. By now the king had come to know that the boy was ever mindful of the unique qualities of the Buddha and also that the boy had cried out 'Namo Buddhaya' when one of the evil spirits tried to pull his leg that night.

Verse 300: Suppabuddham pabujjhanti sadā Gotama sāvakā
Yesaṃ divā ca ratto ca ahiṃsāya rato mano.

Verse 300: Ever well awake are the disciples of Gotama, who by day and night delight in non-violence.

Delight in non-violence
Story of the wood-cutter's son

The king was in doubt whether mindfulness towards the unique qualities of the Buddha was sufficient to protect someone. He, therefore, enquired from the Enlightened One, 'Sir, Is mindfulness of the unique qualities of the Buddha the only method by which one gets protected against evil and danger of life? Or is mindfulness of the unique qualities of the Dhamma equally powerful to provide protection?'

The Buddha replied, 'O king! Mindfulness of the unique qualities of the Buddha is not the only protection against evil and danger. In fact there are six things, mindfulness of any one of them, is a good protection against the evil and danger.'

Verse 301: Suppabuddham pabujjhanti sadā Gotama sāvakā
Yesaṃ divā ca ratto ca bhāvanāya rato mano.

Verse 301: Ever well awake are the disciples of Gotama, who by day and night cultivate meditational practices.

Delight in meditation
Story of the wood-cutter's son

Then the Great Teacher explained those six factors:

1. The disciples of the Buddha, who are **mindful of the virtues of their Teacher the Buddha** day and night, arise wide awake and are in full control of their faculties.

2. The disciples of the Buddha, who are **mindful of the virtues of the Dhamma** day and night, arise wide awake and are in full control of their faculties.

3. The disciples of the Buddha, who are **mindful of the virtues of the Sangha** day and night, arise wide awake and are in full control of their faculties.

4. The disciples of the Buddha, who are **mindful of the real nature of the body** day and night, arise wide awake and are in full control of their faculties.

5. The disciples of the Buddha, whose **minds take delight in non-violence** day and night, arise wide awake and are in full control of their faculties.

6. The disciples of the Buddha, whose **minds take delight in meditation** day and night, arise wide awake and are in full control of their faculties.

Verse 302: Duppabbajjaṃ durabhiramaṃ durāvāsā gharā dukhā
Dukkho' samāna saṃvāso dukkhānupatitaddhagu
Tasmā nacaddhagu siyā na ca dukkhānupatito siyā.

Verse 302: It is hard to become a bhikkhu. It is hard to be happy as a bhikkhu. Hard life of a householder is also painful. Association with those of different temperament is painful. A traveller in samsara is constantly subject to dukkha. Therefore, do not be a traveller. Do not be one subjected to dukkha again and again.

Renunciation is hard
Monk from Vajjis

Place: Mahavana, Vaishali

On full moon day of Kartika (between October and November), the residents of Vaishali, capital of Vajji kingdom celebrated the festival of nakshatra (constellations) on a grand scale. The whole city was beautifully decorated, lighted up and the residents enjoyed singing, dancing etc. A bhikkhu standing alone in a monastery saw it from a distance and felt unhappy and dissatisfied with his lot. He murmured to himself softly, 'My lot is the worst. There can be none who is as unfortunate as I am.'

At that moment, the guardian spirit of the forest overheard it, appeared before him and said, 'Beings who have fallen in hell, envy those who live in the kingdom of the devas. Similarly, the city people living in the towns envy the bhikkhus who live in the forests.' The bhikkhu realised the truth of the statement and regretted that he had thought of the lot of the bhikkhus in poor light.

Early next morning, the bhikkhu went to see the Buddha and the Buddha admonished him, **'Life of all beings is full of hardships. Also there is dukkha (unsatisfactoriness) in the lives of all beings. You should reflect on the fleeting nature of the worldly life and you will be able to get out of the sorrows.'**

Verse 303: Saddho silena sampanno yaso bhoga samappito
Yaṃ yaṃ padesaṃ bhajati tattha tatth eva pūjito.

Verse 303: A wealthy man of repute endowed with faith and virtue is honoured wherever he goes.

Devout are respected by all
Story of virtuous Chitta

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, Chitta, a householder, heard the Dhamma expounded by Venerable Sariputta and attained Anagami, the third stage of Sainthood.

One day, Chitta left for Sravasti with carts full of food and other offerings for the Buddha and the bhikkhus. While he was paying homage to the Buddha, masses of flowers miraculously started falling like shower of rains from the sky. Chitta stayed at the monastery for many days making offerings of food and other things to the Buddha and his bhikkhus. All this time the devas kept on replenishing the stocks of food and other offerings.

On the eve of his return journey, Chitta donated the entire foodgrain and other left over items to the Sangha and left the Jetavana monastery. But the devas again filled up the carts which were empty with various priceless items.

When bhikkhu Ananda saw that the exhausted stock was being replenished by priceless items by the devas, he was curious to know how this was happening and asked the Buddha, 'Sir! Is it because Chitta came to you with his offerings that he has been doubly blessed with the riches? Will he be able to get similar gifts if he goes somewhere else? Will he be showered with the same riches there also?'

The Buddha clarified, 'Ananda, this disciple is full of faith and generosity. No matter where he goes, he will be showered with the riches and honour.'

Verse 304: Dūre santo pakāsenti himavanto va pabbato
Asant ettha na dissanti ratti khittā yathā sarā.

Verse 304: The good are visible from afar like the Himalaya Mountain. The bad ones are not seen, even though they may be near, like the arrows shot in the dark.

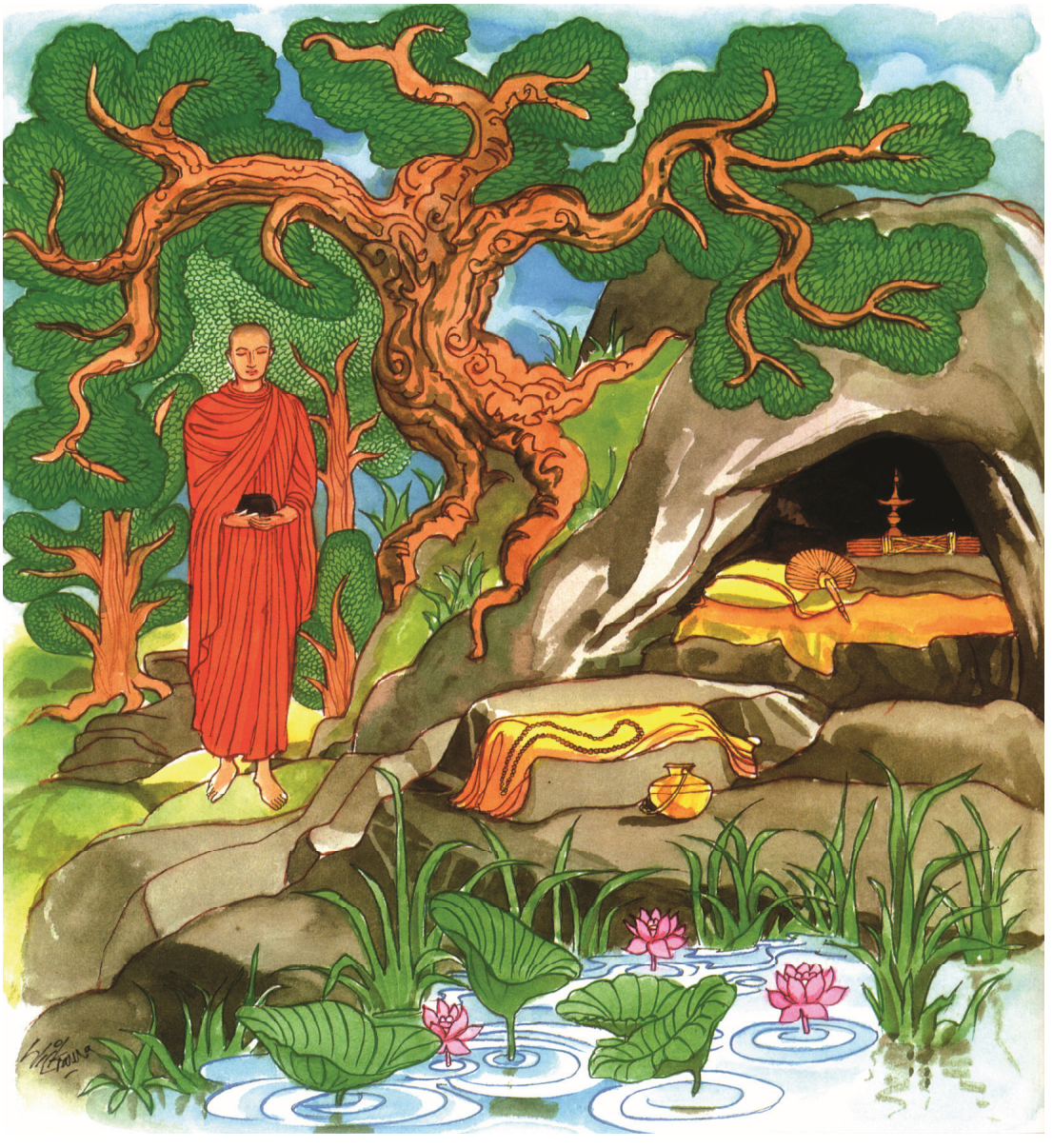
Good are seen from afar
Story of Chula Subhadda

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Both Anatha Pindika and Ugga studied under the same teacher when they were young. Ugga had a son and Anatha Pindika had a daughter named Chula Subhadda. When their children came of age, Ugga asked for consent of Anatha Pindika for the marriage of their two children. After the marriage, Chula Subhadda moved to the house of her parents-in-law. Ugga and his family members were not followers of the Buddha. Sometimes, they invited the naked ascetics to their house. On such occasions, her parents-in-law would ask Chula Subhadda to come and pay regards to them. She felt shy as she had never seen such naked ascetics and did not obey their instructions. On the other hand, she used to tell her mother-in-law about the unique qualities of the Buddha. On hearing the qualities of the Buddha, the mother-in-law was very anxious to meet the Enlightened One. She even agreed to the suggestion of Chula Subhadda to invite the Buddha for almsfood to their house. Chula made the preparations for food and other offerings. Then she went to the top floor of the house and made offerings of flowers and incense towards the Jetavana monastery and contemplated on the unique qualities and virtues of the Buddha. She then spoke her wish, 'Venerable Sir! I respectfully invite you and other noble bhikkhus for almsfood to our house tomorrow. May this invitation of mine be made known to you through this symbol and gesture and be accepted by you.'

Back at the monastery, Anatha Pindika, father of Chula Subhadda, approached the Buddha to come to his house for almsfood the next day. But the Tathagata replied, 'I have already accepted the invitation of Chula Subhadda for tomorrow.' The father was puzzled at the reply and asked, 'Sir! Chula Subhadda does not stay here in Sravasti. She lives far away from here. How could she invite you?' The Buddha replied, 'True, householder, but the good are visible even from a long distance as if they were standing in front of us.'

The next day, the Buddha and the bhikkhus went to the house of Ugga. Seeing the splendour, halo and glow around the Buddha, the parents-in-law of Chula Subhadda were greatly impressed and paid homage to him. After the almsfood, the Buddha delivered a religious discourse. This changed the life of the family members. They all became ardent followers of the Enlightened One.



Verse 305: Ekāsanaṃ ekaseyyaṃ eko caram atandito
Eko damayam attānaṃ vanante ramito siyā.

Verse 305: He, who sits alone, rests alone, walks alone and practises diligently, who controls himself in solitude, will find delight in the forests.

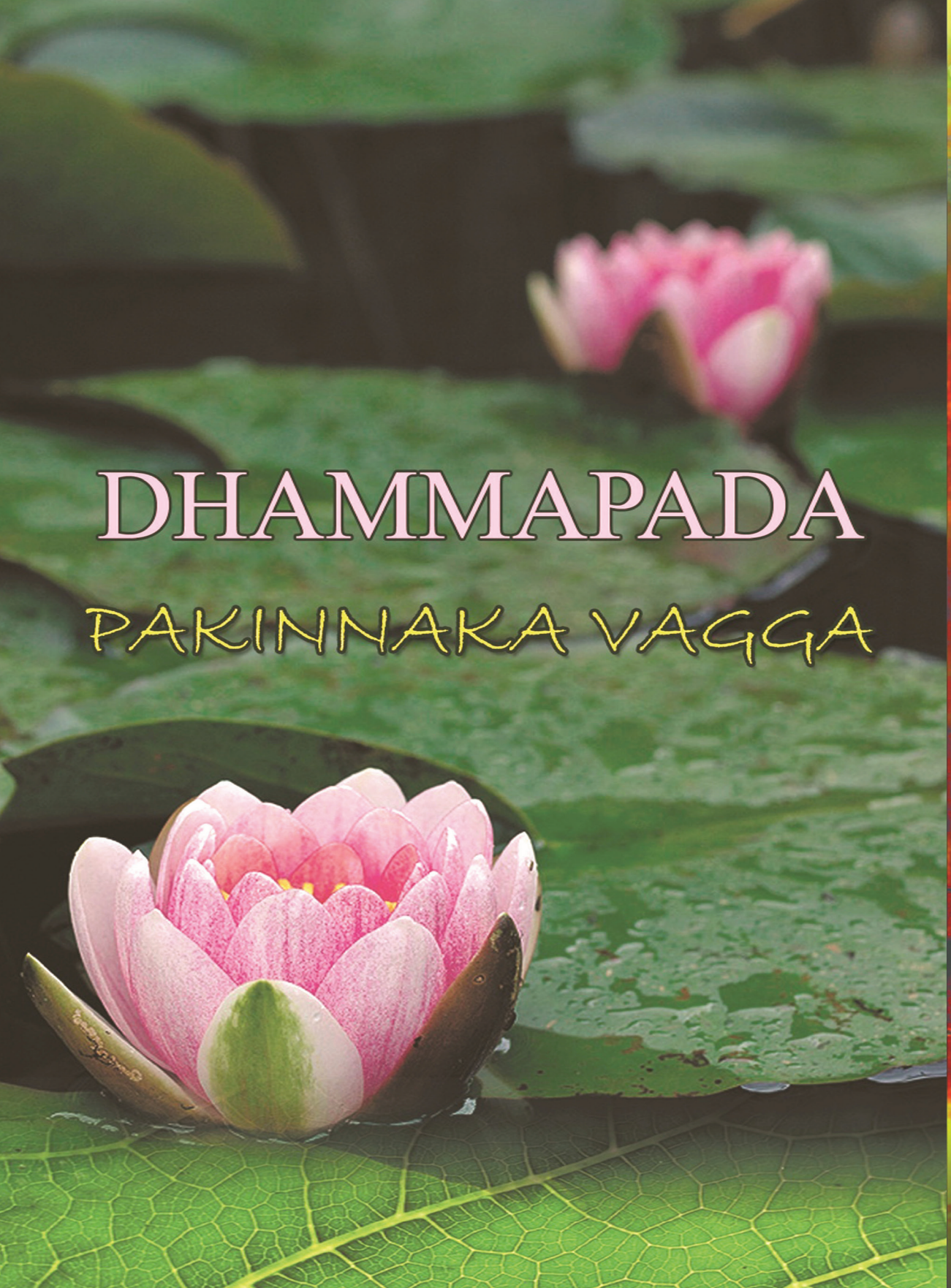
Take delight in solitude
Story of bhikkhu Ekavihari

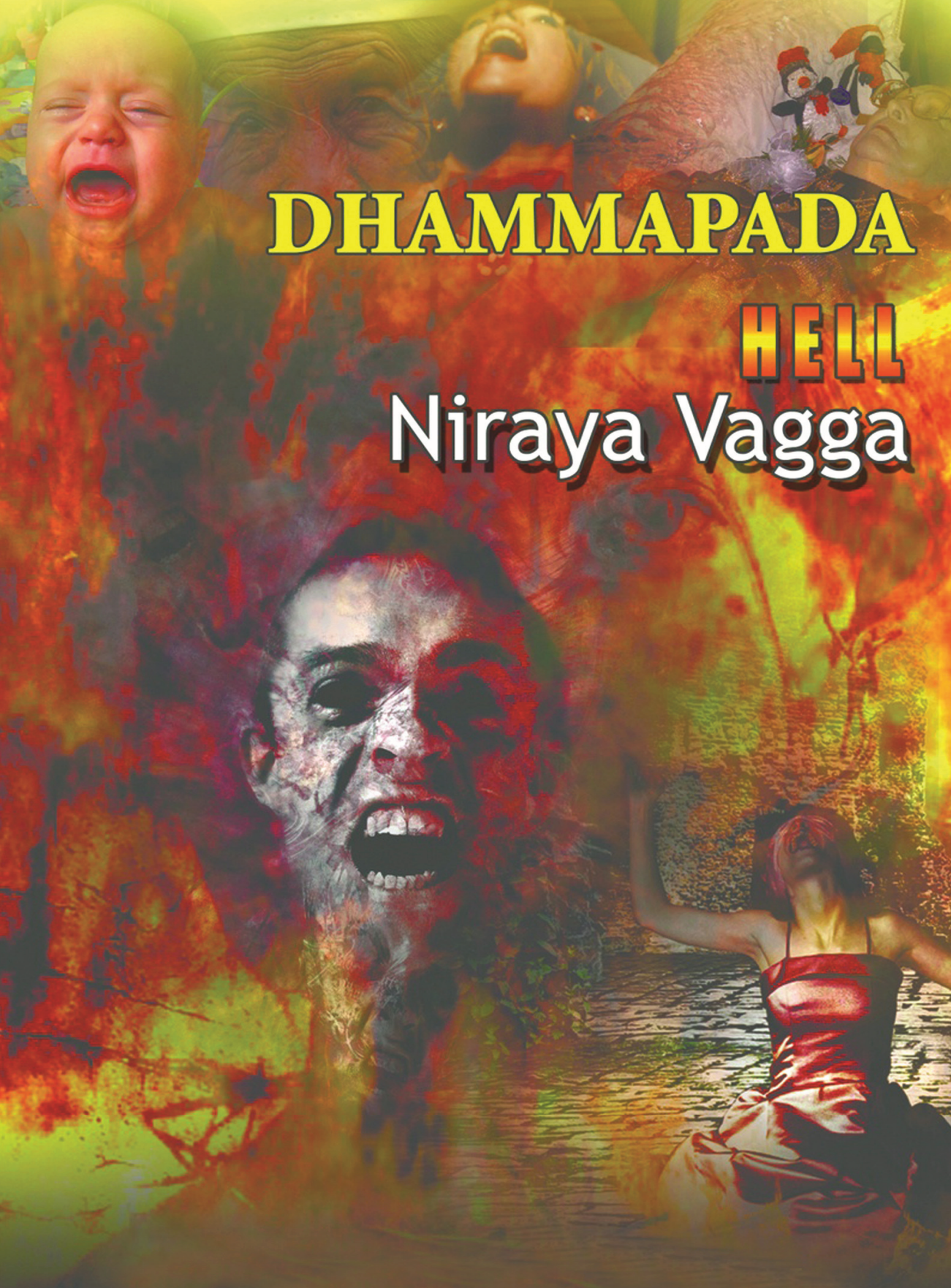
Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke this verse at the Jetavana monastery in respect of bhikkhu Ekavihari, who stayed by himself. Because he had the habit of staying alone, he was known as bhikkhu Ekavihari.

Bhikkhu Ekavihari did not like to mix much with other bhikkhus and preferred to remain alone by himself. He would practise mindfulness diligently whether lying down or sleeping, standing, sitting or walking. Other bhikkhus misunderstood him and brought the matter to the notice of the Buddha.

The Buddha, instead of blaming or admonishing him, praised him. He applauded his activities and said, 'Bhikkhus, My son has done well. It is good for a bhikkhu to stay in solitude and seclusion.'


DHAMMAPADA
PAKINNAKA VAGGA


DHAMMAPADA
HELL
Niraya Vagga

Chapter XXII

NIRAYA VAGGA

Hell, Woeful State

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NIRAYA VAGGA

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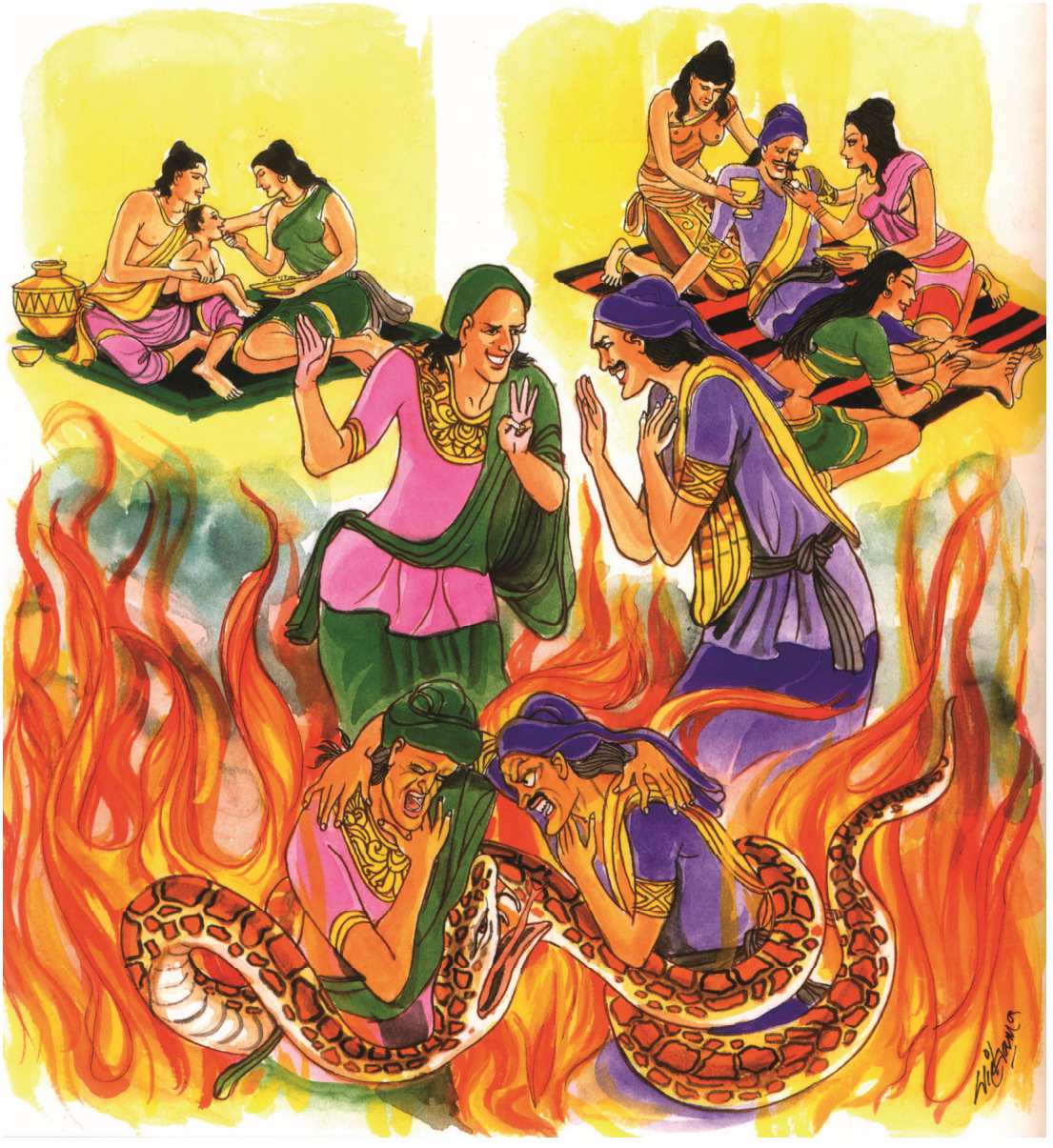


Verse 306: Abhūta vādi nirayaṃ upeti yo cāpi katvā na karomi ti cāha
Ubho pi te pecca samā bhavanti nihina kammā manujā parattha.

Verse 306: The liar goes to hell. He also goes to hell who having done something wrong, denies it. After death, both these evil doers suffer alike in their next existence.

Liars suffer
An evil plot by Sundari

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

When the popularity of the Buddha was going up, some heretics found that the number of their followers was coming down. So, they called one of their female followers, Sundari who was very beautiful and crafty and told her, 'Sundari, you are a very beautiful and clever woman. Make it appear to others that you are having an affair with Gotama. By this, his reputation will be tarnished and the number of his followers will decrease. They will start coming to us. Make best use of your looks.'

Sundari understood what was required to be done. So, in the evening she would dress up beautifully and go in the direction of the Jetavana monastery. When asked by the people, she would reply, 'I am going to visit Gotama in the monastery to live with him.' After saying so, she would go to the place of the heretics, spend the night there and would return home in the morning, through the Jetavana monastery. If someone asked her wherefrom she was coming, she would reply, 'I am coming back from the Jetavana monastery after spending the night there with Gotama.' She continued like this for sometime whereafter the heretics hired some assassins and got her murdered. Her dead body was dumped near the Jetavana monastery.

Next day, the heretics spread the rumour that Sundari's body was found near the Jetavana monastery and that she had been murdered by the Buddha's followers to cover up the misdeeds of their Teacher. The king was reported about it. On hearing it, he said, 'If it is so, you may tell the people about it.' So, the next day they went round the town carrying the dead body of Sundari and shouted their cooked story. When the Buddha was told about it, he said, 'My sons, you just tell them this, "One who tells lies, goes to hell. He, who has done some evil and still says that he has not done it, also goes to hell. Both of them suffer alike in hell and in future births."'

Meanwhile, the king had ordered for investigation which revealed that the heretics had hired the assassins to kill Sundari and dump her body near the Jetavana monastery. The heretics admitted their guilt before the king. They were ordered to go round the town and inform the people, 'We have falsely implicated the disciples of Gotama just to bring disgrace on him. The disciples of Gotama are innocent. Only we are guilty of the crime.' The guilty were punished. The glory and good name of the Buddha was further enhanced.

Verse 307: Kāsāva kaṇṭhā bahavo pāpa dhammā asaññatā
Pāpā pāpehi kammehi nirayaṃ te upapajjare.

Verse 307: Many evil persons wear yellow robe upto their neck. They are unrestrained in thought, words and deeds. They are destined to be reborn in a woeful state on account of their evil deeds.

Corrupt will suffer
Story of five pretas

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

The Buddha spoke this verse in respect of some pretas (ghosts) who suffered for their evil deeds.

One day, when Venerable Moggallana and Venerable Lakkhana were coming down from the Gridhkoot hill in Rajagriha, Moggallana smiled after seeing some miserable, ever-hungry spirits (pretas). The smile indicated that he had seen something peculiar. Lakkhana asked him the reason for the same but Moggallana, instead of giving the clarification, advised him to ask this question at the Venuvana monastery in the presence of the Buddha.

Back at the monastery, bhikkhu Lakkhana repeated his question in presence of the Buddha. Moggallana explained that he had seen five suffering pretas (ghosts) with their bodies engulfed in flames. The Buddha also confirmed that he had seen these very pretas on the day of Enlightenment. 'There may be some who may not believe the horrifying story and by not believing, he will create wrong karma for himself. Therefore, out of compassion for men, I did not tell this story.'

The Buddha then told the story of the five bhikkhus. He said, 'During the time of Kassapa Buddha, these five bhikkhus were not interested in their spiritual development. Instead they committed many evil acts. For the evil deeds done by them in the past, they suffered in hell and now they were repaying for their evil karma as ghosts.'

Verse 308: Seyyo ayogulo bhutto tatto aggi sikhūpamo
Yañ ce bhuñjeyya dussilo raṭṭha piṇḍaṃ asaññato.

Verse 308: For a bhikkhu, who is immoral and lacks self-discipline, it is better to swallow an iron ball as hot as the flame of fire, than to eat food given by the people.

Be not immoral
Bhikkhus pretending as Arahats

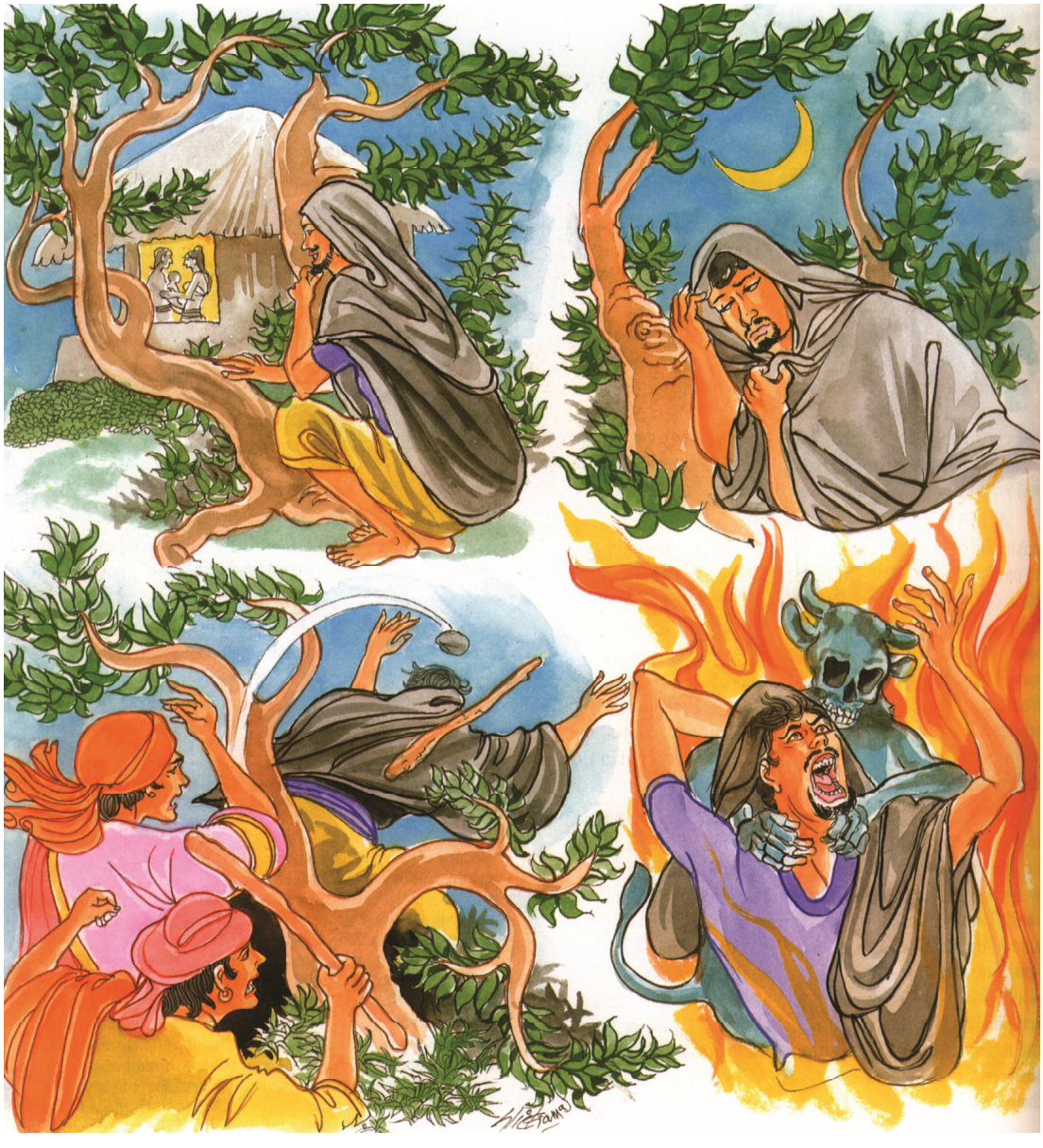
Place: Mahavana, Vaishali

Once, some bhikkhus spent the rainy season on the bank of river Vaggumuda in Vajji province. The Buddha uttered this verse in respect of them while residing at the Mahavana forest near Vaishali.

At that time there was a severe famine in Vajji. So, in order to obtain enough food, some bhikkhus used to tell the householders that they had attained Arahanthood although they had not. The people of the village believed them and due to their respect and devotion for them, offered them much food, leaving a little of food for themselves.

As per the custom, at the end of the vassa (rainy season), bhikkhus from all parts of the country came to pay their respects to the Buddha. The bhikkhus staying beside the river Vaggumuda also came. They looked hale and hearty whereas the bhikkhus from other places appeared pale and weak. The Buddha enquired, 'How did you fare during the vassa?' Then he specially asked the bhikkhus from Vajji, 'Did you face any difficulty in getting almsfood on account of the famine?' 'No Sir, we did not have any difficulty at all in getting the almsfood.'

The Teacher knew how these bhikkhus had managed to get enough food. But he wanted to educate them, enlighten them on this point. So, he asked, 'How did you manage to get food in good quantity during the vassa?' Then the bhikkhus clarified, 'Sir, We discussed amongst ourselves and decided that we shall address one another in such a way that the villagers will think that we have really attained Arahantship.' Then the Buddha questioned them, 'But have you actually attained Arahanthood?' 'No Sir,' was their reply. Then the Buddha advised them, 'There is danger in accepting requisites from the devotees, if you are not worthy of them. It is better to eat a red-hot lump of iron burning like a flame than to eat alms-food, obtained without sila (morality).'



Verse 309: Cattāri ṭhānāni naro pamatto āpajjati paradārūpasevi
Apuñña lābhaṃ na nikāma seyyaṃ nindaṃ tatiyaṃ nirayaṃ catutthaṃ.

Verse 309: Four misfortunes befall a careless adulterer: acquisition of demerit, disturbed sleep, blame and suffering in a woeful state.

Adultery is evil
Khema, loved by women

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke these two verses with reference to Khema, the son of a rich man and the nephew of Anatha Pindika, to whom women were greatly attracted.

It is said that during the times of the Buddha Kassapa, Khema was a wrestler, par excellence. One day, he planted two coloured banners on the golden shrine of the Buddha Kassapa and made the following wish earnestly, 'May all the women who look upon me, except my kins women and blood relatives fall in love with me.' By reason of this, in the various places where he was reborn, other men's wives, who saw him, were unable to control themselves from having intimate relationship with him.

Khema was an exceedingly handsome youth. He had the habit of running after other men's wives. His conscience did not feel pricked when he committed adultery.

One night, the king's soldiers caught him red handed and brought him before the king, Pasendi. The king thought, 'I feel ashamed for the great treasurer.' So, without saying a word of warning, he let him go. But this did not change Khema. He continued with his evil practices. On the second and the third occasions also the king's soldiers took him in custody and brought him before the king but the king just let him go with only reprimand, due to his regard for Anatha Pindika.

Verse 310: Apuñña lābho ca gati ca pāpikā bhitassa bhitāya rati ca thokikā
Rājā ca daṇḍam garukaṃ paṇeti tasmā naro paradāraṃ na seve.

Verse 310: Acquisition of demerit brings an evil destiny. Brief is the enjoyment of the frightened man and the woman. The king, too, imposes heavy punishment. Therefore, no man should go to another's wife.

Adultery brings sin
Khema, loved by women

When the great treasurer came to know about the misconduct of his nephew and what had happened, he took his nephew with him to the monastery and paid homage to the Buddha. The young man was asked to narrate what he had done and then Anatha Pindika prayed to the Buddha, 'Bhante, Please preach the Law to this young man.' The Buddha admonished Khema on the immorality of sexual misconduct and the seriousness of its evil consequences. He explained, 'A thoughtless person, who goes to another man's wife, will suffer four evil results. Firstly, he will acquire demerit---what is not meritorious. Secondly, he will not get enough comfortable sleep. Thirdly, he will be disgraced. Fourthly, he will be born in hell.' 'The sinner will fall in the lower state of hell. Since both man and woman are frightened, their embrace will generate very little pleasure. The king's law will impose severe punishment. Because of all these, a man should not covet for another's wife.' Thereafter, the young man mended his ways and observed the ethical code of morality.

Verse 311: Kuso yathā duggahito hattham evā'nukantati
Sāmaññaṃ dupparāmaṭṭhaṃ nirayāyupakaḍḍhati.

Verse 311: Kusa grass, wrongly held in hand, cuts away the very hand. Similarly, the monkhood, immorally practiced, drags one to a woeful state.

Corrupt lives with suffering
Story of the obstinate monk

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke these three verses at the Jetavana monastery with reference to an obstinate monk.

Once, there was a bhikkhu who was feeling remorseful for unknowingly, unwittingly cutting some grass and plants. He consulted another bhikkhu in this regard who replied, 'Cutting plants is a very minor issue. If at all it is an offence, it is a very minor offence. You have to only take some other bhikkhu in confidence and confess about it to him. You need not worry about it.'

Verse 312: Yaṃ kiñci sithilaṃ kammaṃ saṅkiliṭṭhañ ca yaṃ vataṃ
Saṅkassaraṃ brahmacariyaṃ na taṃ hoti mahapphalaṃ.

Verse 312: Any degrading act, an immoral practice, a suspicious holy life—none of these brings much benefit.

Dubious holiness is cheating
Story of the obstinate monk

So saying, the second bhikkhu went nearby and uprooted some plants with his two hands to show that he thought very little of the offence involved. The matter was brought to the notice of the Buddha. He admonished the bhikkhu. On hearing the advice, at first, he was so rash and inflexible that he did not want to change at all.

At the end of the discourse, however, the reckless, obstinate bhikkhu realised the importance of restraint and discipline in life and started following the sila. Later, through the practice of Insight Meditation, this bhikkhu attained Arahanthood.

Verse 313: Kayirā ce kayirāthenaṃ dalham enaṃ parakkame
Sithilo hi paribbājo bhiyyo ākirate rajaṃ.

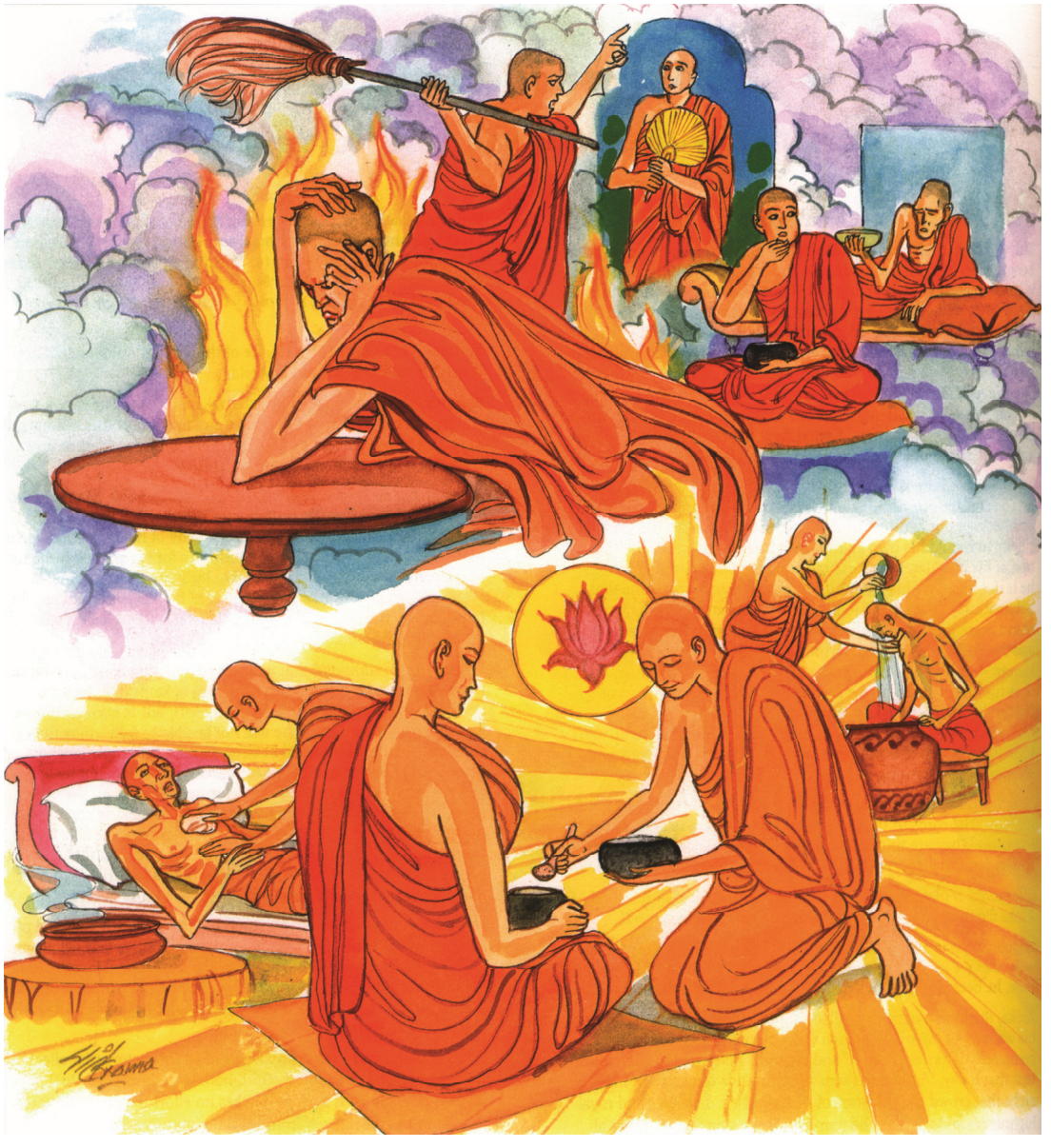
Verse 313: If one has to do something, one must do it well. One must do it immediately and with utmost energy. Asceticism practised loosely throws up much dust of moral impurities.

Do right with whole might
Story of the obstinate monk

The Enlightened One also pointed out, 'The blade of the kusa grass, if held wrongly, will, cut one's hand. In the same way, if one were to handle monastic life in wrong way—it will pull the person down into lower worlds.

Slackness in deeds, foulness in ways and unreliability in the holy life never lead to great results. If you have to do an act of merit, do it with a sense of commitment and concern. But if the practice of monastic life is casual, instead of reducing the dust, dust will be smeared.'

The rule to avoid destruction of plants may seem trivial and impractical but what the Buddha has emphasized is the respect for all forms of life, however low it may be because all life forms are dependent on each other. Today, we can appreciate the Buddha's wisdom in advising us against the wanton destruction of the environment.



Verse 314: Akataṃ dukkataṃ seyyo pacchā tapati dukkataṃ
Katañ ca sukataṃ seyyo yaṃ katvā nānutappati.

Verse 314: It is better not to do an evil deed. An evil deed torments one later on. It is better to do a good deed. One does not repent later on for doing a good deed.

Don't do any wrong
Story of a jealous woman

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, a woman who was very jealous by nature lived in Sravasti along with her husband. She found that her husband was having an affair with the maid of the house. One day, she was so angry with her that she tied her up and cut her nose and ears and shut her up in a room. After doing that, she left for the Jetavana monastery with her husband to listen to the discourse of the Buddha.

Soon after they left, some relatives of the maid arrived at their house and they found her tied up and locked in a room. They freed her and took her to Jetavana monastery. The maid related to the Buddha how her mistress had ill treated her. She stood in the midst of the crowd for all to see how she had been tortured. The jealous woman kept on hearing the charges levelled against her, silently.

The Buddha admonished them, **'Do not do an evil act thinking that you can hide it and people will not come to know about it. An evil deed done secretly, when discovered, brings much unhappiness, pain and sorrow. But a good deed can be done secretly, for it will bring only happiness and not sorrow.'**

The jealous woman realised that she had committed grave crime. So, she worked diligently to uproot jealousy from her deep rooted nature. Later, she realised the Dhamma.

Note: It is desirable not to do an evil act at all. An evil deed done today may not bring pain immediately just as milk does not convert into yoghurt instantaneously, after it is fermented by adding bacteria. In China, a particular type of bamboo seed, when sown in the earth, does not come out of it during the next five years. But in the sixth year, it shoots out 90 feet above the ground. Does it mean that the seed was dead for the last five-six years? No! It was not dead!

Verse 315: Nagaraṃ yathā paccantaṃ guttaṃ santara bāhiraṃ
Evaṃ gopetha attānaṃ khaṇo ve mā upaccagā
Khaṇātitā hi socanti nirayamhi samappitā.

Verse 315: As a border town is well guarded within and without, so guard yourself. Let not any moment of life pass unguarded. Let no opportunity be lost. Those who miss the opportunity fall into the woeful state and grieve.

Guard yourself
Bhikkhus fending for themselves

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke this verse in the Jetavana monastery in respect of some bhikkhus who spent their vassa in a border town.

It so happened that once a group of bhikkhus went to a bordertown to spend their vassa there. The first month of their stay was comfortable. They were provided enough food and taken care of by the householders properly. During the next month, however, the town was attacked by the robbers. They looted the properties and took away some people as hostages. The people had, therefore, to rebuild their town to protect themselves against any future attack. Thus the people could not attend to the bhikkhus as much as they would have liked to do. So, the bhikkhus had to take care of themselves, of their own.

At the end of the vassa, as per the custom, the bhikkhus came to the Jetavana monastery to pay homage to the Buddha. After the exchange of greetings, the Buddha asked them about their welfare. To this, they replied, 'Sir! The first month went off well. But due to the difficulties faced by the people, we also had difficult time during the next two months of the vassa.'

On hearing this, the Buddha advised, 'Bhikkhus! **Don't keep on thinking about this or that. It is always difficult to have a carefree and effortless life. Just as the people of the border town guard their town so should a bhikkhu guard his mind against evil influences and keep it steadfast on his mortal body.**'

Verse 316: Alajjitāye lajjanti lajjitāye na lajjare
Micchādiṭṭhi samādānā sattā gacchanti duggatiṃ.

Verse 316: Beings who feel ashamed of things not shameful and are not ashamed of things shameful, arrive at a woeful state by embracing wrong views.

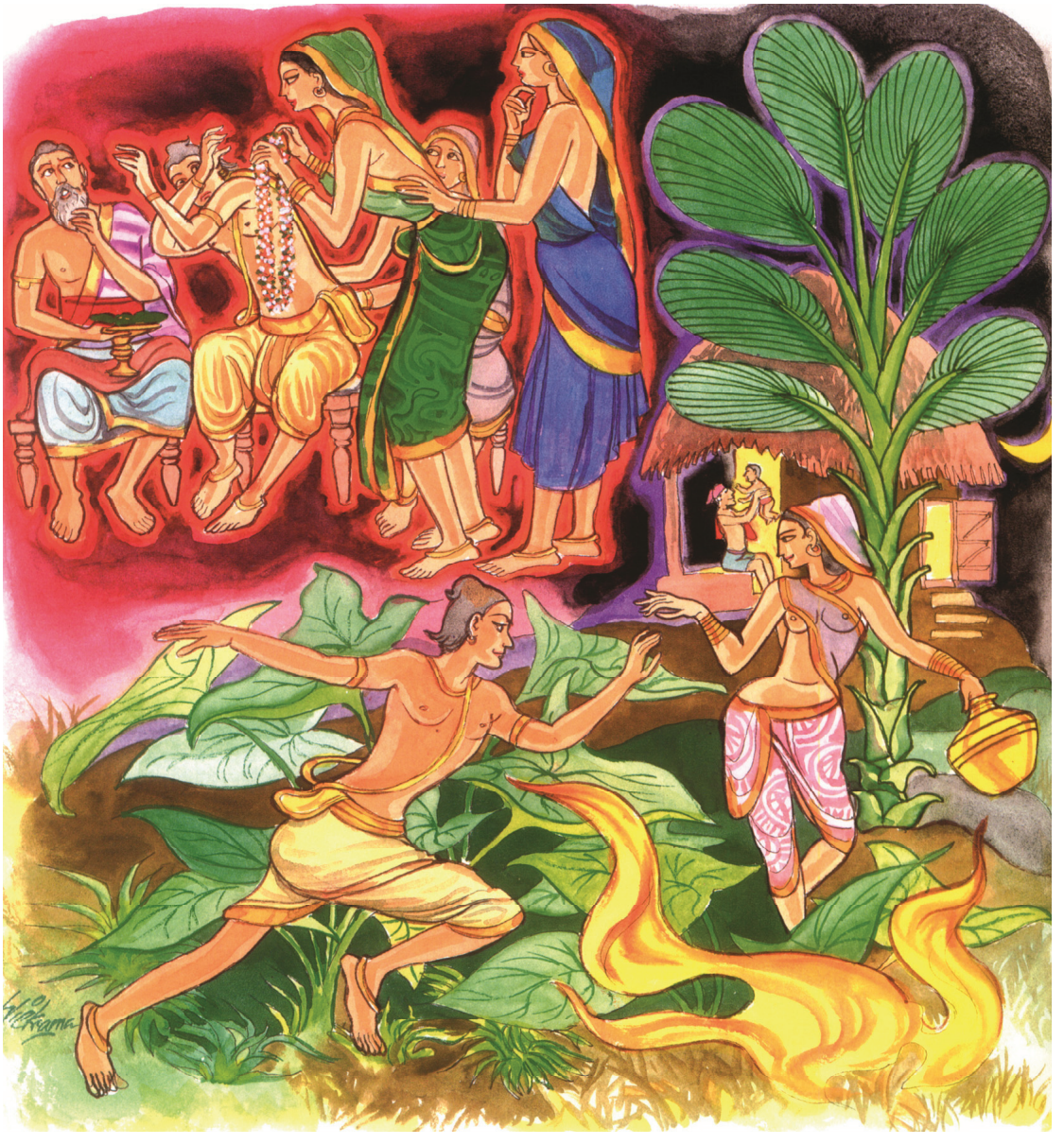
Be modest
Misguided naked ascetics

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke these two verses while staying at the Jetavana monastery in respect of some naked ascetics.

One day, some naked ascetics went for alms round with their alms bowls covered with cloth. Then there were other naked ascetics also who had covered nothing and went for alms round just like that. When the bhikkhus belonging to the Sangha of the Buddha saw them going round like this, they discussed amongst themselves, 'The ascetics who try to cover the front portion of the private parts of their bodies with the alms bowls are at least a little better than those ascetics who are totally naked and go around just like that. They have at least some semblance of shame as compared to the other ascetics who have no shame at all.'

The naked ascetics who tried to hide their front part of the body with begging bowls heard their conversation and replied back, 'Yes, indeed we try to cover the front part of our body by using the begging bowl as a cover. But that is not to cover our private parts out of shame of going naked. We cover our bowls with cloth so that insects do not fall in the bowl. The dust which may fall in our begging bowl also contains life.'



Verse 317: Abhaye ca bhaya dassino bhaye ca abhaya dassino
Micchādiṭṭhi samādānā sattā gacchanti duggatiṃ.

Verse 317: Beings, who look upon things non-fearsome with fear and the fearsome things with no fear, arrive at a woeful state being led by mis-conceptions.

Have sense of proportion
Misguided naked ascetics

The matter was reported to the Buddha. He was told what the ascetics had said. On hearing them, the Buddha explained, 'Bhikkhus! Those naked ascetics are not ashamed of what they should be ashamed of. On the other hand, they are ashamed of what they should not be ashamed of. Because of such wrong views their future will not be happy.'

Note: From the above, it is clear that the naked ascetics were not able to discriminate between what was right and what was wrong. In the society in which we live, the private parts of the body are required to be covered up because the exposure of the private parts like urinary system may bring excitement and attractions of negative kind in others and their exposure is thus 'shameful'. It may also be harmful to the society. On the other hand, the begging bowl does not attract any raga, dwesha, moha etc. Therefore, there is no need to cover it. But the naked ascetics covered it with cloth. The parts of the body which should have been covered, were not covered and the begging bowl, for which there was no need to cover was covered.

Verse 318: Avajje vajja dassino vajje cāvajjadassino
Micchādiṭṭhi samādanā sattā gacchanti duggatiṃ.

Verse 318: Beings, who find wrong in things not wrongful and no wrong in the things wrongful, arrive at a woeful state being led by mis-conceptions.

See what is wrong
Children visit the Buddha

Place: Jetavana Monastery

The Buddha spoke these two verses while residing at the Nigrodharama monastery in respect of some disciples of non-Buddhist ascetics.

The disciples of some non-Buddhist ascetics did not want that their children should mix with the children of the followers of the Buddha. They often instructed them, 'Do not go to the Jetavana monastery. Do not pay respect to the bhikkhus who are the followers of the Buddha.'

One day, the children of the non-Buddhist ascetics were playing near the Jetavana monastery. One of the boys playing with them was the son of a follower of the Buddha. While playing, the boys felt very thirsty. But the children had been forbidden by their parents from entering the monastery. So, they sent the Buddhist boy to quench his thirst there and then bring some water for them. The Buddhist boy went inside the Jetavana monastery, drank water to his satisfaction and then went to pay homage to the Enlightened One. After paying respects to him, he told the Buddha, 'My friends have been forbidden by their parents from entering a Buddhist monastery.' Then the Buddha told him, 'Tell the non-Buddhist boys to come inside the monastery and drink water.' The boys came inside the monastery, drank water and paid their regards to the Enlightened One.

Thereafter, the Buddha gave them a discourse suitable to their temperament. As a result, the boys got established in the faith of the triple gem i.e. the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

Verse 319: Vajjañ ca vajjato ñatvā avajjañ ca avajjato
Sammādiṭṭhi samādānā sattā gacchanti suggatim.

Verse 319: Those who know the wrong as wrong and the right as right get happiness due to their correct views.

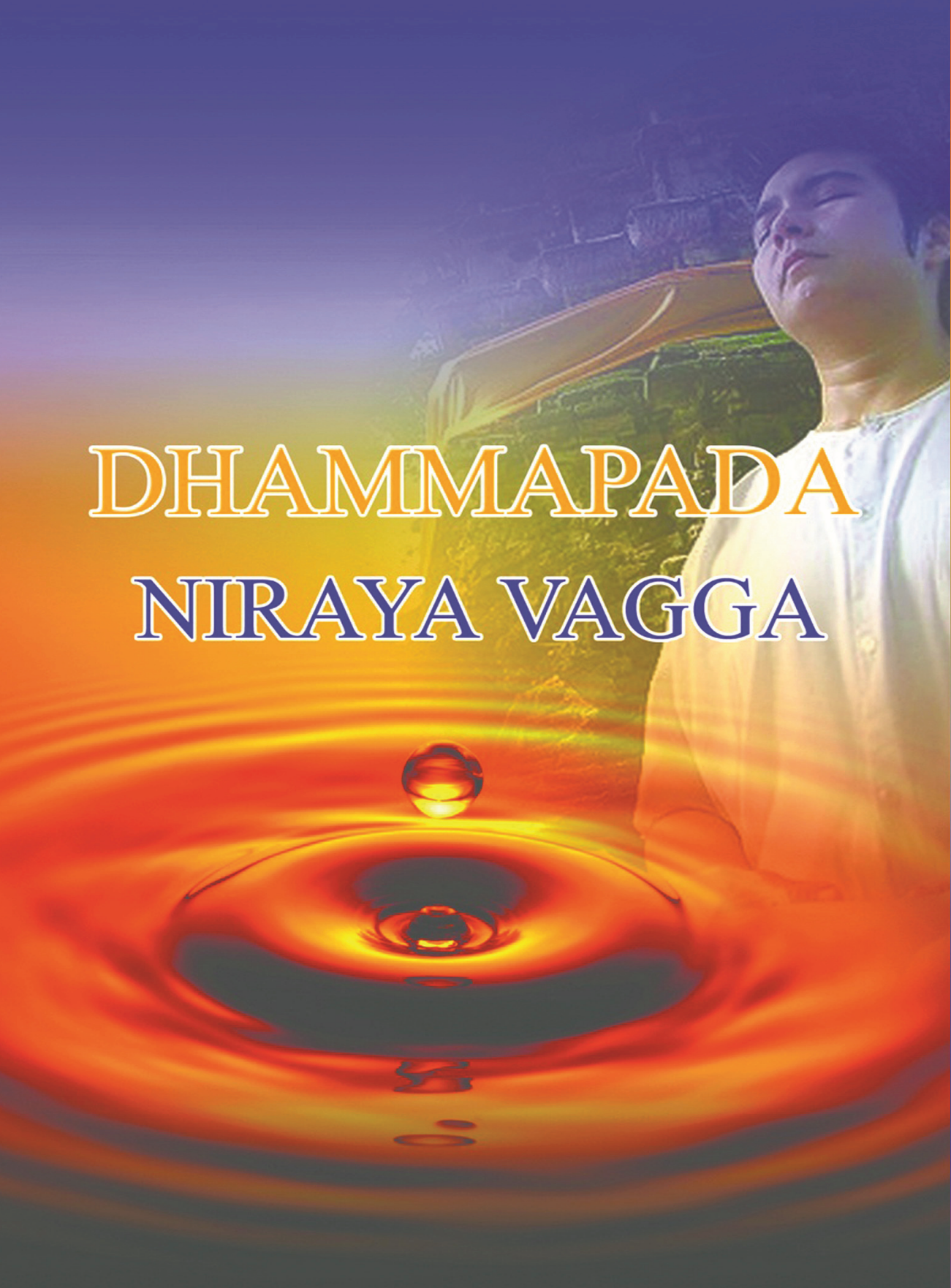
See both right and wrong
Children visit the Buddha

When the boys went home, they told their parents about their visit to the Jetavana monastery and what the Buddha taught them concerning the triple gem. The parents of the boys, being ignorant of the Buddhist teachings, cried out, 'Our children are destroyed. They have become disloyal to our faith. We are ruined.'

On hearing this, some well wishers and intelligent Buddhist parents who stayed in the neighbourhood, came out of their houses and knowing what had happened, advised the weeping parents, 'Stop weeping my brothers. Come with us, along with your children to the Jetavana monastery.' They explained to them the sublime and glorious nature of the Buddha's teachings. Somehow, the parents agreed and they all came to Jetavana monastery to see the Buddha.

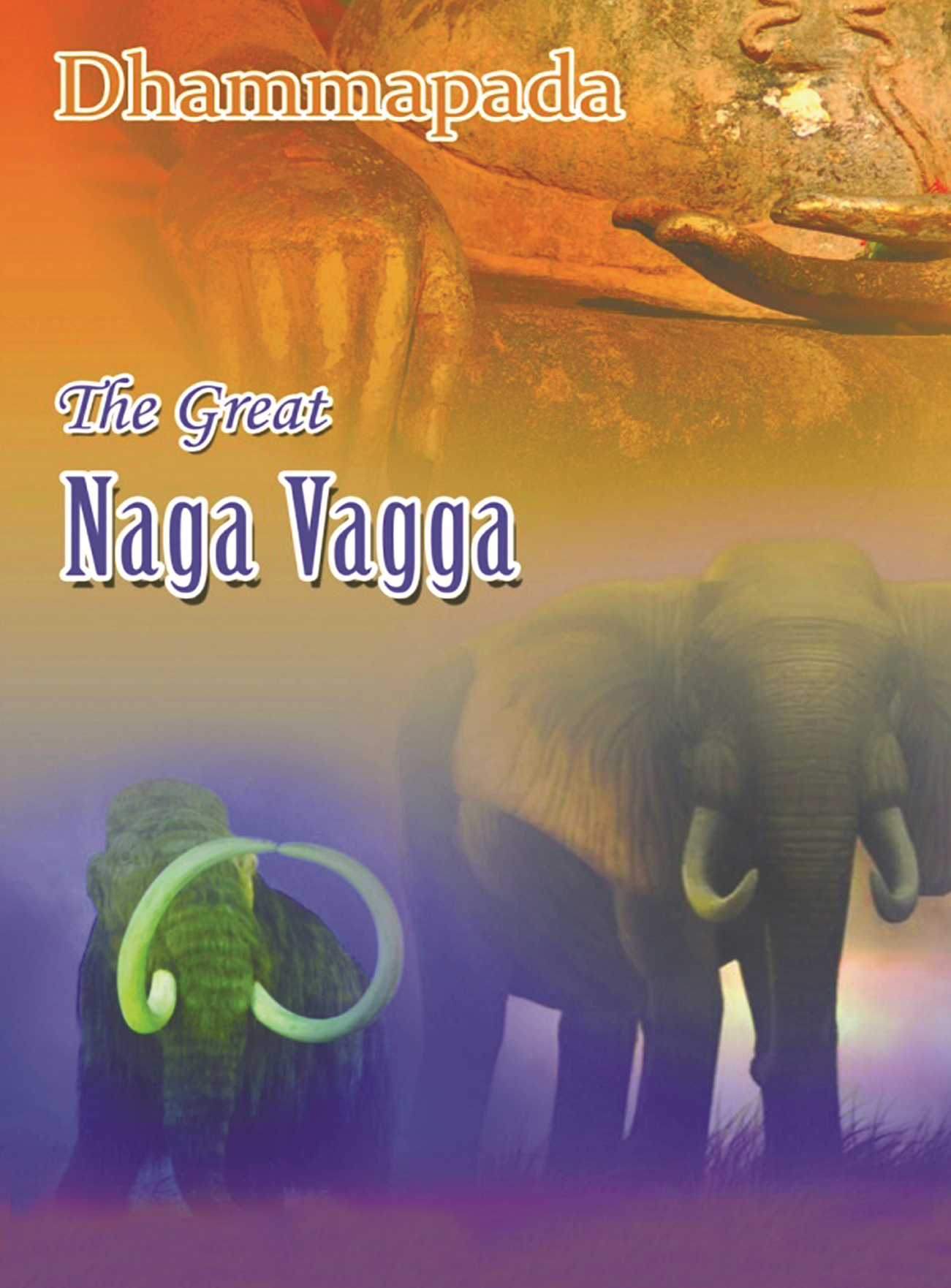
The Buddha knew in advance that they were coming to see him. So, when they came, he explained the Dhamma in simple language to them and thereafter recited the following two stanzas, 'Those who take what is correct as incorrect, and what is not correct as correct, both go to woeful states when they depart from this world, because of their false beliefs. On the other hand, those who regard wrong as wrong, and what is right as right, those people who embrace right views, go to the higher states of existence.'

The parents cooled down on listening to the words of wisdom from the Buddha. They began to visit the Jetavana monastery regularly to listen to the religious discourses given by the Buddha. At the end they were all established in the Dhamma.


DHAMMAPADA
NIRAYA VAGGA

Dhammapada

The Great
Naga Vagga



Chapter XXIII

NAGA VAGGA

The Great, The Elephant

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NAGA VAGGA

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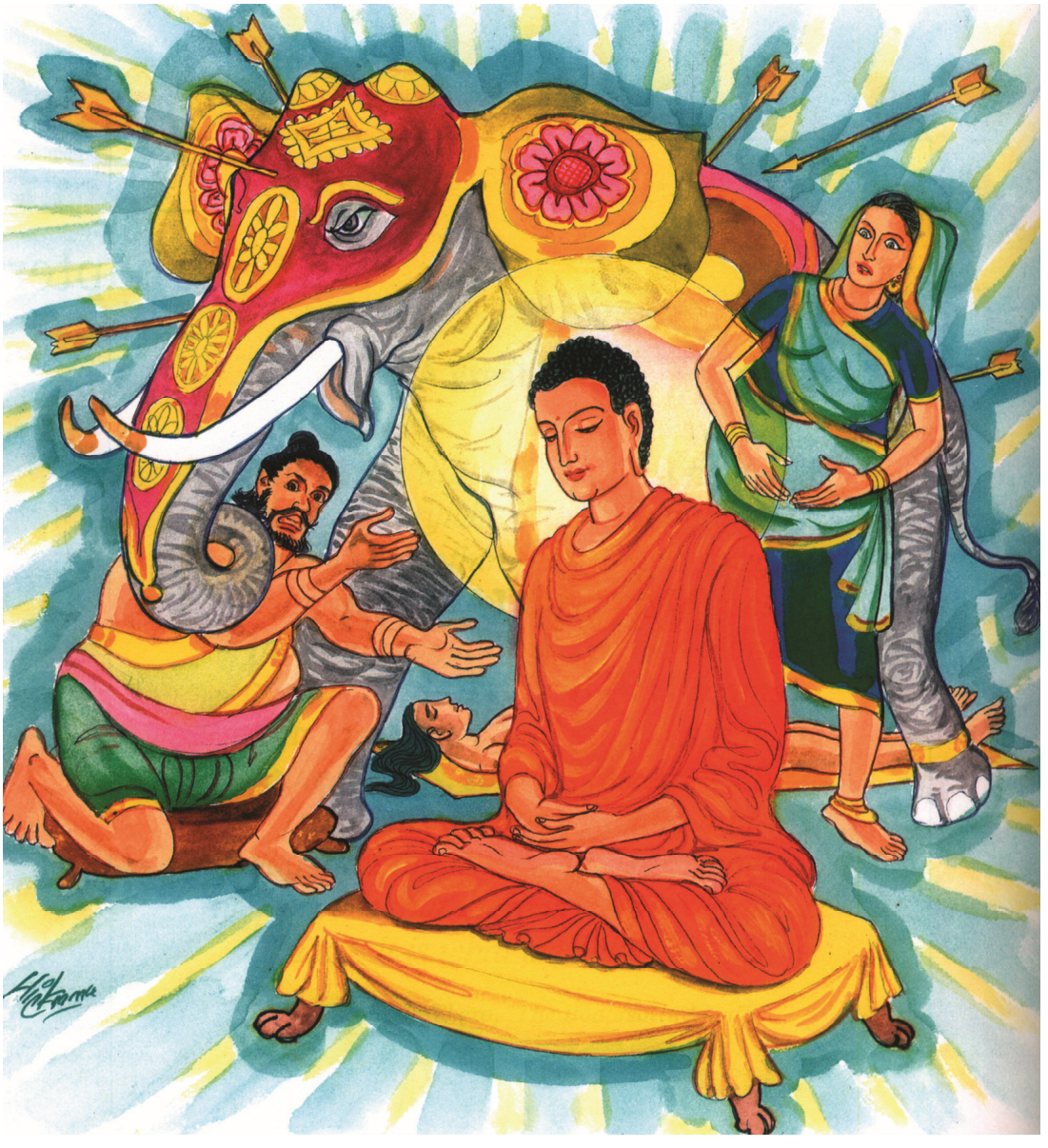


Verse 320: Ahaṃ nāgo va saṅgāme cāpāto patitaṃ saraṃ
Ativākyaṃ titikkhissaṃ dussilo hi bahujjano.

Verse 320: As an elephant in the battlefield stands the arrows shot from the bow, so shall I endure abuse. But most of the people lack that strength because of the lack of moral courage.

Majority are undisciplined
Story of the Buddha's endurance

Place: Kausambi

The Buddha spoke these three verses at the Ghositarama monastery about the patience and endurance shown by him when people hired by queen Magandiya went on abusing him in Kausambi.

Magandiya was a very beautiful daughter of a brahmin. Seeing the impressive personality and looks of the Buddha, the father of Magandiya proposed to the Buddha to marry his daughter (See Chapter2, Verse 21). But the Buddha declined the offer and said, 'I do not like to touch, even with my feet, such a thing like the human body, which is full of filth and excreta.' Magandiya's parents saw the truth in the statement of the Buddha, pondered over it seriously and soon attained Anagami state.

Verse 321: Dantaṃ nayanti samitiṃ dantaṃ rājābhirūhati
Danto seṭṭho manussesu yo' tivākyaṃ titikkhati.

Verse 321: The trained elephants are led to the battle. The king mounts the trained horse or elephant. The self-trained man who endures abusive words is the best among men.

The cultured endure abuse
Story of the Buddha's endurance

Magandiya, however, became very bitter of the Buddha. She bore personal grudge against him and took a vow to take revenge from him.

Later Magandiya became the third queen of King Udayana. When she came to know that the Buddha was likely to visit Kosambi, she hired some anti-social elements and their servants. They followed the Buddha, when he went in the town for alms round, and abused him profusely. They used the abusive words like thief, fool, camel, donkey; one likely to go to niraya (hell) etc. Hearing these abusive words, bhikkhu Ananda felt very disturbed and proposed to the Buddha, 'Sir! Let us leave this town and go to some other place.'

Verse 322: Varam assatarā dantā ājāniyā ca sindhavā
Kuñjarā ca mahānāgā atta danto tato varaṃ.

Verse 322: Excellent are the trained mules. So are the thorough-bred horses of Sind and noble tusked elephants. But far better than them is one who has trained himself.

Self control is the best
Story of the Buddha's endurance

But the Buddha refused to go to some other place, saying, 'People may abuse us in other towns as well. It is not practically possible every time to shift to a new place. We are innocent and, therefore, there is no need to shift to some other place. It is better to solve a problem immediately in a place where it arises, rather than to postpone it. A problem should not be avoided.' He also added, 'I am like an elephant in the battlefield who patiently tolerates all the arrows coming to him from all sides. I will also tolerate patiently the abuses that come to me from people without morals.'

Verse 323: Na hi etehi yānehi gaccheyya agataṃ disaṃ
Yathā ttanā sudantena danto dantena gacchati.

Verse 323: With those vehicles, such as the elephants and the horses, one cannot go to the place one has never been before i.e. the Nirvana. But through the well-trained self, one can go to the Nirvana.

Self control leads to one's goal
Story of an elephant trainer

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke this verse at the Jetavana monastery with reference to a monk who had earlier been an elephant-trainer.

Once, an elephant-trainer was trying to tame his elephant by the side of the river Aciravati. The trainer was finding it difficult to control it. Some bhikkhus standing nearby were observing this. One of these bhikkhus had been an elephant-trainer earlier. He told the other bhikkhus how this elephant could be easily tamed. The elephant-trainer overheard it and was able to subdue the animal by following what the bhikkhu had said.

The matter was subsequently reported to the Buddha. On hearing the whole story, the Enlightened One advised the bhikkhu, 'My son, you are still very far off from your goal of Perfection. You should concentrate on your mission and devote yourself on your spiritual advancement. You cannot attain the Nirvana by taming the elephants. Only one, who has tamed himself, can experience the bliss Supreme.'

It may be noted that the Buddha did not admonish the bhikkhu for giving his service, based on his past experience. He admonished him not to forget his ultimate goal in life for which he had left his family and the entire world, to free the mind from all impurities and attractions.

Verse 324: Dhanapālako nāma kuñjaro kaṭukappabhedano dunnivārayo Buddho kabalaṃ na bhuñjati sumarati nāga vanassa kuñjaro.

Verse 324: The uncontrollable elephant named Dhanapala, in sexually active period, when captured, eats not a single ball of rice. He only recalls his forest, longing to serve his parents.

Service to parents: Best service
Story of ungrateful sons

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

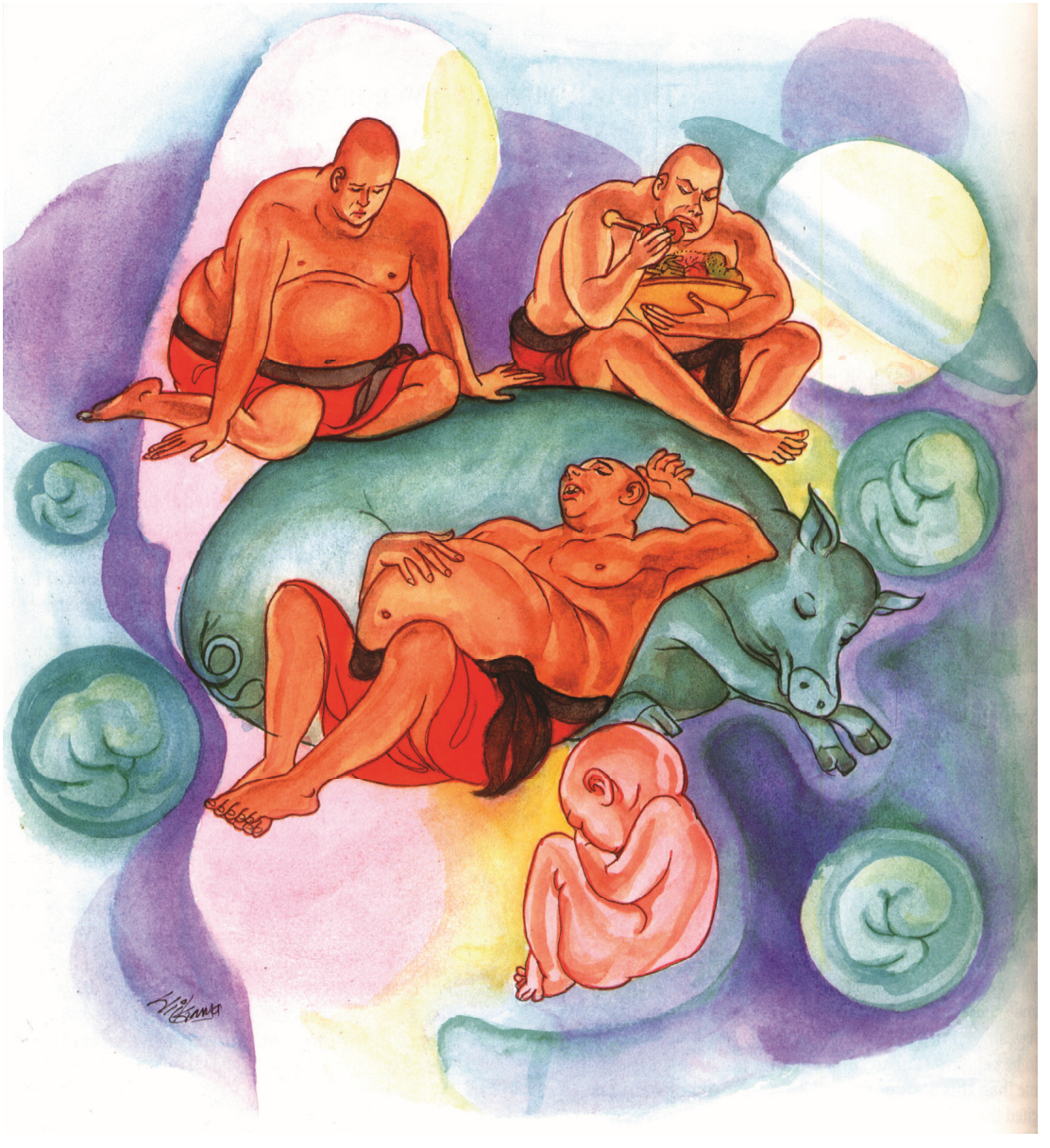
Once, there lived in Sravasti an old brahmin who was very rich. He had four sons. All of them got married in time. When his wife died, they persuaded him to distribute his property amongst the sons which he did and in the process he himself became penniless. But after taking away his entire property, the sons and their wives started ill treating him so much that he had to leave home with a stick and a begging bowl. Knowing that Bhikkhu Gotama was helpful and compassionate to all, he went to meet him for advice.

The Buddha taught him some verses and advised him to recite them in large gathering of people, 'My four foolish sons for whom we prayed to God and rejoiced at their birth, under the influence of their wives, have driven me out of the family as a dog drives out a pig. Just as an old horse is not given any grass to eat, so have I to beg for food. They are like demons to me. This stick with which I protect myself from the street dogs and the cows is more serviceable than all these four sons put together.'

One day, there was a large meeting of the brahmins of Sravasti in which the sons of the old man also sat, well dressed. Now according to the law in the kingdom at that time, 'Any-one who ill treated his mother or father, did not support or look after them was to be punished.' Many in the crowd, on hearing the verses, got wild and wanted the sons to be punished. The sons, all of them, knelt down before their father and prayed for his pardon. Now, they all started treating him well. One day, the eldest son invited the Buddha for almsfood to his house. After the food, all the sons told the Buddha, 'Gotama, you can see that we take care of our father now with all sincerity.' The Buddha told him, 'By doing so you are gaining benefits for yourselves only.' Then he narrated the story of the elephant Dhanapala from Nagrajajataka.

Dhanapala was captured in the forest by the royal guards and well kept in royal palace. But he gave up food and always longed to go back to the forest, 'I cherish my forest Nagavan only. My mother must be crying at the loss of her son. My first duty was to serve my parents which I am unable to do now. That duty can be performed only if I am at Nagavan. How can I relish the food alone?' The Buddha narrated this as one of the stories of his previous birth.

On hearing this, many in the crowd started weeping.



Verse 325: Middhi yadā hoti mahagghaso ca niddāyitā sampari vattasāyi
Mahā varāho va nivāpa puṭṭho punappunaṃ gabbham upeti mando.

Verse 325: The foolish, who is sleepy, gluttonous and lazy, keeps on rolling like a big pig. The stupid one takes rebirths, again and again.

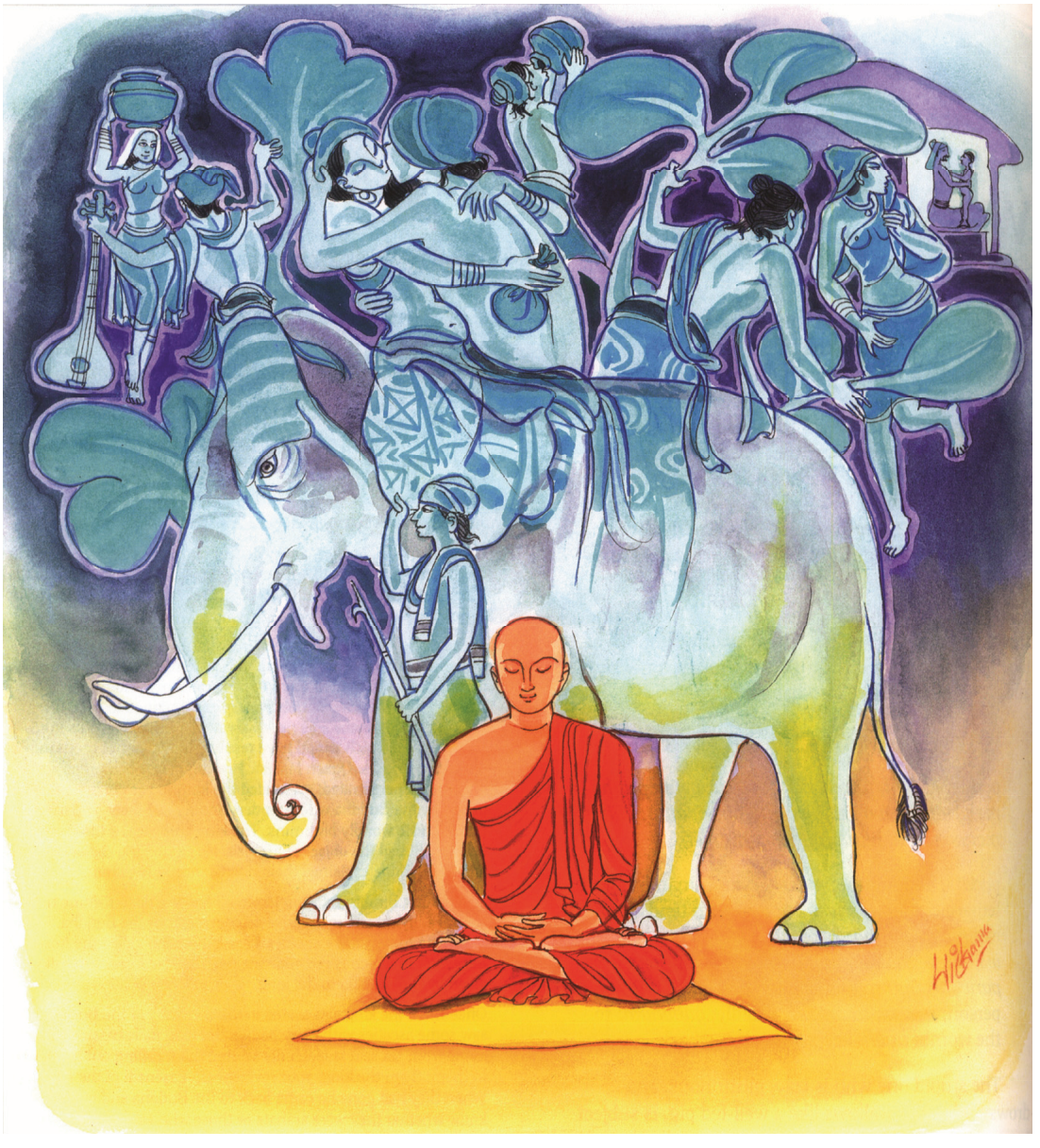
Be moderate in eating
Story of King Pasendi and eating

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke this verse at the Jetavana monastery with reference to King Pasendi of Kosala when he had come to the monastery, after taking heavy meal.

One day, the king went to the monastery to pay homage to the Buddha after taking a heavy meal. While he was sitting in the presence of the Buddha, he felt so drowsy that he started nodding his head. He could hardly keep himself awake. Then he told the Buddha, 'Sir! I have been in great discomfort ever since I took a heavy meal.' The Buddha agreed with the king, saying, 'Yes, king! Overeating creates discomfort.'

On the advice of the Great Teacher, the king gradually reduced the quantity of food he took. He felt much better now. As a result of this, there was loss of weight as well. He became more active, alert and happy.



Verse 326: Idaṃ pure cittam acāri cārikaṃ,
Yenaicchakaṃ yattha kāmaṃ yathā sukhaṃ
Tadajj ahaṃ niggahessāmi yoniso, Hatthippabhinnaṃ viya aṅkusaggaho.

Verse 326: In the past this mind has wandered, as per its pleasure, unchecked, moving wherever it liked. From to-day, I will consciously control my mind wisely, as a mahaut controls an elephant in sexually active period.

Control your thoughts
Story of Novice Sanu and mother spirit

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, Samanera Sanu recited some religious verses in the presence of some senior bhikkhus. At the end of the recitation, he wished, 'May the merit gained through this recitation, be shared with my parents.' One of the mothers of Sanu of a previous life, who was a spirit now, was listening to the recitation. She felt very happy over it and told him, 'My dear son! I am extremely happy to know that you want to share your merit with me as well. Well done, my son!'

As Sanu grew up, he developed disliking for the monastic life. One day, he went back home and told his mother, in this life, about his decision to quit the life of a bhikkhu. His mother did not want that he should give up the life of a bhikkhu. But he was adamant. While all this was going on, his mother in the previous birth and now a spirit thought, 'It will be a great disgrace that my son will give up the life of a bhikkhu. I must do something to stop him from doing so.' So, she took possession of his body. Now he rolled on the ground like a mad man, uttering in-coherent words. When people assembled there requested the spirit to calm down, the boy, still under the influence of the spirit, spoke out, 'This samanera wants to quit the Sangha and re-enter the life of a layman. If he commits this sin, he will not be liberated, even if he flies away to the sky as a bird.' Saying so, the spirit left the body and went away. The samanera became normal once again.

Finding all around him in tears, the samanera asked, 'What had happened?' The mother explained to him all that had happened and also the warning, 'It will be foolish on your part to return to the life of a layman.' The samanera realised his mistake and went back to the monastery.

The Buddha sent him his radiance and blessed, **'Son, one who is not able to check the mind which keeps on wandering here and there will not find happiness. So, control your mind as a trainer controls an elephant.'** After sometime, Sanu attained Arahanthood. He became great exponent of the Dhamma.

Verse 327: Appamāda ratā hotha sacittam anurakkhatha
Duggā uddharath attānaṃ paṅke satto va kuñjaro.

Verse 327: Take delight in wakefulness and guard your mind well. As an elephant stuck in mud pulls itself out of it, so also pull yourself out of the mud of moral impurities.

Avoid the evil way
Story of an old elephant

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

The Buddha spoke this verse while residing at the Jetavana monastery in respect of Paveyyaka elephant. Elephant Paveyyaka was very strong when he was young.

Time passes on. With the passage of time, as it happens with all creatures, this elephant also became weak. He did not have that energy which he once possessed. One day, he went to a pond to take bath but was stuck up in the mud there. He made all efforts to free himself, but failed. People started talking, 'Even a very strong elephant has become so weak today that it is unable to come out of the mud.' The matter was reported to King Pasendi. Seeing no other way to rescue the elephant, he called for the elephant-trainer, who once upon a time, was very close to the elephant. He had retired from his palace-job but was well accustomed to the nature of the elephant. The trainer went to the place where the elephant was. There he ordered his men to beat the battle drums. Hearing the beating of the drums, the elephant thought that he was in the battlefield. His spirit arose. His courage came back. He pulled himself with all his might and came out of the mud.

When the bhikkhus told the story to the Buddha, he said, **'Bhikkhus! Just as the elephant pulled himself out of the mud, so also you must pull out yourselves of the mud of moral impurities with all your strength.'**

Verse 328: Sace labetha nipakaṃ sahāyaṃ saddhiṃ caraṃ sādhu vihāri dhiraṃ Abhibhuyya sabbāni parissayāni careyya ten attamano satimā.

Verse 328: If one gets an intelligent companion of noble living and wisdom, who behaves well, he should live with him happily and mindfully, overcoming all obstacles.

Associate with the wise
Story of Parileyyaka and the Buddha

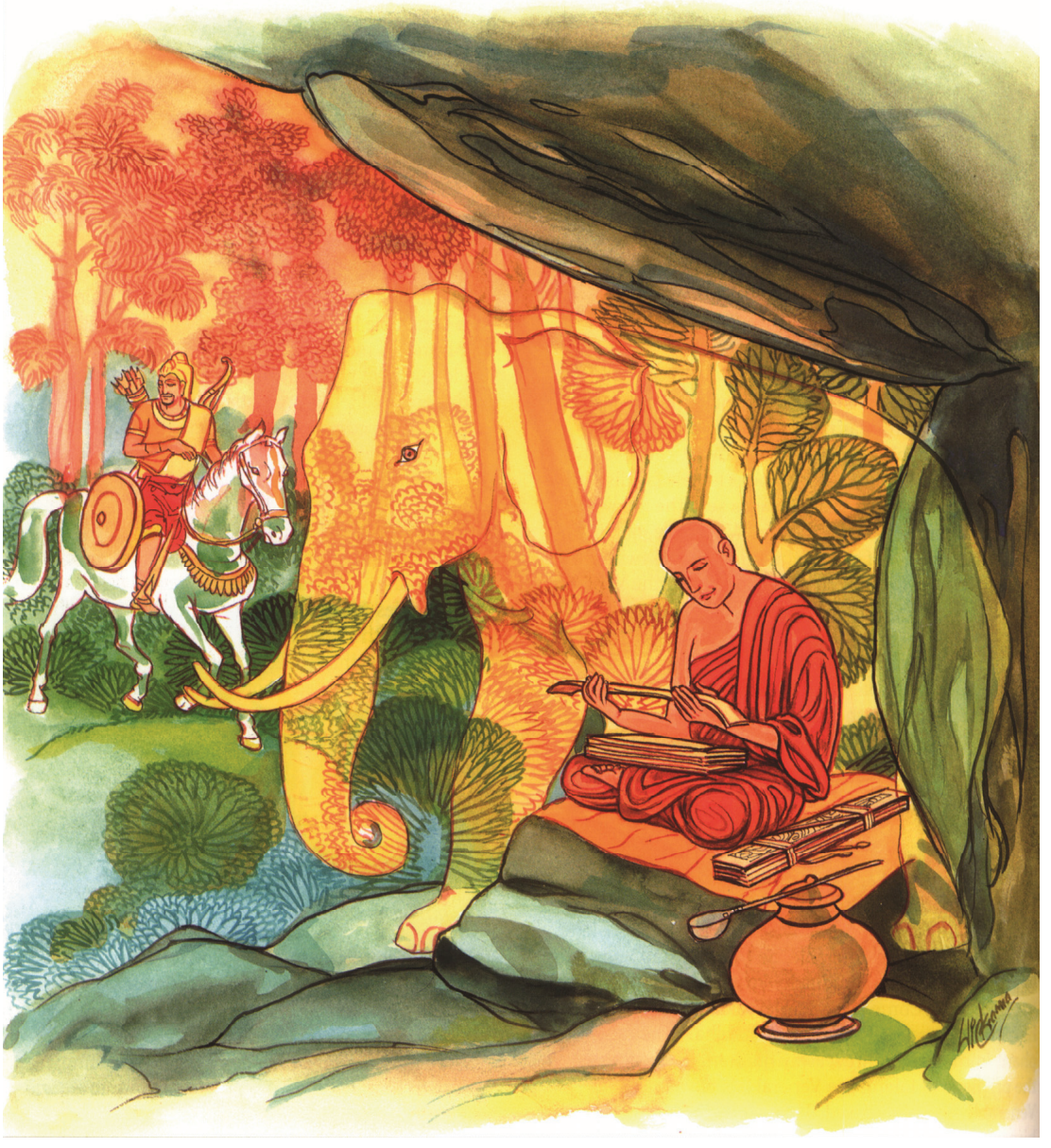
Place: Parileyyaka

While residing in the Parileyyaka forest, the Buddha spoke these verses, with reference to five hundred monks from Kosambi and the elephant Parileyyaka who attended to him while the Enlightened One stayed in the forest.

It was in the ninth year after Enlightenment that the Buddha was staying at Ghositarama, the monastery built by Ghosita in Kosambi. One of the bhikkhus once left some water in the toilet-pot without emptying it, after he used the lavatory. When the bhikkhus questioned him, he admitted his fault that he should have left the pot empty. But, the other monks got together, declared him guilty and passed expulsion order against him.

The bhikkhu was full of wisdom and was an accomplished person. He went to the bhikkhus who had pronounced the expulsion order. He told them that he had admitted his guilt and that their decision was not proper as it would lead to dissension amongst the bhikkhus in the Order. The bhikkhus were divided in two warring groups. The Buddha admonished both the groups to maintain harmony.

After the admonition by the Buddha, the group that had pronounced the judgement began to perform their rites inside the campus and the other group outside the campus. When this was reported to the Buddha, he found nothing wrong in it.



Verse 329: No ce labetha nipakaṃ sahāyaṃ
saddhiṃ caraṃ sādhu vihāri dhiraṃ
Rājā va raṭṭhaṃ vijitaṃ pahāya eko care mātaṅgaraññ eva nāgo.

Verse 329: If one fails to get an intelligent companion of noble living and wisdom, one should live alone like a king leaving a conquered kingdom or as an elephant living alone in the forest.

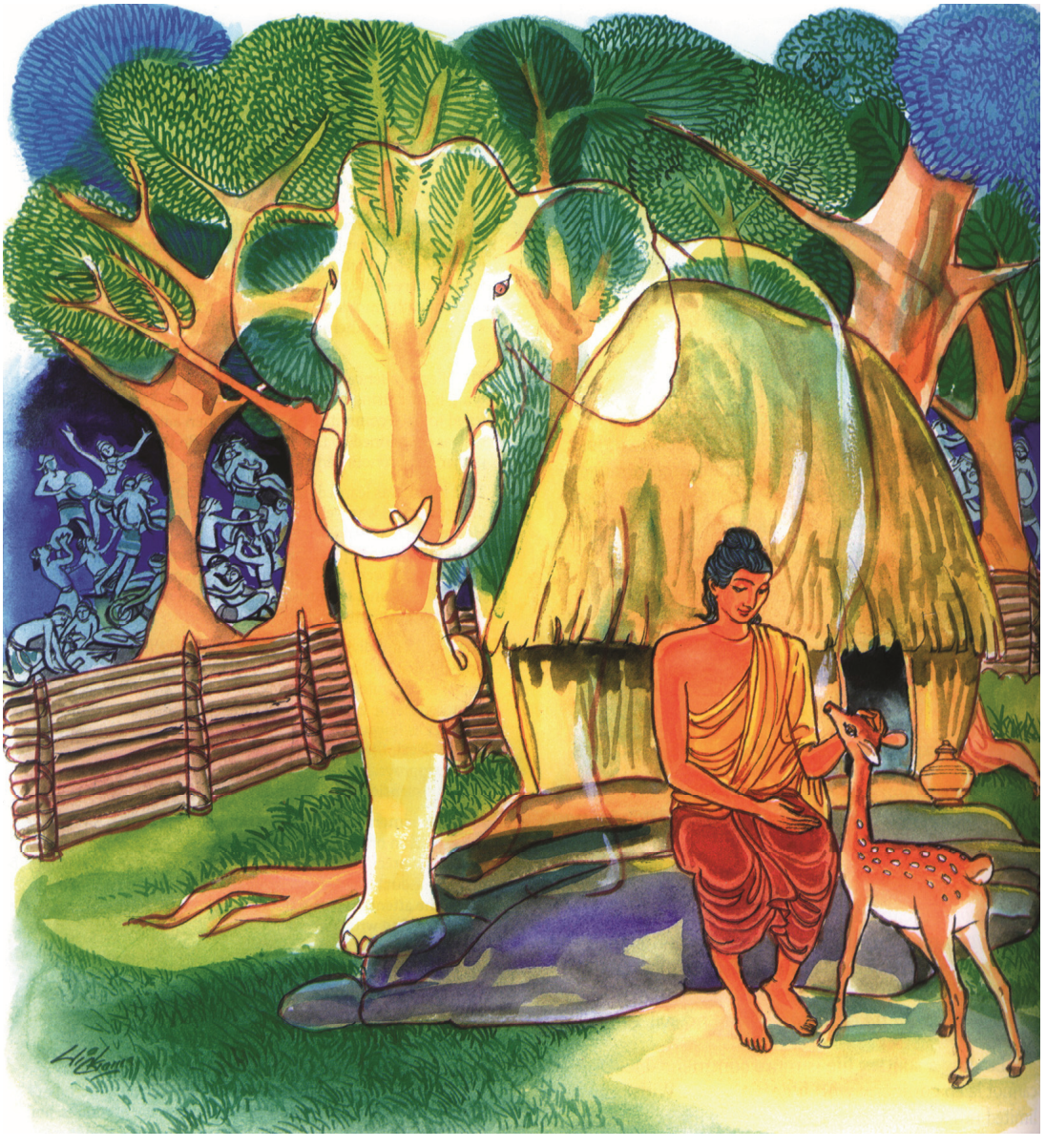
Move alone but not with fools
Story of Parileyyaka and the Buddha

But the matter did not end at that. As the bhikkhus were divided in two groups, they kept on quarreling whenever the groups were face to face. It could be either in the village, in the alms-hall or any place where they met. The people of the town did not approve their conduct. But they could do nothing. It became talking point for the laymen.

Some bhikkhus requested the Buddha to intervene. So, both the groups were called to the Hall of Dhamma. There the Teacher addressed them and asked them to end their misunderstanding. He also told them the story of King Brahmadatta of Kasi, King Dighiti of Kosala and Prince Dighayu to illustrate the evils of quarrels and merits of tolerance. He exhorted them to sink their differences. Then one person of the quarrelsome group stood up and proposed that the Buddha should keep out of the dispute and leave them alone.

The Buddha left the assembly making remarks, 'These fools have lost control of themselves. It is difficult to make them understand.' He arrived at Parileyyaka forest, entered the Rakkhita grove and began to stay below a big sala tree. The Buddha, all alone, left to Himself, was feeling very happy and relieved. An elephant, leader of the herd, named Parileyyaka was sick of the routine herd life and was yearning to lead a solitary life. He came to the place where the Buddha was seated and felt very happy to see the Enlightened One. He started attending to his needs. He brought food and drinks with his trunk. The elephant also enjoyed the life of solitude along with the Buddha.

A similar story has been mentioned in chapter 1, Yamaka Vagga, verse 6.



Verse 330: Ekassa caritaṃ seyyo natthi bāle sahāyatā
Eko care na ca pāpāni kayirā Appossukko mātaṅgarañño eva nāgo.

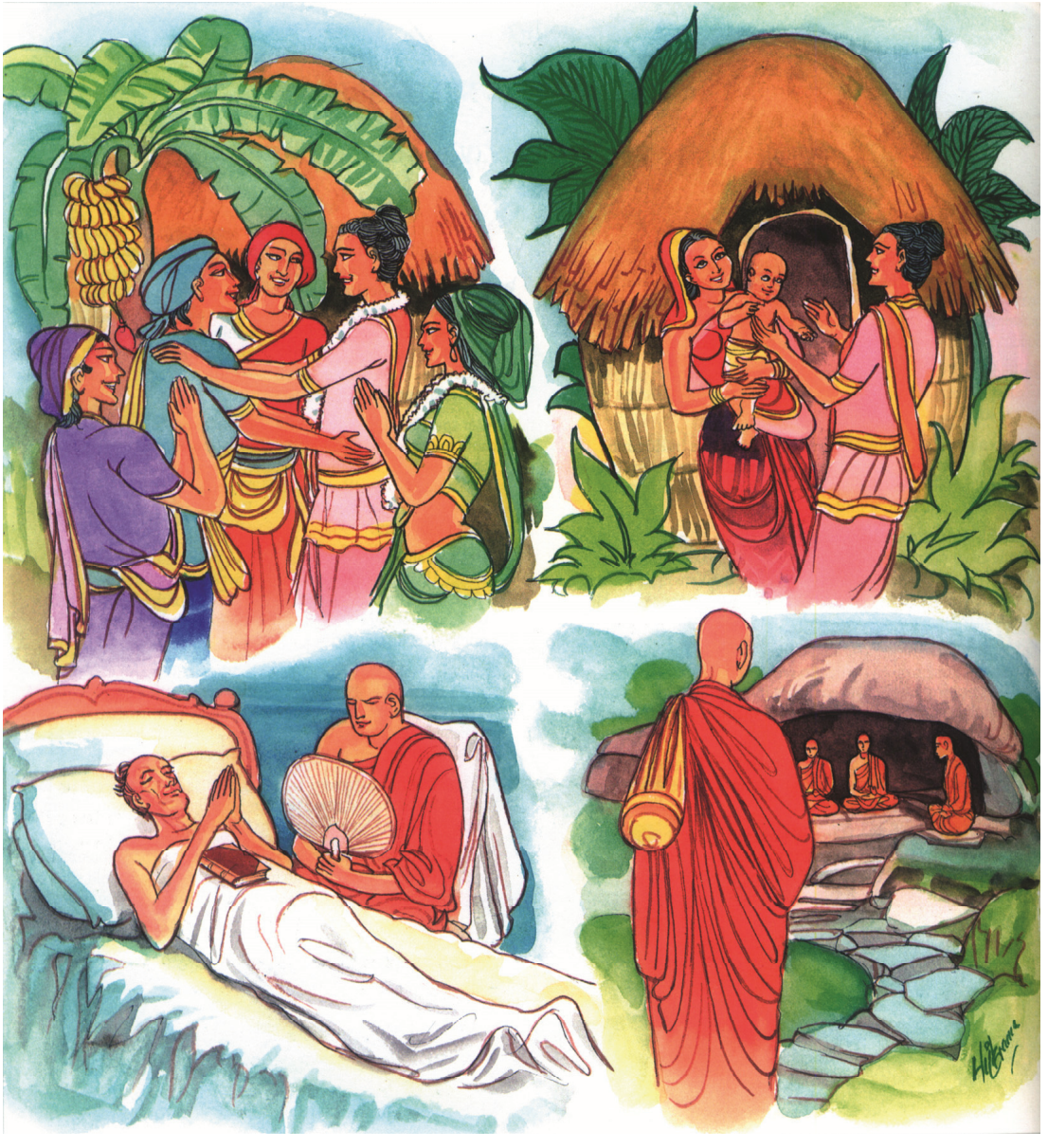
Verse 330: It is better to go alone than to have companionship with the fool. One should go alone like a care-free elephant in the forest and do no evil.

A solitary career is better
Story of Parileyyaka and the Buddha

After the Buddha left for the forest, the bhikkhus realised their folly. They went upto the forest with bhante Ananda. When they reached the outskirts of the forest, Ananda thought, 'The Buddha has stayed in the forest all alone for three months. It is not proper that I should go and meet him with so many bhikkhus with me.' So, he went to see the Buddha alone. After paying regards to him, he sat down on one side.

The Buddha asked him, 'Did you come alone?' 'I have come with five hundred monks.' 'Where are they?' 'They have stayed back outside the forest.' 'Call all of them here,' the Buddha asked. The bhikkhus arrived where the Enlightened One was sitting. They all fell at his feet, pleaded guilty before the Buddha and prayed for pardon. They also mentioned that the Buddha must have felt a lot of inconvenience as he was all alone for three months.

The Tathagata replied, 'Bhikkhus, the elephant Parileyyaka did all the services for me. For one who has a companion like him, he can live alone. If one could not get a companion like him, then in that case the life of solitude is better than the fellowship with the ignorant.'



Verse 331: Atthamhi jātamhi sukhā sahāyā tuṭṭhi sukhā yā itaritarena
Puññaṃ sukhaṃ jivita saṅkhayamhi sabbassa dukkhassa sukhaṃ pahānaṃ.

Verse 331: It is blissful to have friends in need. It is blissful to have contentment with whatever is available. It is blissful to have merit when life is coming to an end. Blissful is the end of sufferings.

Blessed are friends in need
Story of Mara tempting the Buddha

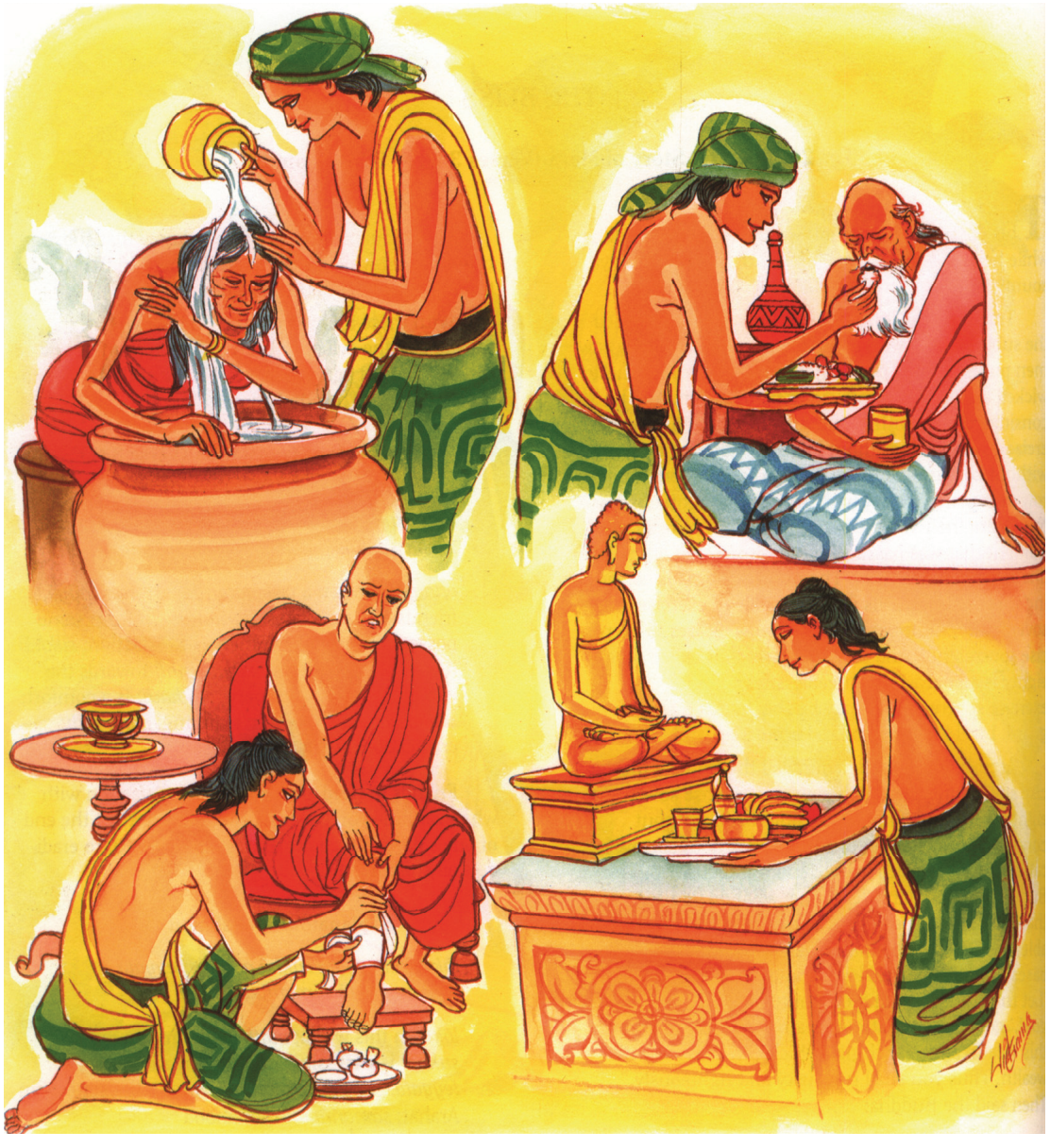
Place: Mountain Himalaya

These three verses were spoken by the Buddha with reference to Mara while the Buddha was dwelling in a forest-hut near the Himalayas.

Once, the Buddha found that the people were being ill-treated by some wicked kings. They were very oppressive to the people whom they ruled. As he saw the men being punished by these wicked kings, he was moved by the compassion towards them. He thought, 'Will it be possible to prevent these kings from ill-treating those who should not be ill treated and make them rule justly and wisely?' Mara knew what the Buddha was thinking. He tried to entice the Buddha to rule as a king. He thought, 'The bhikkhu Buddha is considering within himself to exercise sovereignty. It must be that now he desires to become a king. And this thing which is called kingship is an occasion of heedlessness. If he becomes a king, then it is an occasion for me to catch him off his guard. I will, therefore, go and kindle his desire.'

Thus Mara encouraged the Buddha to exercise kingship happily, without killing or causing to kill, without conquering or causing to conquer, without sorrow or causing any sorrow, with justice and righteousness.

The Buddha replied, 'Evil one, what do you see in me that you behave like this?' Mara said, 'If you resolve to be a king, the Himalayas, the king of mountains, can be converted into gold by me. And with that vast wealth you can rule comfortably, doing a lot of welfare activities. You can rule as a just and righteous king.'



Verse 332: Sukhā matteyyatā loke atho petteyyatā sukhā
Sukhā sāmaññatā loke atho brahmaññatā sukhā.

Verse 332: It is blissful to be dutiful to one's father and mother. It is blissful to perform the services to ascetics and the Noble Ones.

Serve the parents
Story of Mara tempting the Buddha

Then said the Buddha,

'The whole of a mountain of gold, even of fine gold.

Were not enough for one.

Knowing this, a man should walk justly.

How can a man who has seen whence arises suffering

devote himself to the pleasures of the senses?

'Let the man, in the world, who has come to know what attachment is, train himself to subdue this alone.'

Saying so, the Buddha warned Mara and told him, 'I admonish you once again, evil one. I have nothing in common with you.'

Through these three verses, the Buddha has given beautiful messages which are very relevant even today. It has been well said, 'Friend in need is friend indeed.' Also contentment is said to be the greatest virtue. Satisfaction is said to be the highest form of happiness. And satisfaction is the quality which is very much needed in the society today.

Verse 333: Sukhaṃ yāva jarā silaṃ sukhā saddhā patiṭṭhitā
Sukho paññāya paṭilābho pāpānaṃ akaraṇaṃ sukhaṃ.

Verse 333: It is blissful to observe moral virtues till old age. It is blissful to have firm faith. Blissful is the gaining of insight wisdom and blissful is abstinence from doing evil.

Blessed are the virtuous
Story of Mara tempting the Buddha

It has been rightly said, 'The Mother Earth can meet everyone's need, but not his greed.' Therefore, sensible people should not be greedy. Can it be possible? Yes, it can be. How? 'Kill out ambition, but work as those who are ambitious,' should be our motto in life. If we do so, we shall not get attached to the world as the water drop on a lotus leaf does not get attached to the leaf, though it remains on the leaf.

The Buddha has also exhorted us to do good deeds in life and, thereby, earn merit. **The entire sum and substance of the Buddha's teachings is that one should do only good deeds and avoid doing ill deeds and thus at the end of life, with additions and subtractions of merits and demerits, one should have enough of merit points earned.**

Through verse 332, the Buddha has pointed out that **there are four blessings in life. They are: (1) Motherhood (2) Fatherhood (3) Monkhood and (4) Arahanthood. The last one i.e. Arahanthood is the greatest blessing.**

Similarly, the pursuit of virtue until old age and death is a blessing. The acquisition of wisdom is a blessing. Also, abstaining from doing wrong things is also a blessing.

We may recall that the **Buddha reminded young householder Singala to worship the six directions as follows: East: Parents, South: Teachers, West: Wife and children, North: Friends, Relatives and neighbours, Nadir: Servants, Workers and employees, Zenith: Religious men.**

DHAMMAPADA

NAGA VAGGA

Dhammapada
Craving
Tanha Vagga

Chapter XXIV

TANHA VAGGA

Craving

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TANHA VAGGA

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Verse 334: Manujassa pamatta cārino taṇhā vaḍḍhati māluvā viya
So plavati hurāhuraṃ phalam icchaṃ va vanasmiṃ vānaro.

Verse 334: The craving of the man living a reckless life grows like a creeper. He jumps from one life to another like a monkey jumping in the forest in search of fruits.

Don’t live a reckless life
Golden fish with stinking breath

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

In the days of Kassapa Buddha there lived two brothers, by names Sodhana (elder) and Kapila (younger). The brothers, along with mother Sadhini and younger sister Tapana retired from the world and took to monastic life. The elder brother took a topic of meditation from his teacher and entered the forest. He strived very hard with all his strength and attained Arahantship.

The younger brother, on the other hand, thought, ‘I am still young. When I shall grow old, I shall follow meditation.’ He learnt the three Pitikas by heart and gained a lot of following. But he became so arrogant of his knowledge that he would pronounce a thing said by the others to be wrong, even when it was right. He would call someone as guilty, even when he was innocent and call other person innocent, even when he was guilty. The good natured monks advised him, ‘Brother, Do not speak like this.’ But Kapila would reply, ‘What do you know, people with empty hands?’ He would go on his way, unchecked.

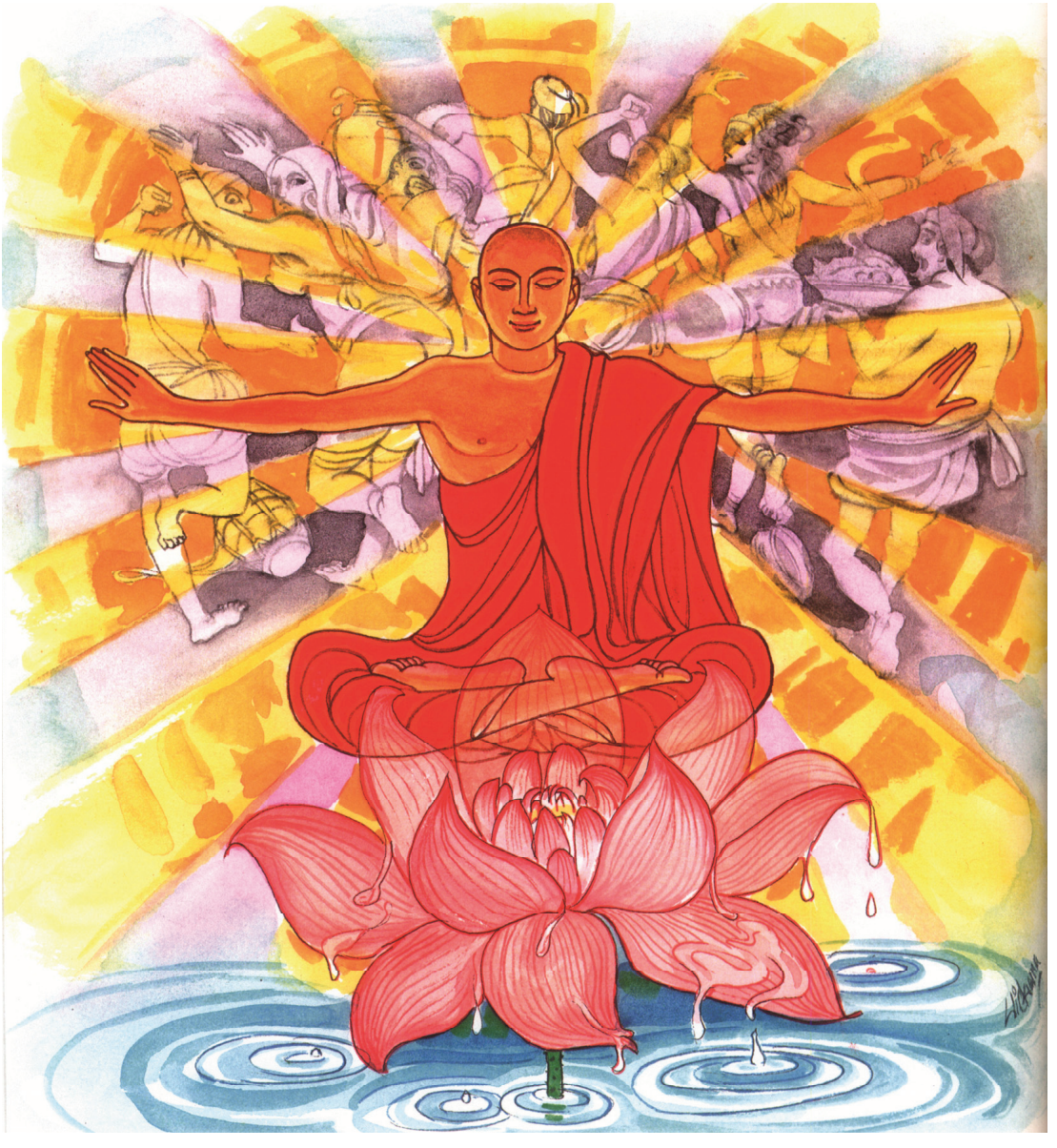
The monks brought it to the notice of his elder brother, who also advised Kapila, ‘Brother Kapila, Right conduct is the most important thing for a bhikkhu. You should, therefore, not give up right conduct and speak whatever you wish to speak.’ But Kapila did not change his habit. The elder brother admonished him two-three times but seeing that he did not pay attention to him, left him saying, ‘Brother, if you do not change your ways, you will become notorious for the things you are doing.’

Verse 335: Yaṃ esā sahati jammi taṇhā loke visattikā
Sokā tassa pavaḍḍhanti abhivaṭṭhaṃ va biraṇaṃ.

Verse 335: Whoever in this world is overcome by this wretched, poisonous craving, his sorrows grow like birana grass in the rains.

Craving multiplies sorrows
Golden fish with stinking breath

Thus Kapila behaved in arrogant way, unbecoming of a monk. He also gathered the company of the like minded people around him. One day, he thought, 'I shall recite the Patimokkha (Fundamental Precepts for the bhikkhus) in the Hall of Discipline.' So, he took a fan in his hand and sat on the seat of the Dhamma. He recited the Patimokkha and asked the usual question, 'Brothers! Are there amongst the bhikkhus assembled here, some who have anything to confess?' The monks thought, 'There is no point in giving answer to this monk' and they remained silent. Observing that the bhikkhus remained silent, Kapila said, 'There is no such thing as Sutta, Abhidhamma or Vinaya. It does not matter whether you listen to Patimokkha or not.' Saying so, he left the congregation. By saying these words, Kapila tried to neutralise the teachings of the Kassapa Buddha. His wrong statement, in fact, meant that he tried to retard the spreading of the teachings of the Buddha Kassapa. For these misdeeds, Kapila had to suffer a lot after his death. He was reborn in the hell of avichi. His mother Sadhani and sister Tapana were co-conspirators in these acts. They also used to abuse the kind monks. They were also reborn in the same hell.



Verse 336: Yo cetaṃ sahati jammiṃ taṇhaṃ loke duraccayam
Sokā tamhā papatanti udabindūva pokkharā.

Verse 336: But whoever overcomes this wretched craving, so difficult to overcome, his sorrows fall away like water-drops from a lotus.

No sorrow for craving-free
Golden fish with stinking breath

Now, during that period there lived five hundred robbers who earned their livelihood through robbery. One day, when they were being chased by the villagers, they entered the forest. There, they met a hermit whom they paid respects and said, 'Bhante, provide us shelter. Be our refuge.' The hermit replied, 'For you there is only one refuge and it is the refuge of the precepts of morality. Do you take upon yourselves the five precepts of morality?' 'Yes, Sir', they said and took the vow to follow the five moral precepts. Then the hermit warned them, 'Now that you have taken the vow to follow the five moral principles, you should not cross the moral laws or entertain evil thoughts, even at the cost of your lives.' 'Surely, Sir', said the former bandits. When the villagers reached there and found the robbers, they punished those dacoits to death. These five hundred men, on death, went to the deva loka and after living there for sometime were reborn during the period of Gotama Buddha in a village as five hundred fishermen.

Kapila, along with his mother and sister, suffered in hell during the period of the two Buddhas and was reborn in Aciravati river as a fish, during the times of Gotama Buddha.

One day, the group of five hundred young fishermen said, 'Let us catch some fish.' So, they threw the net in the river and the fish (Kapila) was caught in it. It was golden in colour. The fishermen had not seen such a beautiful fish anytime earlier. 'Let us take it to the king. It is so beautiful. The king will definitely give us some reward.' They went to the king with the fish in a boat. 'What is this?' the king asked. 'A golden fish, your majesty!' they replied.

Verse 337: Taṃ vo vadāmi bhddaṃ vo yāvant ettha samāgatā
Taṇhāya mūlaṃ khaṇatha usirattho va biraṇaṃ
Mā vo nalaṃ va soto va māro bhañji punappunaṃ.

Verse 337: Therefore, I tell you, all assembled here, for your good! Dig up the root of craving as one in quest of fragrant scent, digs up the birana grass. Let not Mara destroy you again and again, as the flood destroys a reed.

Cut off craving from the root
Golden fish with stinking breath

When the king saw the golden fish, he thought, 'The Buddha only can tell us the reason for such beautiful colour of this fish.' So, the king ordered the fish to be taken to the Jetavana monastery before the Buddha. As soon as the fish opened its mouth there, the whole monastery was filled with foul smell. The king asked the Buddha, 'Venerable Sir! How is it that this fish has a beautiful golden colour and yet has such a bad smell?'

Then the Buddha narrated to the king the story of Kapila as a bhikkhu in the times of Kassapa Buddha and how the fish acquired the foul smell. 'I will let him speak for himself, great king!' 'Surely, bhante! Let him speak for himself.'

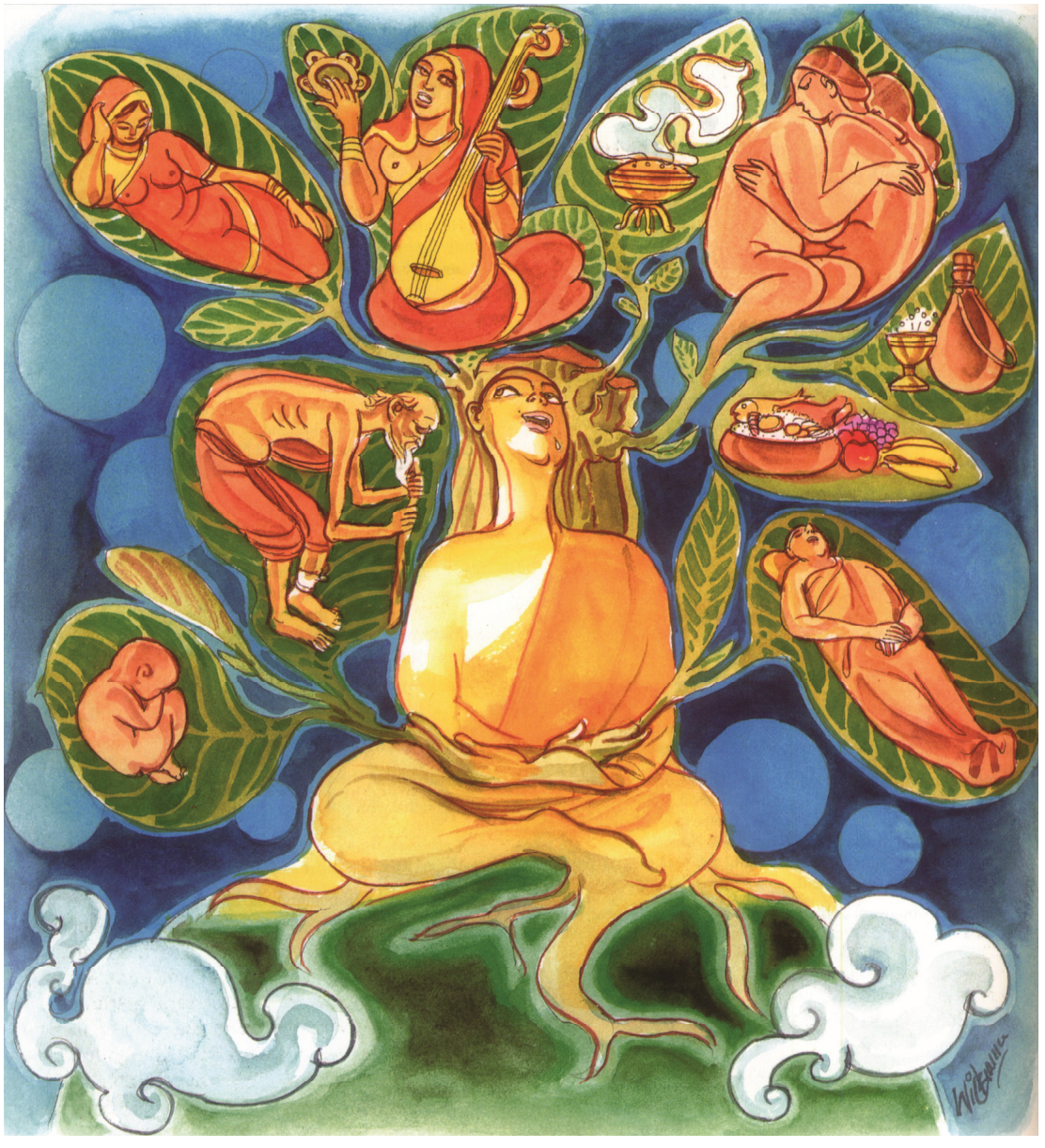
So the Buddha asked the fish, 'Are you Kapila?' 'Yes Bhante! I am Kapila.' 'Wherefrom have you come?' 'I have come from the avichi hell, bhante.' 'What happened to your elder brother, Sodhana?' 'He attained Nirvana.' 'But what happened to your mother and sister?' 'They both were born in hell.' 'Where will you go now?' 'I shall go to the same avichi hell.' The fish was full of shame and it struck its head against the ground and died on the spot, then and there. He was reborn in avichi hell.

The Buddha then explained that because Kapila had taught the sublime Dhamma to many, he was born with golden body as a fish. Also because he had abused many bhikkhus and also criticised the Dhamma, he had a stinking breath.

By this time, proper environment had been created for preaching the Dhamma. So, the **Buddha said,**

'A life of righteousness, a life of holiness,

This they call the gem of highest worth.'



Verse 338: Yathā pi mūle anupaddave dalhe, Chinno pi rukkho punareva rūhati Evam pi taṇhānusaye anūhate, Nibbattati dukkham idaṃ punappunaṃ.

Verse 338: Just as a tree being cut down remains uninjured and comes out again and again if the roots are strong, even so suffering arises again and again, if the roots of craving are not destroyed.

Cut down the latent craving
Story of the young pig

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

One day, while the Buddha was on an almsround at Rajagriha, he saw a dirty, young female pig and smiled. Ananda asked the reason of his smile. The Buddha replied, 'Ananda! Do you see that young female pig? Just look at that!' 'I see bhante!'

Then the Buddha narrated the story of that female pig. 'During the times of Kakusandha Buddha this pig was a hen. She stayed near a monastery. As she lived close to that monastery, she used to hear the sound vibrations of the recitations of the sacred texts. Merely by hearing the vibrations of those sacred words, when she passed away, she was reborn as a princess by the name Ubbari. One day, she was in her toilet and saw some maggots hovering round the excreta. Seeing them, she became mindful of the loathsomeness of the body, she attained the first stage of Sainthood. When she died in that life, she was reborn in the world of the Brahma. But due to some evil karma she had created in the past, she has now been reborn as a young pig. Ananda! See the unique effect of the karma. See, how due to good and bad karma there is no end to the cycle of birth and death. It was for this reason that I smiled.'

Verse 339: Yassa chattiṃsati sotā manāpassavanā bhusā
Vāhā vahanti duddiṭṭhiṃ saṅkappā rāganissitā.

Verse 339: A man who is given away to pleasures will be swept away by craving. His thoughts will make him suffer, like waves, coming and going continuously.

Lust arises from craving
Story of the young pig

Note: The young pig, after passing out of the pig's life was reborn in Suvannabhumi in the royal family. Passing from there she was reborn at Benaras, then at Supparaka port in the house of a dealer of horses and thereafter in the family of a mariner at Kavira port. From the mariner's family she was reborn in Anuradhapura in the family of a nobleman of high rank. From there she was reborn in the south country in the village of Bhokkanta as the daughter of a householder named Sumana, from her father's name.

When the villagers deserted the village, her father went to the kingdom of Dighavapi, and started living in the village of Mahamuni. Subsequently, Lakuntaka Atimbara, minister of King Dutthagamani came to that village and saw her. They were married with great pomp and show and the Minister took her with him to live in the village of Mahapunna.

Verse 340: Savanti sabbadhi sotā latā ubbhijja tiṭṭhati
Tañ ca disvā lataṃ jātaṃ mūlaṃ paññāya chindatha.

Verse 340: Current of craving flows in all directions. Craving sprouts like a creeper and goes up and up. Cut the root of craving with the sharpened axe of wisdom, as and when it comes up.

Cut off craving with wisdom
Story of the young pig

One day, bhikkhu Anula of Maha Vihara of Kotipabbata, stopped at the door of her house as he was going for almsround. On seeing her, he spoke to the monks about her past, 'Bhikkhus! See the wonderful effect of the Law of Karma! A young pig has become the wife of Lakuntaka Atimbara, prime minister of the king!'

Verse 341: Saritāni sinehitāni ca somanassāni bhavanti jantuno
Te sātasitā sukhesino te ve jāti jarūpagā narā.

Verse 341: Man's joys are always fleeting. Since men pursue pleasures, craving for happiness, they undergo the cycles of birth and death continuously.

Pleasures cause birth & decay
Story of the young pig

When the lady heard these words, she tried to remember her past births. Instantaneously, she moved inwardly. She took permission from her husband to become a nun and retired from the world. She became a nun of the Order of Panchabalaka nuns with great pomp. After listening to the recitation of the Mahasattipatthana Suttanta in Tissa Maha Vihara, she was established in the fruit of conversion. Subsequently, after the crushing of the Damilas, she returned to the village of Bhokkanta, where her parents lived and started living in that village. After listening to the Asivisopama Sutta in Kallaka Maha Vihara, she attained Arahatship.

Verse 342: Tasināya purakkhatā pajā parisappanti saṡ'o va badhito
Saññojana saṅgasattā dukkham upenti punappunaṃ cirāya.

Verse 342: People are entangled in craving. They struggle hard, like a hare caught in the net, to get out of it. Held tight by attachments, they undergo cycles of birth and death again and again.

Craving brings grief
Story of the young pig

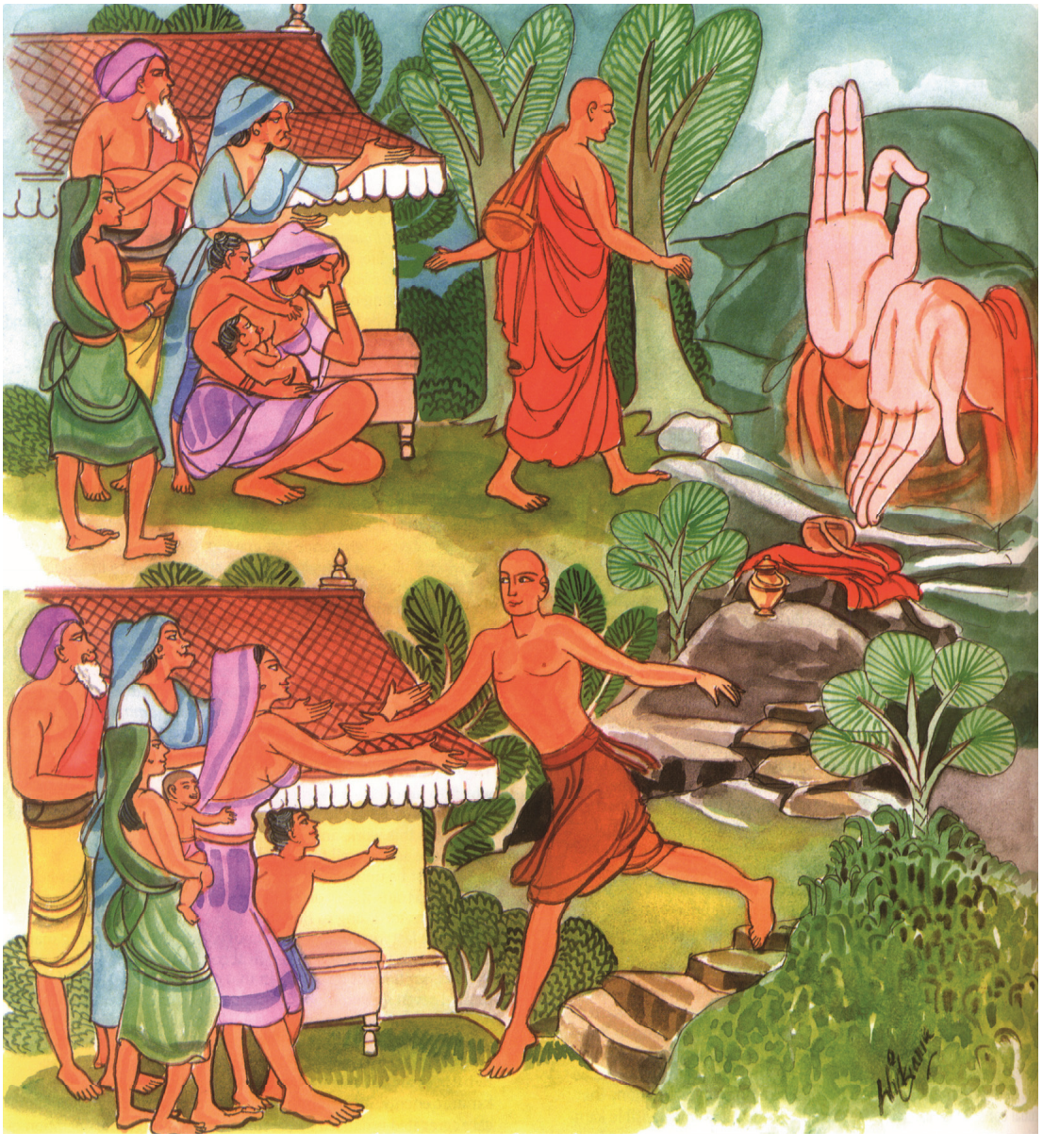
On the day, before she passed into Nirvana, questioned by the monks and nuns, she related this whole story to the community of nuns from the beginning to the end. Likewise in the midst of the assembled community of monks, associating herself with the Venerable Maha Tissa, a great teacher of the Dhamma, and a resident of Mandalarama, she again related the whole story.

Verse 343: Tasināya purakkhatā pajā parisappanti saṡ'o va badhito
Tasmā tasinaṃ vinodaye bhikkhu ākaṅkhi virāgam attano.

Verse 343: People, entangled in craving, struggle hard like a hare caught in the net to get out of it. Therefore, a bhikkhu wishing his enlightenment should give up craving.

Discard craving
Story of the young pig

At the end, she concluded, 'I thus passed through thirteen states of existence for better or for worse. In my present state of existence, I became dissatisfied, retired from the world, became a nun and attained Arahatship. Everyone of you must work out your salvation with heedfulness.'



Verse 344: Yo nibbanatho vanādhimutto vana mutto vanam eva dhāvati
Taṃ puggalam etha passatha mutto bandhanam eva dhāvati.

Verse 344: One who was once free of desires for worldly life and was attracted to forest has run back to that very worldly life. Look at the unfortunate man who has run back to embrace that very bondage again.

Don't return to the worldly life
Story of man facing death bravely

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

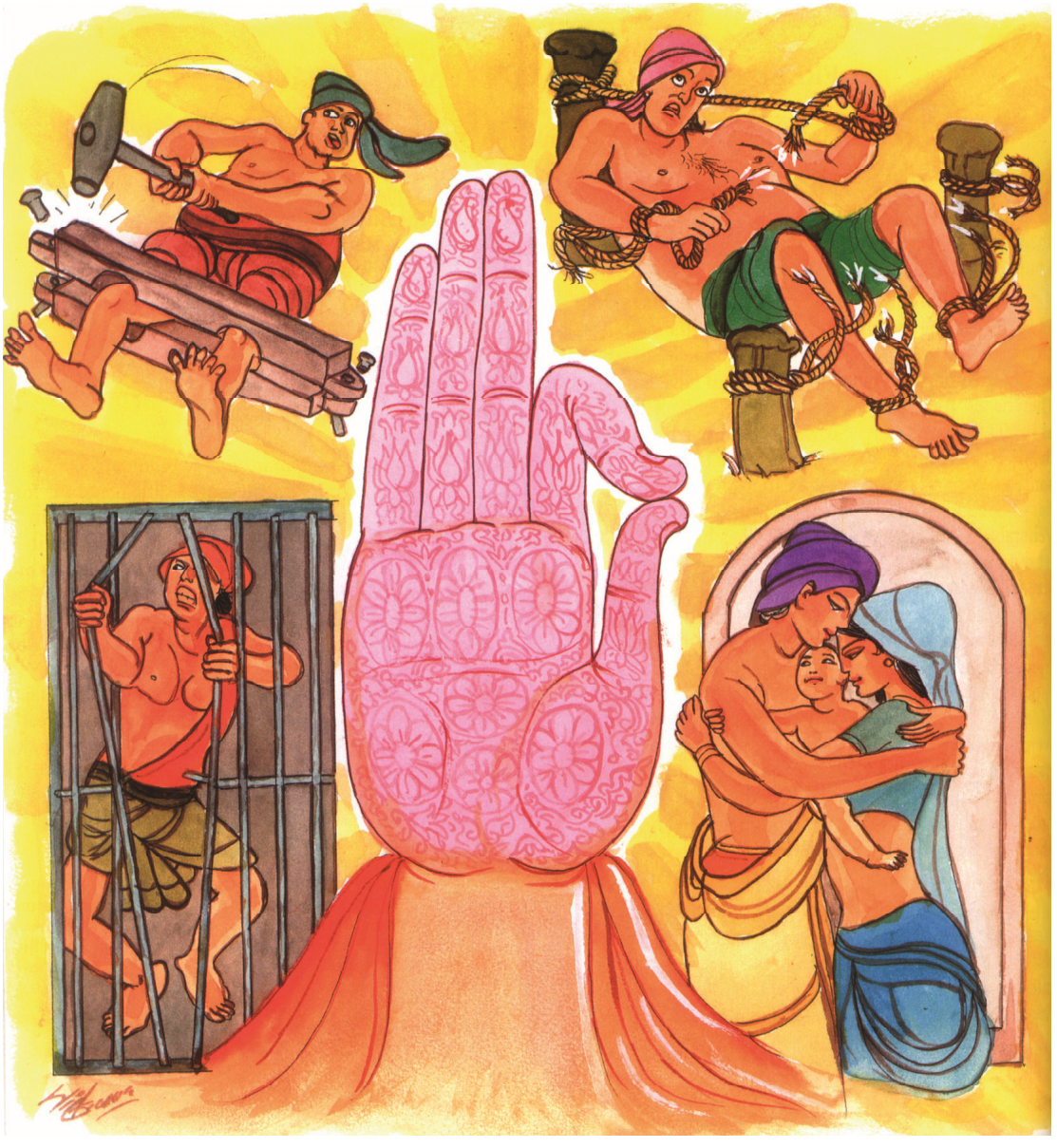
A pupil of bhikkhu Maha Kassapa had achieved four stages of absorption but one day he saw some beautiful objects of attraction in the house of his uncle who was a goldsmith and developed strong craving for them. He left the life of the bhikkhu and became a householder. But he was a very lazy man and did not work hard. So, one day his uncle drove him out of the house.

In order to earn a living, he became a thief. One day, he was caught red handed by the soldiers of the king. The king pronounced death penalty for him. The soldiers took him to the execution ground.

On the way, Maha Kassapa saw his former pupil being taken away for execution, took pity on him and advised him, 'My pupil, keep your mind fixed up on an object of meditation.' As advised by the Teacher, he concentrated on a subject of meditation and established himself in deep mental absorption.

When the soldiers were making preparations for the execution, they did not find any sign of fear on the face of the man. 'Just look at this thief. Though, he is going to be put to death, he neither trembles, nor quakes. We have never seen such a man. He is really very brave.' Seeing this unusual behaviour of the man, the soldiers reported the matter to the king. The king was pleased and ordered for his release.

The Buddha heard about this and sent his message of radiance to the thief and advised him strongly, 'Having left the forest of desire (i.e. the life of a householder); he takes to the forest of the practice (i.e. the life of a bhikkhu), but when he is free from the forest of desire, he rushes back into that very bondage.' 'Purify your mind of all mental impurities. Uproot desire from the roots and be free.' He meditated diligently and attained the first stage of Sainthood. Later on, he was readmitted into the Sangha. Receiving further guidance from the Buddha, he attained Arahanthood.



Verse 345: Na taṃ dalhaṃ bandhanam āhu dhirā,
yadāyasaṃ dārujaṃ babbajañ ca
Sārattarattā maṇikuṇḍalesu, Puttesu dāresu ca yā apekkhā.

Verse 345: Chains made of iron, wood or rope, are not strong enough. Longing for jewels and ornaments, attachment to children and wife are far stronger chains, so say the wise.

Which fetter is stronger?
Story of prisoners

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, a group of bhikkhus came to Sravasti for almsfood. While they were going round the town for it, they saw some prisoners being taken with their hands and legs in chain. When they came to the monastery, they told the Buddha what they had seen in the morning and asked, 'Bhante! These prisoners in chain were feeling a lot of pain. They cannot break these chains and escape. Is there any bond stronger than these bonds?'

The Buddha answered, 'Bhikkhus! Those bonds are nothing compared to the bondage created by craving for food and clothing, for riches and family. The evil passions create this bond known as craving, the bond of attachment for wealth, crops, sons and wives. This bond created through craving is a hundred-fold, nay, a thousand-fold stronger than those chains, hand-cuffs and cages, you have seen. As it is very strong, it needs a lot of effort to break it. Wise men in olden times broke it. That is the reason why the wise cut off craving and renounced the world to enter the Order of the bhikkhus or went to the Himalayas, after retiring from the world.'

Verse 346: Etaṃ dalhaṃ bandhanam āhu dhirā,
Ohārinaṃ sithilaṃ duppamuñcaṃ
Etam pi chetvāna vajanti dhira, Anapekkhino kāma sukhaṃ pahāya.

Verse 346: That bond which drags one down and is hard to loosen is the strongest. So say the wise. The wise cut off this bond also. When they leave the world they have no longings. They are free from sensual pleasures.

Renounce sensual pleasures
Story of prisoners

Then the Buddha narrated a story of the period when king Brahmadatta used to rule at Benaras. At that time the future Buddha was born in the family of a certain poor householder. When he grew up, his father passed away and he had to support his mother. The mother forced the young man to marry. After sometime, the mother also died.

In the course of time, the wife conceived a baby. Knowing that his wife had conceived a child, the husband requested his wife, 'Dear wife, please take up some employment for living. I want to become a bhikkhu.' 'Wait till the child is born.' 'Very well,' said the husband. When the baby was born, the husband said, 'Now that the baby is born, let me go.' 'Let him grow up to walk.' While the husband stayed back, the wife conceived the second child.

The husband thought, 'If I do as she wishes me to do, then I shall not be able to leave home. I shall go away without telling her a word about it.' Thinking so, he fled away in the night. After moving from place to place, he went to the Himalayas and became a hermit. He developed supernatural powers and gained higher attainments. And as he stayed there, he thought, 'I have broken this bond which is so difficult to break, the bond of evil passions, the bond of attachment for son and wife.'

Verse 347: Ye raga rattānupatanti sotaṃ, Sayaṃ kataṃ makkaṭako va jālaṃ Etam pi chetvāna vajanti dhirā, Anapekkhino sabba dukkhaṃ pahāya.

Verse 347: Those who are affected with passions fall back into the stream of cravings just as a spider falls back into the web spun by it. The wise cut off all bonds of craving. They walk with firm determination, leaving all dukkha behind.

Avoid your own web
Story of Khema

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Queen Khema was the chief queen of King Bimbisara. She was very beautiful and also very proud of her beauty. The king wanted her to go to the monastery to pay homage to the Buddha. But she had heard that the Buddha criticised beauty and, therefore, she always kept herself away from him.

The king understood her attitude. He also knew how proud she was of her beauty. So, he ordered the court musicians to sing songs in praise of Veluvana monastery; about the pleasant and peaceful environment etc. Hearing the praise of Veluvana, Khema decided to go to the Veluvana monastery.

When Khema arrived at the monastery, the Buddha was preaching the Dhamma. A thorn is used to take out a thorn. So, by his supernatural power the Buddha created the vision of a very beautiful young lady sitting not far from him and fanning him. This lady was visible only to the Buddha and Khema. When Khema saw her, she realised how inferior her beauty was as compared to that of the young lady. But when she started looking at the beauty of the lady with concentration, she found that the young lady's beauty had started fading slowly. In the end, she found her body changing into a corpse, with stinking smell, being attacked by worms and flies. Seeing this, Khema realised the impermanence of beauty.

The Buddha knew that Khema was now in the proper frame of mind to receive the Dhamma. He told her, 'Khema! Look at this decaying body. It is built around a skeleton of bones and is subject to disease, decay and death. Reflect on the uselessness of the beauty of the youth.'

Khema pondered over what the Buddha told her and attained the first stage of Arahanthood. Later, she joined the Sangha and became one of the chief female disciples of the Buddha. She attained Arahanthood.

Verse 348: Muñca pure muñca pacchato majjhe muñca bhavassa pāragu
Sabbattha vimutta mānaso na puna jātijaraṃ upehisi.

Verse 348: Let go the past. Let go the future. Let go the present. You have reached the end of existences. With mind freed from all things which create cravings, you will not undergo the suffering of birth and decay again.

Release your mind
Story of Uggrasena

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

Once, a theatrical troupe came to Rajagriha. There, on seeing a female dancer, the young son Uggrasena of a rich man fell desperately in love with her. He married her. Since the dancer refused to stay back in Rajagriha, he had to accompany the troupe. As he was an unskilled worker, he worked as a helper to carry the boxes, drive the carts etc. In due time, a son was born to them. The mother sang to the son, 'O son of a man who carries boxes and bundles! O son of the ignorant one who can do nothing.' Uggrasena asked his wife if she sang the song to taunt him. She replied in the affirmative. In order to teach her a lesson, Uggrasena requested his father-in-law to train him also in performing acrobatics. As a result, he became a skilful performer in a year's time.

One day, the troupe came back to Rajagriha. Uggrasena was demonstrating his skills on the top of a pole. At that time, the Buddha found that time was ripe for Uggrasena to realise the Dhamma. So, he stood near the place where he was performing his skills. He willed that the audience paid attention to him rather than to the acrobat. Uggrasena found himself being neglected. He sat down depressed. The Buddha, by sending him radiant waves, addressed him, 'Abandon all attachments. Strive to liberate from the cycles of birth and death.' Reflecting on the admonition, he attained Arahantship, still sitting on the top of the pole. When he came down, he joined the Sangha.

In the evening, the bhikkhus were discussing why Uggrasena went after a petty dancer. The Buddha explained that during the period of Kassapa Buddha, Uggrasena and his wife, offered food to a bhikkhu and made an earnest wish, 'Bhante, May we be able to realise the truth!' The bhikkhu was an Arahant and foresaw that the wish of the couple would be fulfilled in the near future. He, therefore, smiled. The man did not know the ways of the Arahats. So, he commented that the bhikkhu was behaving as an actor. Because of this comment, he had to accompany the wandering theatrical troupe.

Verse 349: Vitakka pamathitassa jantuno, Tibba rāgassa subhānupassino Bhiyyo taṇhā pavaḍḍhati, Esa kho dalhaṃ karoti bandhanaṃ.

Verse 349: Craving increases more and more for the man whose mind is filled by evil thoughts, who is exceedingly lustful at the sight of beauty, and who always looks for pleasant things. Surely, he makes the bond of Mara stronger.

Craving grows in the passionate
Story of young woman and a bhikkhu

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, a young bhikkhu went to a house and took some water from a young woman who fell in love with him. She invited him to come for water, then for rice-gruel and almsfood. She finally told him, 'I have everything I can wish for, but I feel lonely all by myself in the house.' The young bhikkhu also became attached to her. He became dissatisfied with the life of a bhikkhu. Other bhikkhus came to know about it and reported the matter to the Buddha. The Buddha admonished the young bhikkhu, 'My son, listen carefully. This young woman will become your undoing as she has been in a previous birth when you were Dhanuggaha, the wisest man in all India.'

Then the Buddha narrated the story of the young archer. Young archer, the wise Dhanuggaha, acquired the arts of archery at Taxila from a world renowned teacher. His teacher was so happy that he gave his daughter to him in marriage. The archer took his wife and left for Benaras. At the entry of the forest he killed fifty robbers with fifty arrows. When all his arrows were gone, he put the leader of the gang on the ground and cried, 'Wife, bring me the sword.' But the moment the lady saw the bandit, she fell in love with him. She betrayed her husband. Instead of giving the sword to her husband, she put the hilt of the sword in the hand of the bandit. The bandit killed the man and took the woman with him.

On the way, this man thought, 'If this lady sees some other man, she may kill me as she has killed her innocent husband. What use I have for such a lady?' When they reached near the river bank, he took her ornaments and said, 'Remain here till I take your ornaments and other things to the other shore.' Then he left her. The lady cried, 'Return quickly. Speedily! Take me also to the other shore.'

Verse 350: Vitakkūpasame ca yo rato asubhaṃ bhāvayati sadā sato
Esa kho vyantikāhiti esa checchati māra bandhanaṃ.

Verse 350: He, who delights in suppressing evil thoughts, meditates on the impurities of the body, is ever mindful; will put an end to craving. He will cut off Mara's bond.

Cut down Mara's bond
Story of young woman and a bhikkhu

The bandit replied, 'You have bartered your faithful and known husband for me, who is unknown to you. You may barter me also for someone else. I am not coming back.'

The Saka wants the lady to be put to shame. He takes the form of a jackal, his charioteer as a fish and his musician as a bird. The jackal takes a piece of meat in his mouth and stands in front of the lady. The fish jumps from the river. The jackal tries to catch the fish, leaving the meat. The bird picks up the piece of meat and flies away in the air. The fish goes back in the river. The jackal loses both fish and meat. The lady laughs loudly. 'Who is this that laughs in this forest?' the jackal asks, 'It is time to weep, shapely buttocks. Why do you laugh, fair one?'

The woman replies, 'Foolish jackal, you possess little wisdom. You have lost both fish and meat. You mourn like a pauper.' The jackal says, 'It is easy to see the faults of others, but hard to see your own. You have lost both husband and lover. You too mourn, I do not doubt.' The woman says, 'So, it is you. I will go and submit to the will of a husband.' The jackal says, 'He that will steal a vessel of clay, will also steal a vessel of copper. You have done wrong once, you will repeat it again.'

After telling the Chulla Dhanuggraha Jataka, found in the fifth Nipata, the Buddha said, 'At that time you were the young archer, the wise. O bhikkhu! This lady was your wife. I was Sakka who came in the form of a jackal to put this lady to shame. The lady deprived the life of the best archer in India, just at the look of a bandit. Bhikkhu, uproot and destroy the desire that has arisen in you for this woman.'

Admonishing the bhikkhu thus, the Buddha recited these two verses.

Verse 351: Niṭṭhaṅgato asantāsi vita taṇho anaṅgaṇo
Acchindi bhava sallāni antimoyaṃ samussayo.

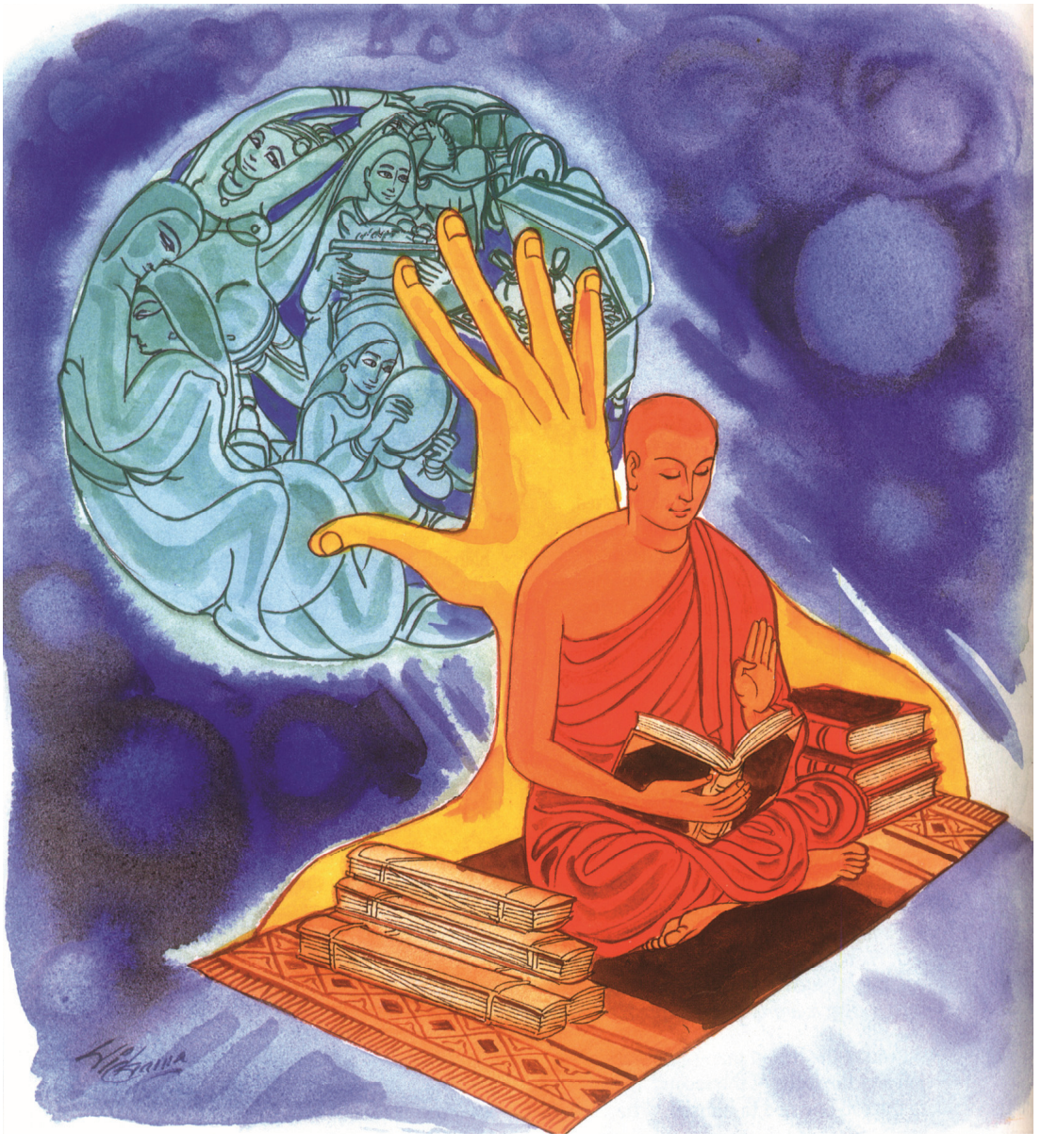
Verse 351: This is the last body for one who has reached the ultimate goal, is fearless, free from cravings, passionless and has cut off all thorns of life.

Whose life is the last?
Story of Mara & young Rahula

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

On one occasion, a number of bhikkhus arrived at the Jetavana monastery at an odd hour. They went to the room of Rahula and woke him up. Rahula accommodated them in his room. Seeing no other place to sleep, Samanera Rahula had to go out of the room and sleep near the door, just outside the perfumed chamber of the Buddha. Rahula, although he was only eight years old, had already attained Arahatship. Mara Vasavatti, in his normal form, saw Rahula lying outside the chamber of the Buddha. He wanted to annoy the Buddha through his son, Rahula. So, he thought, 'The son of bhikkhu Gotama lies outside his perfumed chamber, like finger of a body. The monk himself is in the perfumed chamber. If the finger of the son is pinched, Gotama will himself feel the pinching.' So, Mara took the form of an elephant and encircling Rahula's head with his trunk made an alarming sound, hoping to frighten him. But Rahula was not disturbed at all. The Buddha knew from his chamber what Mara was doing and said, 'O wicked Mara! Even a thousand such as you would not be able to frighten my son. My son has no fear. He is free from craving. He is vigilant. He is wise.'

Hearing these words from the Buddha, Mara realised that the Buddha knew his tricks and he instantaneously disappeared.



Verse 352: Vitataṇho anādāno nirutti pada kovido
Akkharānaṃ sannipātaṃ jaññā pubbaparāni ca
Sa ve antima sāriro mahā paññō mahā puriso ti vuccati.

Verse 352: He, who is free from craving and attachment, is skilled in the ways of chanting, who knows the wording-sequence of what precedes and what follows, is indeed called 'one who has lived his last life, a man of great wisdom, a great man.'

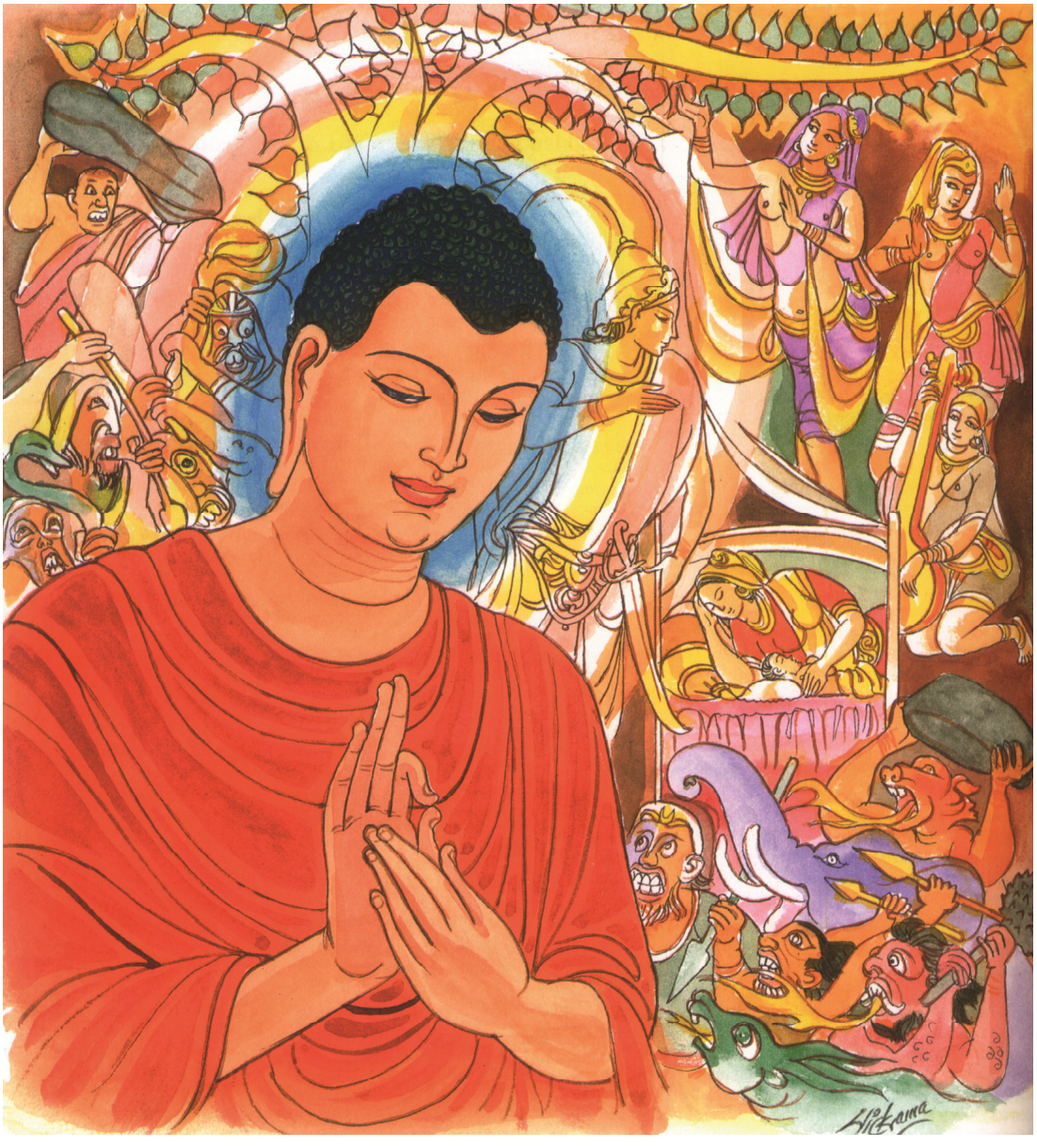
Who is a real sage?
Story of Mara & young Rahula

How Rahula was ordained and became a samanera has interesting background.

When the Buddha came to his home town Kapilvastu for the first time, his wife Yashodhara requested Rahula, a small boy of seven years, to ask for his inheritance from his father. The moment they met each other, Rahula was greatly drawn towards the Buddha and exclaimed, 'Oh, how sweet is your shade!' Rahula, who on the advice of his mother, was insisting and asking for inheritance, kept on following the Buddha to the monastery asking for it while the Buddha remained silent. When they reached the monastery, the Enlightened One requested Sariputta to ordain Rahula as the worldly treasures could only prolong his samsaric suffering.

When King Suddhodana came to know of it, he was grief stricken. He lamented before the Teacher, 'It was so difficult for me to find you out when you left home. And then Nanda and now Rahula have also left home. This grief has penetrated into very marrow of my bones. Please make a rule that hereafter, without the consent of the parents, none of the tender age shall be ordained.'

This Vinaya rule was made immediately by the Enlightened One.



Verse 353: Sabbābhibhu sabbavidū ham asmi, Sabbesu dhammesu anupalitto Sabbañjaho taṇhakkhaye vimutto, Sayaṃ abhiññāya kam uddiseyyaṃ?

Verse 353: I have conquered all. I know all. I am attached to nothing. I have given up all. I am above all moral impurities. I have destroyed cravings. I have realised the four Noble Truths. I have done all this by my own efforts. Whom shall I call as my teacher?

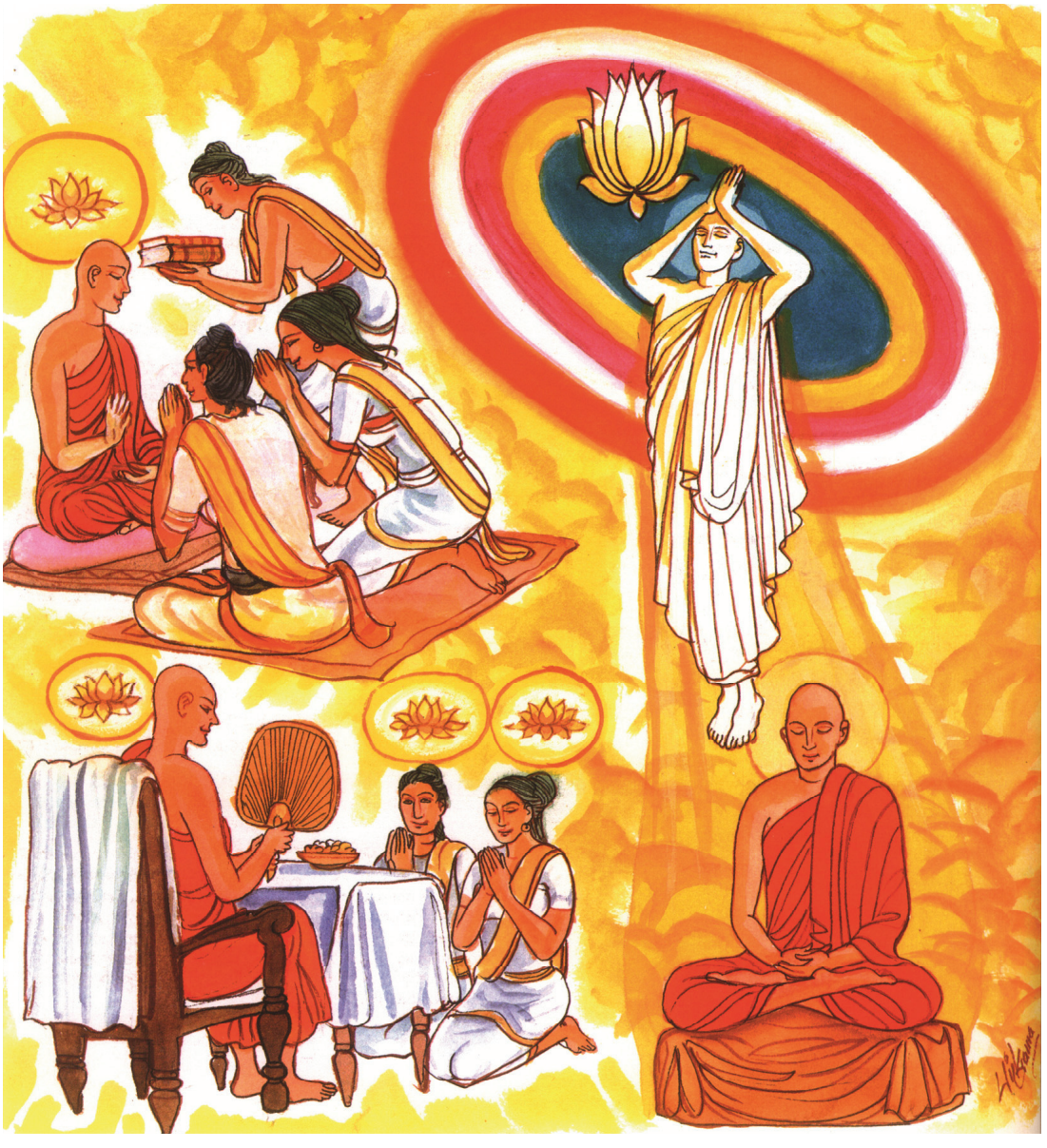
Omniscient one has no teacher
Story of Upaka

Place: Antaramagga

The Buddha spoke this verse, in answer to a question put up by Upaka, a non-Buddhist ascetic, when the Buddha was on his way to the Deer Park to expound the first sermon, the Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta.

The story goes that when the Enlightened One was on his way to the Deer Park (Mrigadava) where the five bhikkhus (panchavaggis) were staying, a wandering ascetic named Upaka met him on the way. He was greatly impressed by the radiant glow coming out of the Buddha and the halo around him. Treating the Tathagata as his equal, he addressed him casually, 'Friend, you look so serene and pure! Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you follow?' The Buddha replied, 'I have no instructor or teacher.' Then he asked, 'What is the essence of your doctrine?' In reply to his question, the Buddha recited the verse and told him the Dhamma in short. On hearing the essence of the Dhamma, Upaka expressed neither appreciation nor rejection. He just nodded his head a few times and went away.

The story illustrates that not everyone, who was fortunate enough to meet the Buddha, could appreciate the Dhamma. On the other hand, Arahants like Sariputta were convinced simply by hearing half a stanza (chapter 1: Verse 11). Verses 64 and 65 of Bala Vagga (chapter 5) are also relevant in this regard where the Buddha has given the examples of soup and spoon and soup and the tongue.



Verse 354: Sabba dānaṃ dhamma dānaṃ jināti, Sabbaṃ rasaṃ dhamma raso jināti Sabbaṃ ratiṃ dhamma ratijināti, Taṇhakkhayo sabba dukkhaṃ jināti.

Verse 354: The gift of Dhamma is better than all other gifts. The taste of Dhamma is better than all other tastes. The delight in Dhamma is better than all other delights. He who has destroyed cravings has overcome all sorrows.

Which gift excels?
Story of Sakka's questions

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

At a meeting of the devas in the Tavatimsa Loka, four questions were raised but they could not find any answer to these questions. So, Sakka and the devas came to the Jetavana monastery and put the following questions before the Buddha:

Among gifts, which is the best?

Among tastes, which is the best?

Among delights, which is the best?

Why is the eradication of craving said to be the most excellent?

To these, the Buddha replied, **'The Dhamma is the noblest of all the gifts, the best of all the tastes and the best of all the delights. Eradication of craving is said to be the best, the excellent act because it leads to the end of all sufferings. Therefore, it is the greatest of all the conquests.'**

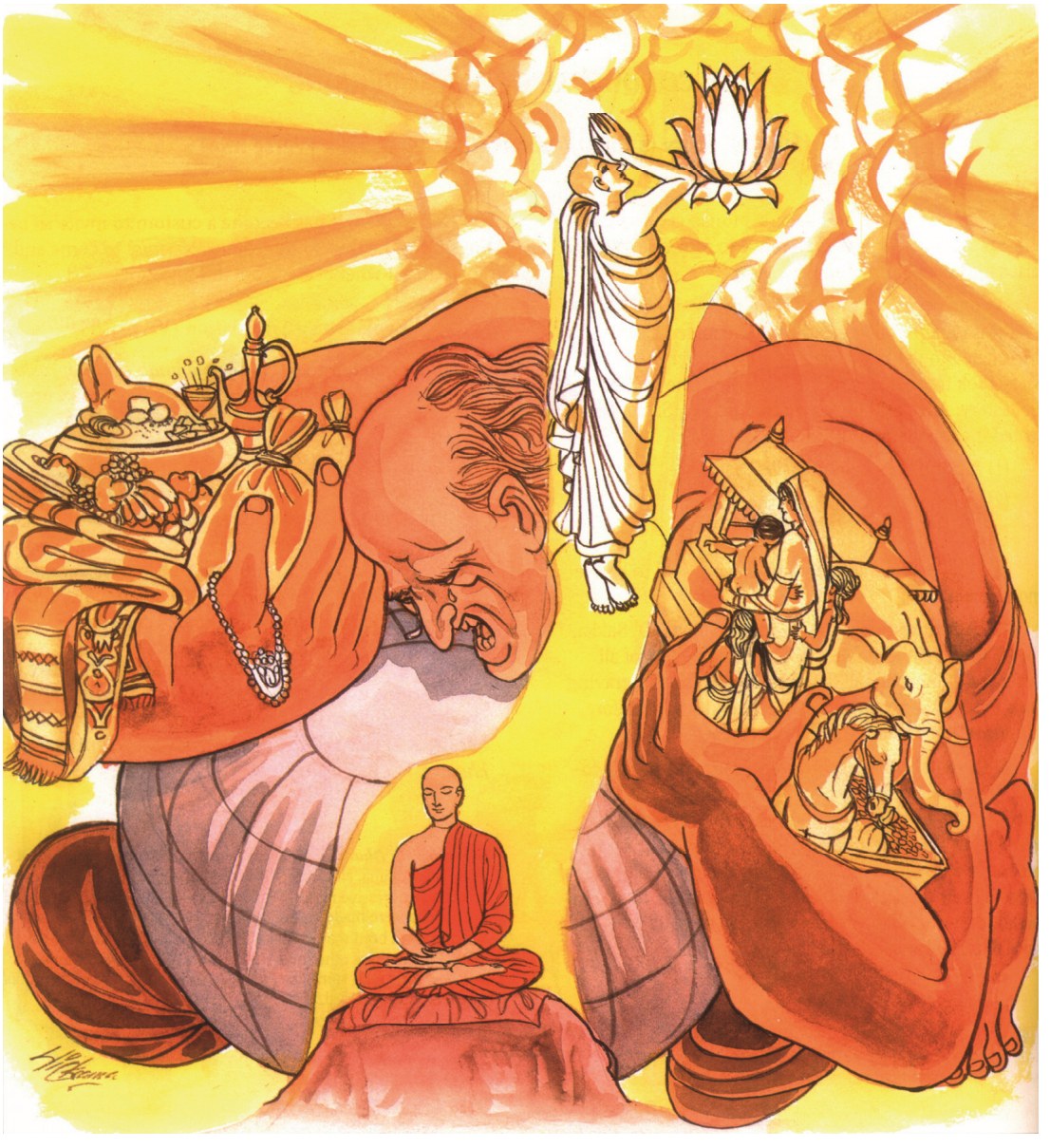
At the end of the discourse, Sakka requested the Buddha, 'Bhante! If the gift of the Dhamma excels all other gifts, why are we not invited to share the merit whenever gifts of Dhamma are made? Sir! I pray that from now onwards we may be given share in the merit of good deeds.' Then the Buddha asked all the bhikkhus to assemble and exhorted them to share the merits of their good deeds with all.

Since then, it became customary to invite all the devas and others to share the merit whenever a good deed was done. The stanza recited to invite the Devas and Nagas to share the merit is:-

Akasattha ca bhummattha- Deva Naga mahiddhika

Punnam tam anumoditva – Ciram rakkhantu loka sasanam

May beings, celestial and terrestial, Devas and Nagas of mighty power, share this merit of ours. May they long protect the world and its regime!



Verse 355: Hananti bhogā dummedhaṃ no ve pāra gavesino
Bhoga taṇhāya dummedho hanti aññe va attanaṃ.

Verse 355: Riches destroy the fool; but not the wise who seek the other shore i.e. Nirvana. By his craving for riches, the fool ruins himself, as if ruining others.

Riches ruin the fool
Story of a fool rich man

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, when King Pasendi of Kosala reached late to pay homage to the Buddha, he told the Buddha that he was held up because a rich man had died without any heir and all his property was to be accounted in the royal treasury. Though this man was very rich, he was a great miser. He did not practise charity. Nor did he spend any money on himself.

On hearing this, the Buddha mentioned that this man behaved in a similar manner in one of his previous births also. During the times of Pachcheka Buddha, this man was born as a very rich man. One day, when Pachcheka Buddha came to his house, he asked his wife to give almsfood to him. She thought, 'It is very rare that my husband gives me permission to give anything to anybody.' So, she filled up the alms-bowl with some food. But the man thought, 'Oh, this monk will only have a good sleep after a heavy meal.' By thinking this, the rich man regretted his generosity. Also, this man had a brother who too was rich and had a son. When his brother died, he killed his nephew and took away all his wealth.

Because the man had offered almsfood to the Pachcheka Buddha, he became a rich man. Because he regretted offering him food, he had no desire to spend even on himself. Because he had killed his own nephew, he had to suffer in hell for long time. When his bad karma was over, he was reborn in human form but here also he did not perform any good deeds. The king observed, 'Sir! Even though he lived in the life time of the Buddha himself, he did not make any offering to anyone. Indeed, he has lost a very golden opportunity.'

Verse 356: Tiṇa dosāni khettāni rāga dosā ayaṃ pajā
Tasmā hi vita rāgesu dinnaṃ hoti mahapphalaṃ.

Verse 356: Weeds damage the corn fields. Lust destroys all beings. Therefore, giving to the lustless brings immense benefits.

Lust: Blemish of mankind
Story of Ankura

Place: Pandukambalasila

The Buddha once visited the Tavatimsa deva kingdom to expound the Abhidhamma to Deva Santusita, who had been his mother earlier. During that time there lived a deva by name Indaka in the Tavatimsa loka. What was the merit earned by Indaka that he was born in Tavatimsa Loka?

On one occasion, when bhikkhu Anuruddha entered the village for alms, Indaka gave him a spoonful of his own food. This was the good karma he had earned during one of his previous births.

In the same deva loka there was another deva by the name Ankura who was enjoying the life of a deva on a lower scale than that of Indaka. What was the noble deed done by Ankura in his previous birth that he was born in Tavatimsa loka? Ankura had set up a row of fire places twelve leagues long for many years and had given abundant alms.

Why Indaka was given more luxuries than Ankura in the deva loka? Because though Indaka had made a small offering to a holy man, the merit earned by him through this small act was quite in abundance and, therefore, he deserved more luxuries in the deva loka.

Verse 357: Tiṇa dosāni khettāni dosa dosā ayaṃ pajā
Tasmā hi vita dosesu dinnaṃ hoti mahapphalaṃ.

Verse 357: Weeds damage the corn fields. Hatred destroys all beings. Therefore, giving to those who are free from all hatred brings immense benefits.

Hatred: Blemish of mankind
Story of Ankura

As the Buddha was then at the Tavatimsa Loka, Ankura asked him the reason for variance in getting the benefits. The Buddha explained, 'O Ankura! One should use discrimination in giving alms. While giving charities and donations, you must consider wisely whom you give to, because acts of charities and donations are just like seeds. Seeds sown in fertile soil will yield abundant crop. But if they are sown not in fertile soil, they will not yield abundant crop. You have sown your seed in poor soil, so you have reaped poorly.'

In the Buddhist literature we find that the lay supporters are encouraged to make offerings of alms to the Buddha and the bhikkhus. Why there is, for example, so less reference about feeding the poor? According to the Buddha, the charity being given to a needy is indeed praise worthy and is certainly encouraged. There is reference about it in the Buddhist books which shows how important it is to support the poor and the needy. Anatha Pindika, the philanthropist-supporter and the disciple of the Buddha was one who worked continuously to uplift the lot of the poor. His very name means, 'Feeder of the Poor'.

Verse 358: Tiṇa dosāni khettāni moha dosā ayaṃ pajā
Tasmā hi vita mohesu dinnaṃ hoti mahapphalaṃ.

Verse 358: Weeds damage the corn fields. Delusion destroys all beings. Therefore, giving to those who are free from delusion brings immense benefits.

Delusion: Blemish of mankind
Story of Ankura

Members of the Sangha are, however, the teachers of the Dhamma. Their job is to sustain the Essential Teachings and moral fabric of the Society. The lay disciple is expected to help them so that they can lead a pure and noble life. Spreading the message of the Dhamma and sustaining its custodians is considered more meritorious deed than merely feeding the hungry. Therefore, the Buddhist devotees are expected, while supporting the needy, to pay more attention to providing the requisites to the religious and holy people so that these holy men can concentrate solely on the development of purity and doing some service to the public.

Those who have renounced the world have renounced it for the welfare of the society. They are not required to be bothered about the personal needs which are to be met by the society. In this way, the lay disciples participate in the spiritual advancement of the society indirectly. The offering of food and other needs by the devotees is traditionally followed by a discourse by the bhikkhus. This helps the listeners in their quest for understanding and wisdom.

Verse 359: Tiṇa dosāni khettāni icchā dosā ayaṃ pajā
Tasmā hi vigaticchesu dinnaṃ hoti mahapphalaṃ.

Verse 359: Weeds damage the corn fields. Craving destroys all beings. Therefore, giving to those who are free from craving brings immense benefits.

Desire: Blemish of mankind
Story of Ankura

Helping the poor and needy ensures physical well being but helping the bhikkhus ensures improvement in the mental well being of the society at large which is far more important thing to do.

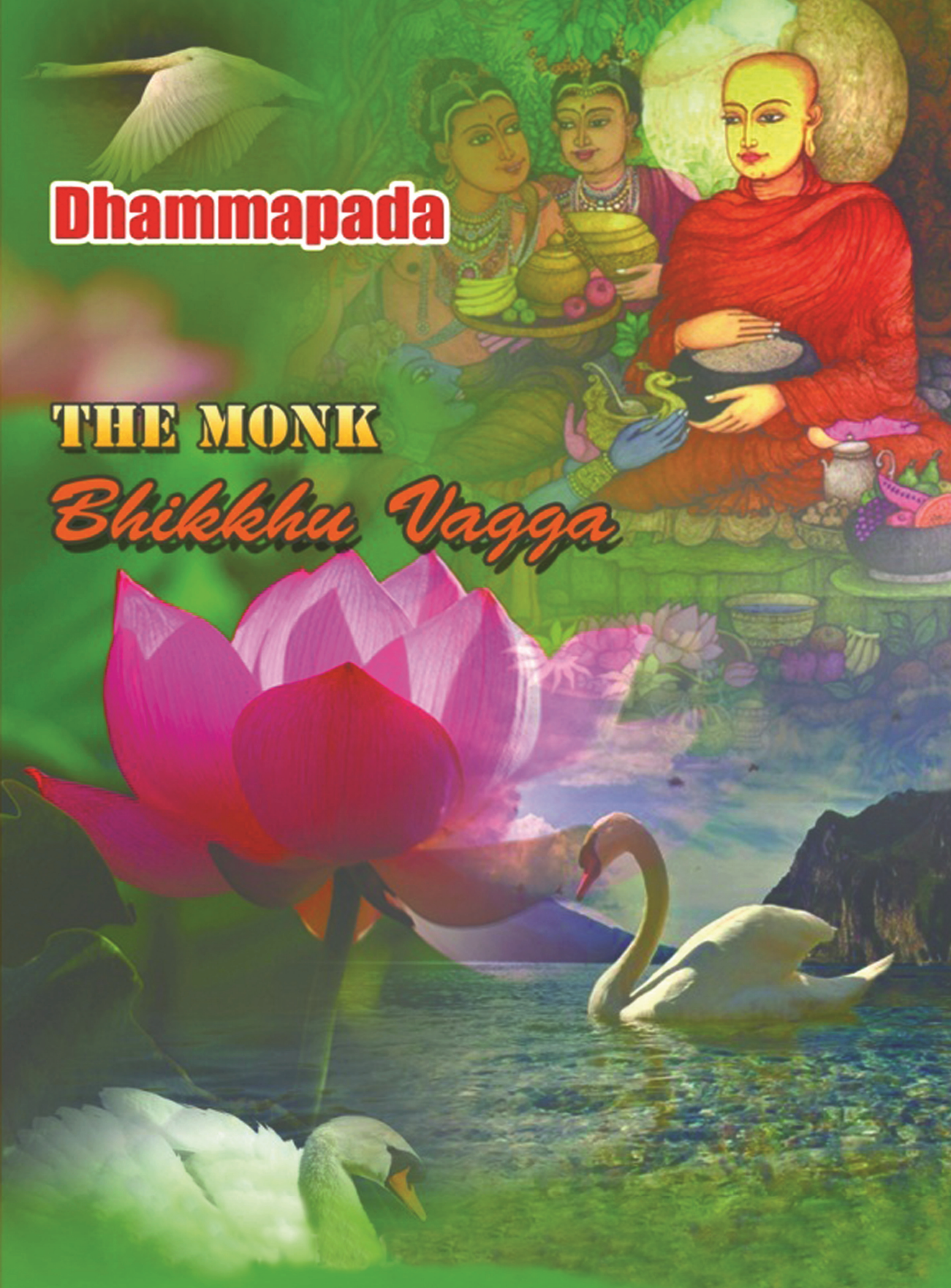
It may be noted that the Buddha did not encourage the support of the Buddhist bhikkhus alone but any spiritual being who is sincere and teaches the Right View. The Dhammapada narrates incidences when some bhikkhus did not follow the Dhamma properly. When this happened, then such bhikkhus were boycotted by the townsmen till they mended their ways (Verse 6). The offering made to a bhikkhu is made worthy because it is made with confidence and trust and with a pure mind to one who receives it with an equally pure mind.

DHAMMAPADA
TANHA VAGGA

Dhammapada

THE MONK

Bhikkhu Vagga



Chapter XXV

BHIKKHU VAGGA

The Monk or
The Mendicant

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BHIKKHU VAGGA

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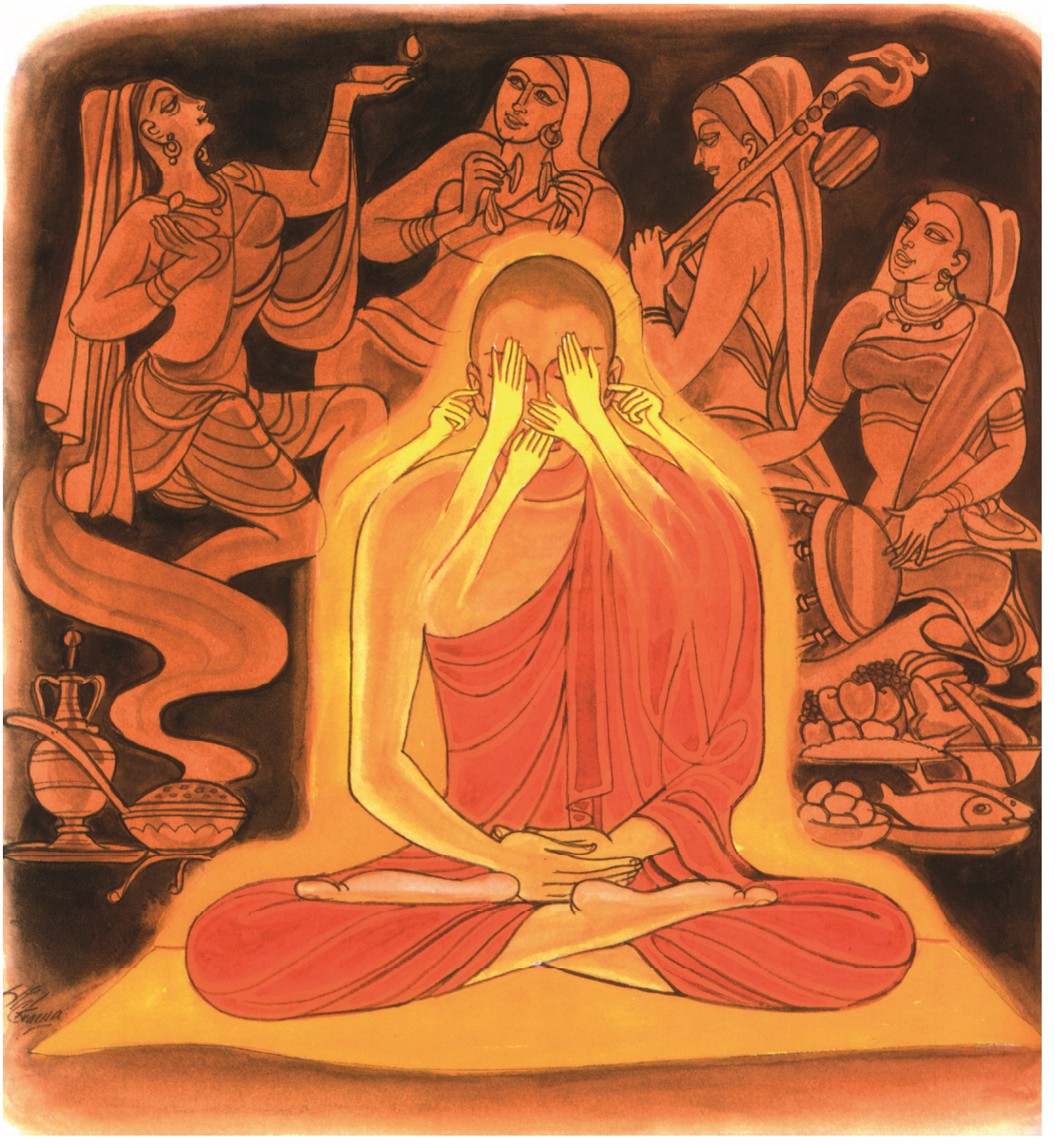


Verse 360: Cakkhunā saṃvaro sādhu sādhu sotena saṃvaro
Ghāṇena saṃvaro sādhu sādhu jivhāya saṃvaro.

Verse 360: Good is the control of the eye, good is the control of the ear. Good is the control of the nose and good is the control of the tongue.

Guard the senses
Story of five bhikkhus

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, there lived five bhikkhus in Sravasti, each of whom practised control of just one, out of five senses.

Each of them claimed that his control of the sense was the most difficult. They kept on arguing that their control of the sense was the most difficult but could not arrive at a conclusion. So, they decided to get it resolved from the Buddha.

The Buddha told them, 'Each of the senses is just as difficult to control as the others. But the bhikkhu who controls all the five senses will escape from suffering. Also this is not the first time that you have failed to control yourselves in these five senses. You all died in one of your previous births because you refused to comply with the admonition of the wise men.'

'When was it, bhante?' asked the five bhikkhus.

Verse 361: Kāyena saṃvaro sādhu sādhu vācāya saṃvaro
Manasā saṃvaro sādhu sādhu sabbattha saṃvaro
Sabbattha saṃvuto bhikkhu sabba dukkhā pamuccati.

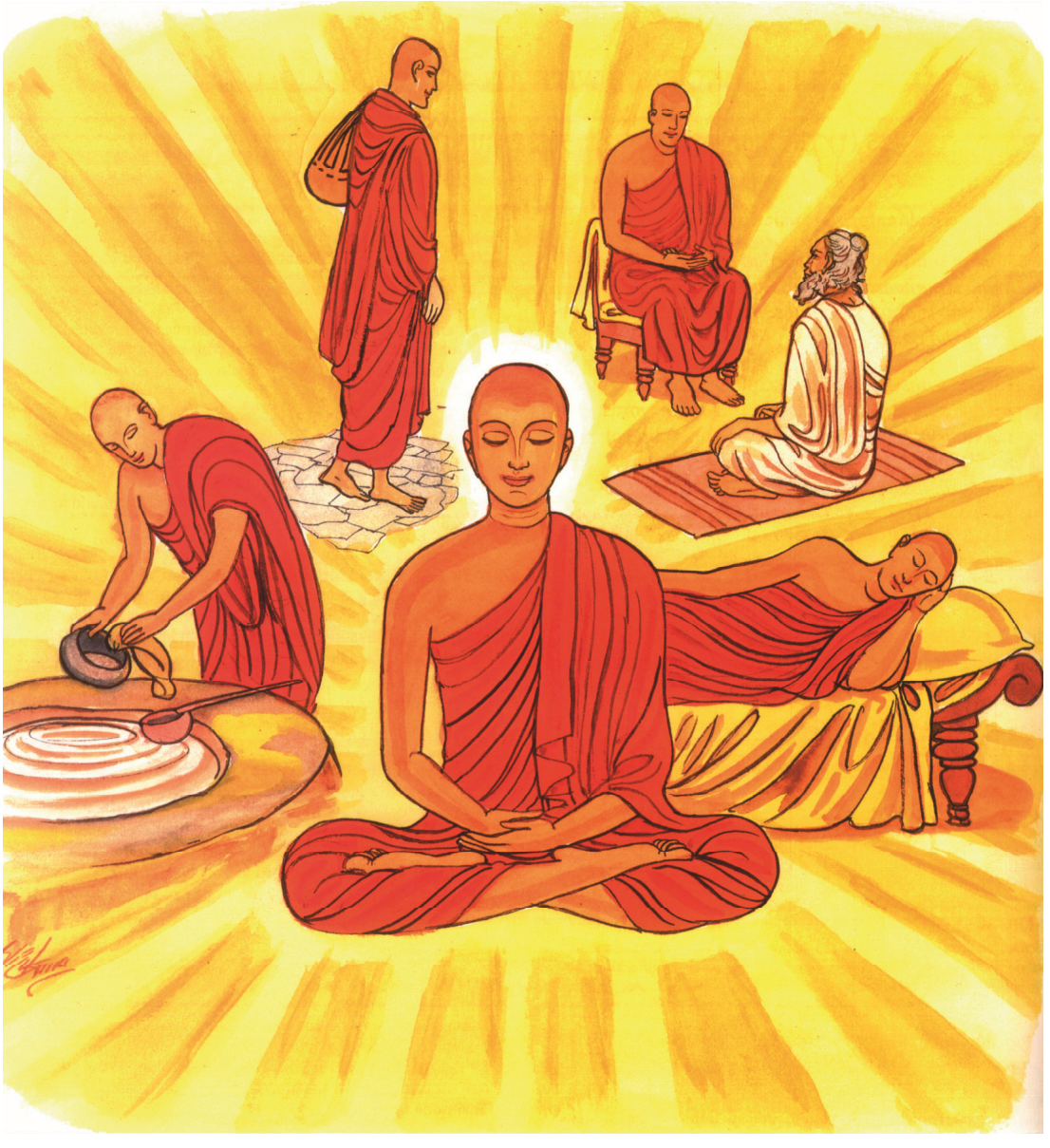
Verse 361: It is good to control the body. It is good to control the speech. It is good to control the mind. Control is good in all respects. The bhikkhu who controls himself in every way is freed from all sufferings.

Get released from sorrow
Story of five bhikkhus

Then the Buddha told them the story from the Taxila Jataka.

In the distant past, the household of a king was destroyed by some evil spirits. Thereafter, the Buddha, in that life, ascended the royal throne. While seated on the throne, he surveyed his own majesty and glory and thought, 'Men should exert the power of their will.' He further thought, 'Because with firm courage, I stood steadfast in the admonition of the good, because I showed no fear, I did not come under the influence of the female evil spirits, that I stood back safe.'

The Buddha narrated the story, 'At that time, you were the five men who, when the great giant went forth to take the kingdom of Taxila, you stood at the roundabout with the wise man with weapons in your hands, guarding the road. But when you journeyed by the way, the female evil spirits tempted you with objects pleasing to the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. You threw off all control, and then you disregarded the admonitions of the wise man. You yielded to the seductions of the female evil spirits. They ate you all. You all were utterly destroyed. The wise man who checked himself and yielded not to their temptations, who paid no attention to the female giant of celestial beauty that followed closely behind, and who reached Taxila safely and became the king, was I myself.'



Verse 362: Hattha saññato pāda saññato, Vācāya saññato saññatuttamo Ajjhattarato samāhito, Eko santusito tam āhu bhikkhuṃ.

Verse 362: He, who has control over his hand, foot and speech, possesses the highest control of mind, delighted within and composed, lonely and contented is called a bhikkhu.

Who is a bhikkhu?
Story of a monk killing a goose

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, there lived a bhikkhu who was an expert in throwing stones and hitting targets. He could hit even the fast moving objects. One day, the bhikkhu had taken bath in river Aciravati along with another bhikkhu. They were drying their clothes and enjoying the sunshine. At that time, they found two geese flying over them in the sky. The expert bhikkhu told his friend that he could hit the eye of one of the geese. Saying so, he picked up a stone, aimed it at one of the geese and threw at it. The stone hit the eye of the bird. It cried out in severe pain. It dropped down at the feet of the bhikkhus and was dead in a minute.

Other bhikkhus saw this incidence and reported the matter to the Buddha. The Buddha admonished the young bhikkhu, 'My son, why did you kill the innocent bird? It had done no harm to you. As a bhikkhu you are supposed to practise loving-kindness towards all creatures. You should strive towards liberation instead of creating evil karma for yourself. A bhikkhu must control his thoughts, words and deeds diligently.'

A bhikkhu is also required to observe the four kinds of Higher Morality:

1. The fundamental moral code.

2. Morality pertaining to sense-control.

3. Morality pertaining to purity of livelihood.

4. Morality pertaining to the use of necessities of livelihood.

These four kinds of morality are collectively known as Purity of Virtue.

Verse 363: Yo mukha saññato bhikkhu manta bhāni anuddhato
Atthaṃ dhammañ ca dipeti madhuraṃ tassa bhāsitaṃ.

Verse 363: The bhikkhu who is controlled in tongue, who speaks wisely with his mind composed, who tells the Dhamma and its meaning without being arrogant; sweet indeed is his speech.

Whose speech is sweet?
Story of bhikkhu Kokalika

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Bhikkhu Kokalika had abused the two bhikkhus, Sariputta and Maha Moggallana. He had to suffer because of this evil deed. The bhikkhus, in the Hall of Truth, started discussing on this matter saying, 'Alas! Bhikkhu Kokalika had to suffer severely because he did not control his tongue. As soon as he used those abusive words, the earth opened and swallowed him up.' The Buddha heard them and said, 'Bhikkhus! It is not for the first time that Kokalika has brought his ruin because of non control of his tongue.' On the request of the bhikkhus, he narrated his past story.

Some lives ago, once there lived a tortoise in a lake. One day, two geese came there. They developed friendship with him and soon they became good friends. Subsequently, they told the tortoise, 'Friend! We live on the Mount Chittakuta in the Himalayas in a golden cave. It is great pleasure living there. Would you not like to come there?' 'Friends, how can I go there?' questioned the tortoise. 'If you can keep your mouth shut, we will carry you.' 'Alright, take me there.' The geese brought a long stick. The tortoise was made to grip it in the middle with his teeth. The geese took the two ends of the stick in their bills, took off from there and went up in the air.

Some village boys saw this unusual scene and cried out laughingly, 'What a surprise! A tortoise is being carried by two geese.' The tortoise forgot the warning given to him and cried out in anger, 'What business you have to make a comment, if my friends are carrying me with them?' As he opened his mouth, he fell on the roof of the royal palace of Benaras and died immediately. Kokalika was the tortoise in that life.

Verse 364: Dhammārāmo dhamma rato dhammaṃ anuvicintayaṃ
Dhammaṃ anussaraṃ bhikkhu saddhammā na parihāyati.

Verse 364: The bhikkhu who dwells in the Dhamma, delights in the Dhamma, remembers the Dhamma well and meditates on the Dhamma, such a bhikkhu does not fall away from the Dhamma sublime.

Who does not fall?
Story of Dhammarama

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Announcement had been made that the Buddha would pass into parinirvana in four months' time. Most of the puthujjana monks (i.e. those who had not yet attained any of the maggas) felt extremely depressed and did not know what to do. They did not want to leave the company of the Buddha. So, they stayed close to him.

However, there was a bhikkhu by name Dhammarama who stayed all alone by himself. He did not go near the Buddha as other bhikkhus did. He wanted to attain Arahatship before the Buddha departed from this world. Therefore, he put up all his effort in Insight Meditation practice. Other bhikkhus did not know why he was doing so. They misunderstood his behaviour and took him to the Buddha.

They said, 'This bhikkhu does not appear to have reverence for you. He has been staying all alone and has not been coming to pay regards to you.' Dhammarama was asked to explain his conduct. He said, 'Sir! You know everything. The greatest homage I can pay to you is to attain Arahanthood before your parinirvana.'

The Buddha praised the bhikkhu profusely and said, 'Bhikkhus! You should be like my son, bhikkhu Dhammarama.' He also told Dhammarama, 'My son, you have done very well. A bhikkhu, who loves and respects me, should be like you. Only those who really practise the Dhamma, truly pay homage to me.'

Verse 365: Salābhaṃ nātimaññeyya n āññesaṃ pihayaṃ carē
Aññesaṃ pihayaṃ bhikkhu samādhiṃ n ādhigacchati.

Verse 365: One should not look down upon what one receives, nor envy the gain of others. The bhikkhu, who covets others' gain, cannot concentrate his mind.

Be contented at all times
A monk goes to Devadatta's camp

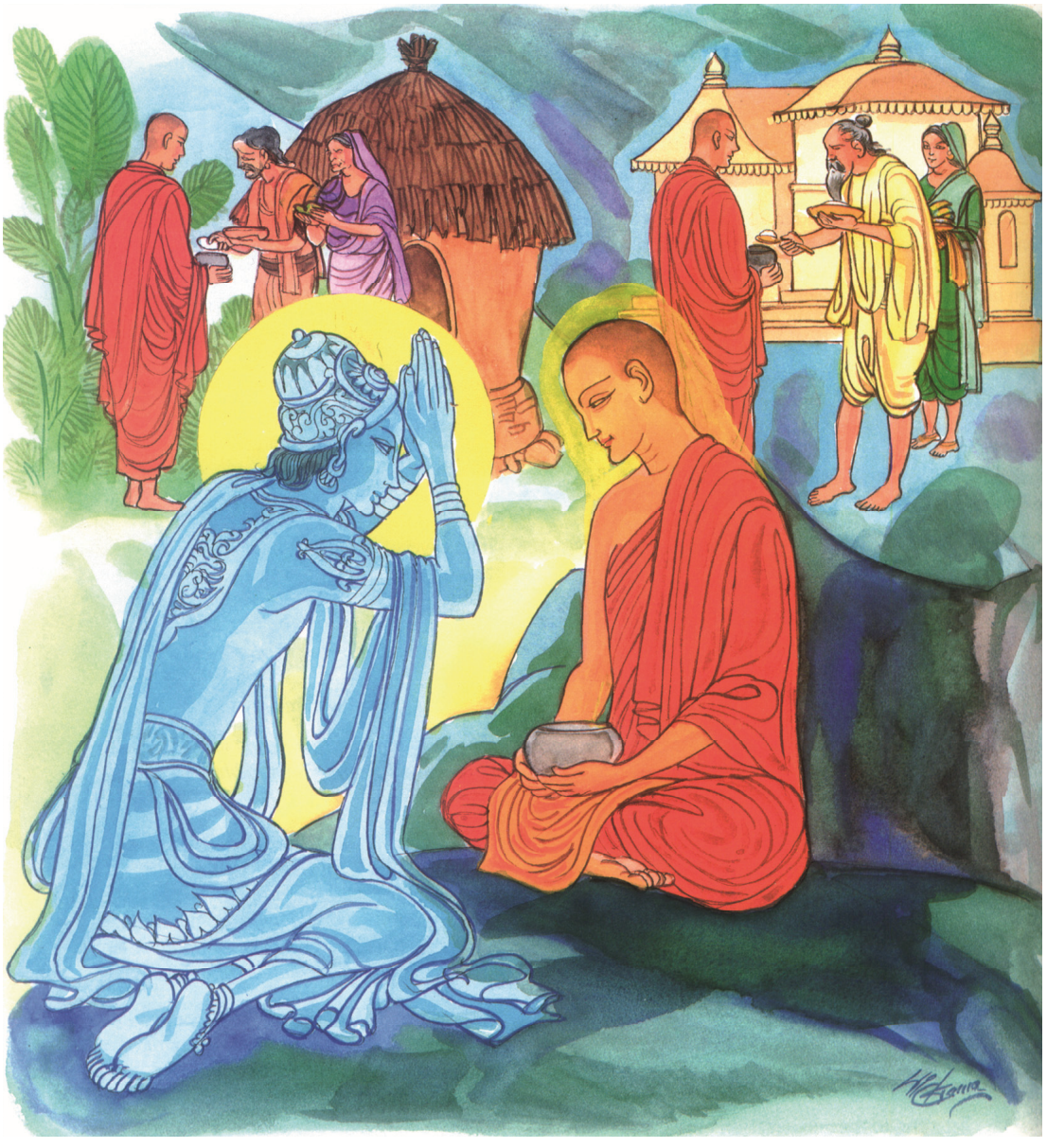
Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

A bhikkhu of the Buddha's Sangha was very friendly with a bhikkhu, belonging to the faction of Devadatta. Devadatta was a very mischievous person and had the Sangha of the Buddha split up.

One day, when the bhikkhu was returning from the alms-round along with his other brother bhikkhus, he met the bhikkhu of Devadatta's camp who asked him, 'Where have you been?' 'I went to such and such village for my alms-round.' 'Did you get any food?' 'Yes, I got some quantity.' 'In our monastery we get very valuable offerings. Stay with us for sometime.' Thus he visited Devadatta's monastery and stayed there for a few days eating, sleeping and enjoying the comforts and amenities of that monastery. Then he returned back to his own group.

Other bhikkhus reported this matter to the Buddha. He called the bhikkhu and asked him, 'Is the report true?' The bhikkhu admitted, 'Yes sir, I have stayed at the monastery of Devadatta for a few days but I have not embraced the teachings of Devadatta.'

The Buddha exhorted him, 'My son, even when you have not embraced the doctrine of Devadatta, you are going around in the village as if you are one of his followers and enjoying the comforts being provided to his bhikkhus. But, this is not for the first time that you are doing so. You did the same thing in one of your previous births as well.'



Verse 366: Appa lābho pi ce bhikkhu salābhaṃ n ātimaññati
Taṃ ve devā pasaṃsanti suddhājiviṃ atanditaṃ.

Verse 366: Though receiving but little, if a bhikkhu does not look down upon his own gains, such an active bhikkhu of pure livelihood is praised even by the devas.

Despise not what one gets
A monk goes to Devadatta's camp

Then the Buddha narrated the story of Elephant Damsel-face, from Mahilamukha Jataka:

'After listening to the talks of the thieves and murderers, a well behaved elephant moved here and there, became unruly, went on destroying all around, killing his keepers. But after listening to the discourses of the sages and Brahmanas, men of self control, this best of elephants recovered all his good qualities and became well behaved again. The traitor monk was the elephant in that life.'

The Buddha further advised, 'A bhikkhu should be contented with what he gets. He should not covet other people's gains. A bhikkhu who is filled with envy at the good fortune of others will not attain Samadhi (Concentration), Insight (Vipassanā) or the Path that leads to Nirvana. Only the bhikkhu who is contented with whatever he gets will be able to attain Concentration, Insight and Correct Path.'

Verse 367: Sabbaso nāma rūpasmiṃ yassa natthi mamāyitaṃ
Asatā ca na socati sa ve bhikkhū ti vuccati.

Verse 367: One, who has no 'I' and no 'mine'-thought in respect of the body and mind, and grieves not over what he does not have, is indeed called a bhikkhu.

A bhikkhu has no attachment
A brahmin shares eaten food

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

Once, there lived in Sravasti a brahmin who was generous and offered food and other items to the Buddha. One day, the Buddha saw in his vision that the brahmin and his wife were in a position to attain Anagami fruition.

Accordingly, the Buddha came to his house and stood at his door. The brahmin was having food and did not see the Buddha. His wife saw him but was afraid that her husband, on seeing the Buddha would offer the plate of food to him. Then she may have to cook again. With this thought in her mind, she stood in front of her husband so that he could not see the Enlightened One. Then she slowly moved towards the Tathagata and whispered, 'Sir! We do not have any almsfood for you today.' The Buddha just shook his head. Seeing his gesture, the brahmin's wife could not control herself and she burst into laughter.

At that moment, the brahmin turned around and saw the Buddha. At once, he knew what his wife had done and cried out, 'Wife, I am ruined. Why did you not tell me when the Venerable teacher stood at the door of our house? By failing to do so, you have embarrassed me greatly.' Then taking up his plate of rice, he approached the Buddha and apologetically requested, 'Venerable sir! Please accept this rice which I have partly consumed. I am very sorry that I have to offer you this partly consumed food.' To him the Buddha replied, 'O Brahmin! Any almsfood is suitable for me, whether it has been eaten or not.'

The brahmin was very happy that his offering had been accepted by the Buddha. Next, he asked him by what standard a bhikkhu was to be judged and how a bhikkhu is to be defined. The Buddha knew that both the brahmin and his wife knew something about mind and body (nama-rupa). So, he answered, 'O brahmin! One who is not attached to mind and body is called a bhikkhu.' At the end of the discourse, both the brahmin and his wife attained the third stage of Sainthood.

Verse 368: Mettā vihāri yo bhikkhu pasanno Buddha sāsane
Adhigacche padaṃ santaṃ saṅkhārūpasamaṃ sukhaṃ.

Verse 368: The bhikkhu who lives with loving-kindness, delights in the Buddha's Teachings, attains the state of peace and happiness---where existence ends, all grief are gone.

Loving-kindness radiates peace
Story of a devout lady

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

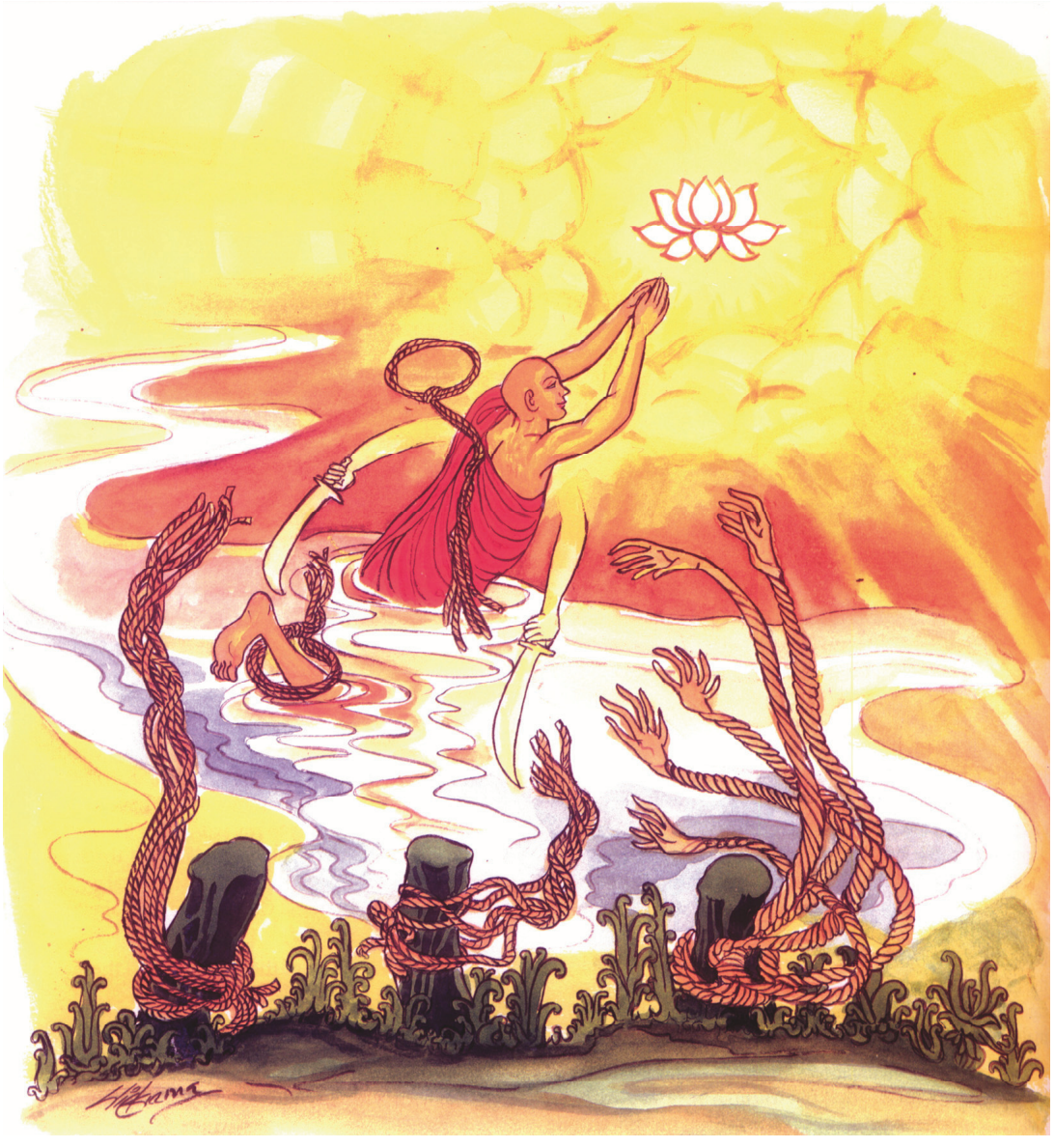
Once upon a time, bhante Maha Kachchana was staying in Avanti country on a mountain, near the city of Kuraraghara. A lay disciple, son of a very rich lady, named Sona requested him to admit him as a bhikkhu under him. The Elder kept on saying, 'Sona, the life of a bhikkhu is not an easy one. It is a difficult matter to eat alone and live a life of chastity.' He turned him away twice. But Sona was determined to become a bhikkhu. So, he requested him the third time and this time he convinced the Master. He got entry in the Sangha as a bhikkhu. After staying at that monastery for three years, he took permission from his teacher and left for the Jetavana monastery to see the Buddha.

Verse 369: Siñca bhikkhu imaṃ nāvaṃ sittā te lahum essati
Chetvā rāgañ ca dosañ ca tato nibbānam ehisi.

Verse 369: O Bhikkhu, go on emptying, this body resembling boat. Emptied by you (of evil thoughts) it will move faster. Cut off lust and hatred and attain Nirvana thereby.

Give up lust & hatred
Story of a devout lady

On reaching there, he paid reverence to the Enlightened One. The Buddha greeted him with friendliness and asked him to stay in the perfumed chamber, where the Buddha was himself staying. After spending most of the night in the open air, bhikkhu Sona spent the rest of the night on the couch assigned to him in the perfumed chamber. At the dawn time, the Buddha commanded him to recite the sixteen suttas. When he finished reciting these verses, the Buddha thanked him for it and also praised him by saying, 'Sadhu! Sadhu! (Well done! Well done!)' Hearing the applause given by the Buddha, the devas in all the worlds also gave a big applause of appreciation for Sona.



Verse 370: Pañca chinde pañca jahe pañca c uttari bhāvaye
Pañca saṅgātigo bhikkhu oghatiṇṇo ti vuccati.

Verse 370: Cut off five (i.e. self-illusion, doubt, practice of wrongful rites and rituals, sensual desire and hatred), give up five (i.e. passion for the world of Rupa, passion for the world of Arupa, arrogance, restlessness and ignorance). Further develop five (i.e. confidence, mindfulness, effort, concentration and wisdom). The bhikkhu who has gone beyond the five bonds is called the 'passer of stream'.

Who is a flood-crosser?
Story of a devout lady

The deity, staying in the house of Sona's mother in Kururaghara city, at a distance of one hundred and twenty yojanas from the Jetavana monastery, also made a loud applause. Sona's mother heard this and raised her voice, 'Who is this that gives applause?' 'I am the resident deity of your house.' 'You have never given any applause on me in the past. Why do you do so today?' 'I am not giving applause on you.' 'Then upon whom are you giving applause?' 'I am giving applause on your son, bhikkhu Sona,' the resident deity replied. 'What has he done so wonderful?' the mother asked her again.

'Today your son resided in the perfumed chamber of the Buddha and recited the Dhamma to him. The Enlightened One was so pleased with the recitation of the Dhamma that he applauded him. On hearing the Buddha applauding him, I also applauded him.' 'Sir, Is it really that my son recited the Dhamma to the Teacher? Or was it the other way that the Buddha recited the Dhamma to my son?' 'No Sister, it was your son who recited the Dhamma to the Tathagata.'

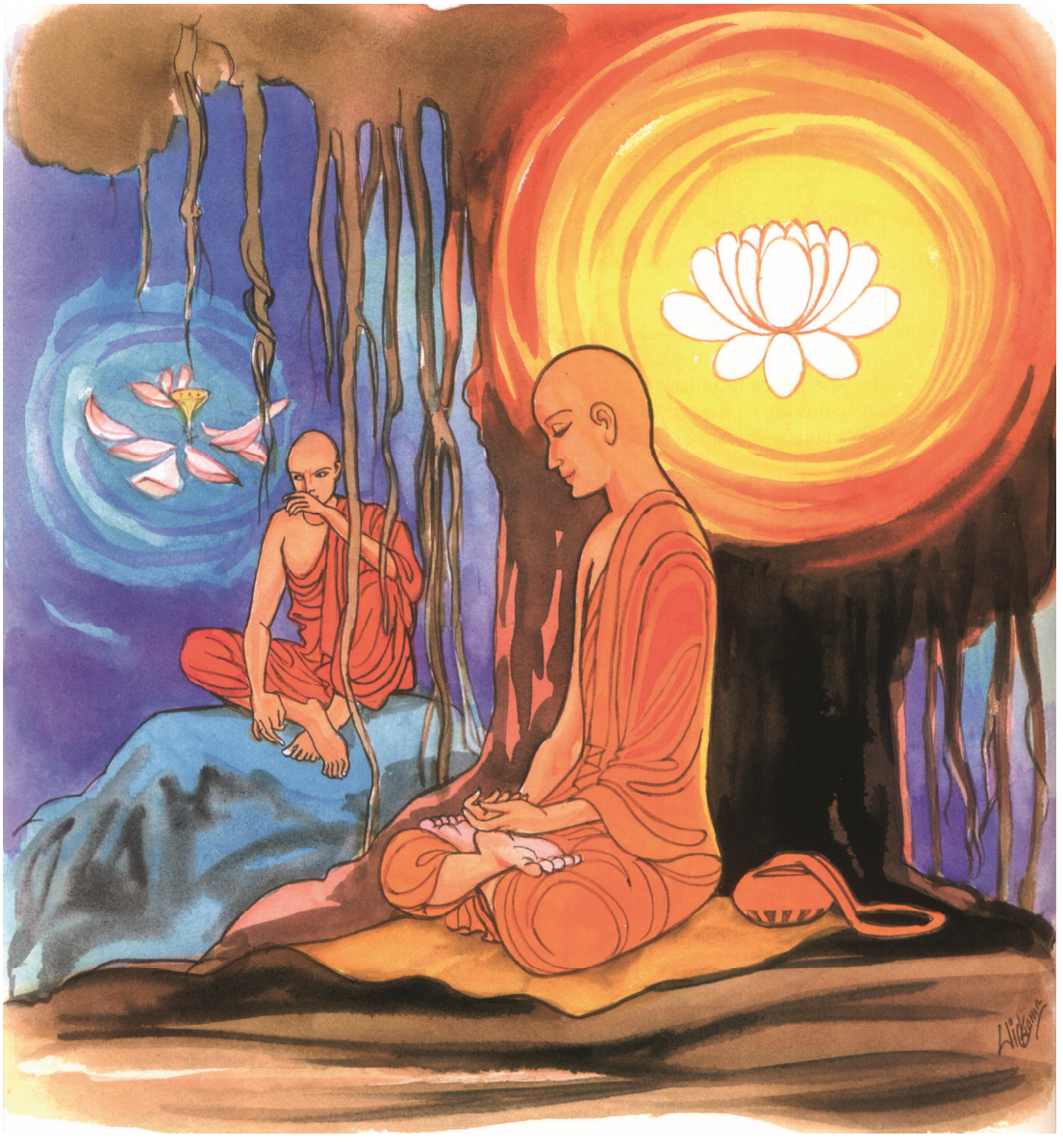
Verse 371: Jhāya bhikkhu mā ca pamādo mā te kāma gune bhamassu cittaṃ
Mā loha gulaṃ giḷi pamatto mā kandi dukkham idanti ḍayhamāno.

Verse 371: O bhikkhu! Go on meditating. Don't be heedless. Let not your mind roam in sensual pleasures. Don't swallow an iron-ball carelessly. You will burn, weep, cry and then grudge, 'What a suffering!'

Meditate earnestly, diligently
Story of a devout lady

While the deity spoke thus, five kinds of joy filled the mother's whole body. Then she thought, 'If my son can stay with the Buddha in his perfumed chamber, recite the Dhamma to him and get applause from him, then definitely he can deliver a discourse to me as well. When my son comes to this place, I shall arrange for him to deliver a discourse so that I could also hear him preach the Dhamma.'

After the Buddha had applauded bhikkhu Sona, he stayed with the Buddha for a few more days. Then he thought, 'I will now go to see my teacher.' He took leave of the Buddha and in due course arrived at the monastery of his teacher.



Verse 372: Natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa paññā natthi ajhāyato
Yamhi jhānañ ca paññā ca sa ve nibbāna santike.

Verse 372: One, who lacks wisdom, cannot concentrate. One, who cannot concentrate cannot attain wisdom. One, who has, both concentration and wisdom is near the Nibbana.

Who has the real wisdom?
Story of a devout lady

Next day, bhikkhu Kachchana took bhikkhu Sona with him and went round the village for almsfood where the lay disciple, mother of bhikkhu Sona, stayed. When the mother saw her son, her heart was full of joy. While she served the food, she paid every attention to him. After he had taken the food, she asked him, 'Is it true that you resided alone in the perfumed chamber of the Buddha with him and also that you recited the Dhamma before him?' 'Lay disciple, who told you this?' 'The deity of our house told this to me. In fact he gave a big applause at the same time the Buddha gave you applause, after hearing your recital of the verses.' She further said, 'After I heard the whole story from him, I thought, "If my son can recite the Dhamma to the Buddha, he will also recite it for me, if I request him." I pray, you recite the Dhamma for me as well. I will make arrangements for hearing the Dhamma on such and such day and shall like to hear you speak.' The bhikkhu agreed. The lay disciple honoured the company of bhikkhus and started looking forward to hear the discourses from her son.

Verse 373: Suññāgāraṃ paviṭṭhassa santa cittassa bhikkhuno
Amānusi rati hoti sammā dhammaṃ vipassato.

Verse 373: The bhikkhu who has retired to a lonely place, who has calmed his mind, who has right belief, experiences a joy, surpassing that of all men.

Who experiences divine joy?
Story of a devout lady

On the eventful day, she said, 'We all shall go to hear my son today.' So, she left a single lady attendant at her house and went to the fixed place with all her attendants to hear the discourse. At the fixed place a special pavilion was made for this occasion. A beautiful seat was placed on a properly made dais for her son, the bhikkhu Sona. The bhikkhu ascended the seat and started preaching the Dhamma.

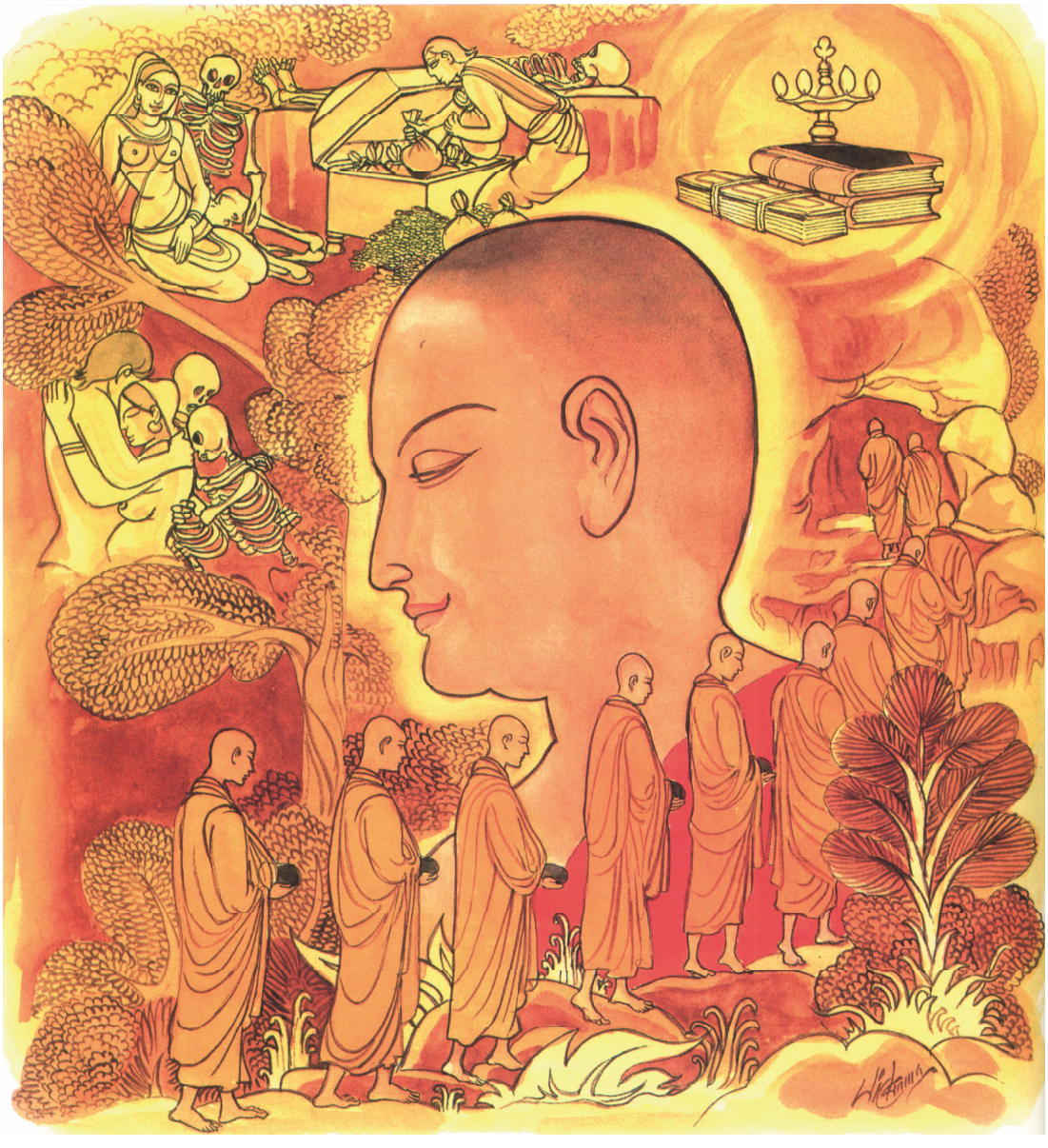
Verse 374: Yato yato sammasati khandhānaṃ udayabbayaṃ
Labhati piti pāmojjaṃ amataṃ taṃ vijānataṃ.

Verse 374: As and when he meditates on the rise and fall of the Aggregates (composition of the being), he derives joy and happiness. That meditation itself brings deathlessness to the knower.

Reflect on the rise and fall
Story of a devout lady

Now during that period a large number of thieves were looking forward for opportunity to get into this lady disciple's house. Finding that she was not at home, they dug a tunnel in the ground and made their way to the house. The thieves sent the ring leader to the congregation to keep a watch on the mistress of the house, advising him, 'If she hears that we have entered the house and, therefore, takes the way back home, kill her with your sword.'

The leader went to the place where the discourse was being delivered and kept a watch on the mistress of the house. When the female attendant at home saw the thieves, she went to the meeting place and told her mistress, 'Madam, the thieves have entered your house and have opened the chest of copper coins.' The lady replied, 'Let the thieves take all the copper coins they see. I am listening to the Dhamma being preached by my son. Do not spoil the Dhamma talk. Go home.' So saying, she sent her back.



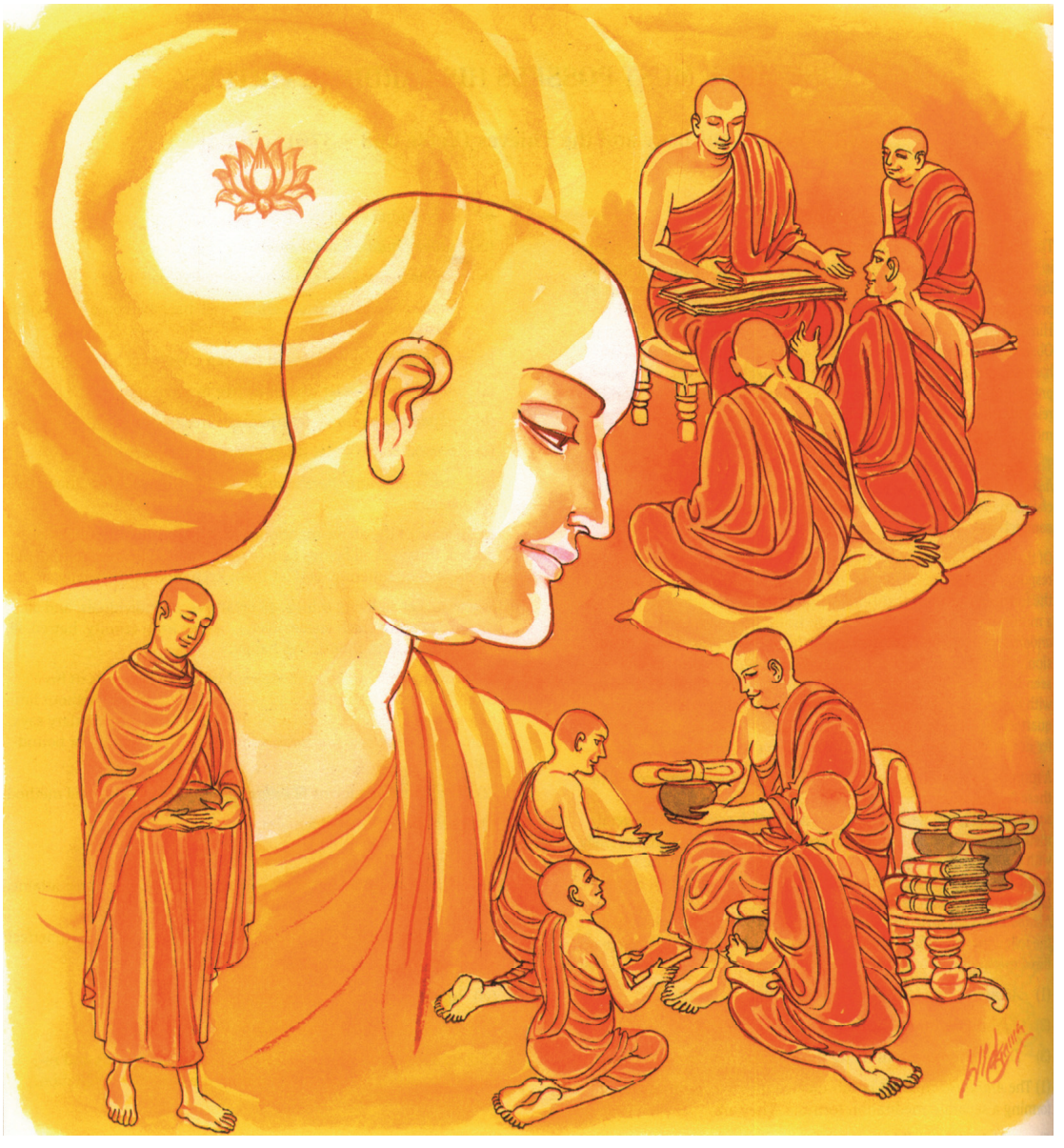
Verse 375: Tatrāyam ādi bhavati idha paññassa bhikkhuno
Indriya gutti sāntuṭṭhi pātimokkhe ca saṃvaro
Mitte bhajassu kalyāṇe suddh ājive atandite.

Verse 375: The primary objectives of a wise bhikkhu are: sense-control, contentment, observation of moral principles and association with the noble and energetic friends whose living is pure.

A bhikkhu must be virtuous
Story of a devout lady

When the thieves had emptied the copper chest, they opened the silver chest. The lady servant again ran to the mistress and reported the matter to her who replied, 'Let the thieves take whatsoever they want to take. Do not disturb me. I am listening to the Dhamma.' She was sent back home once again. After they had emptied the silver chest, the thieves laid their hands on the gold chest. The lady servant again approached her mistress. This time the lady got annoyed. She was furious and told her maid, 'I have already told you two times to let the thieves take whatever they want to take. Still you have come back and disturbed me while I have been listening to the Dhamma talk. If you come again, I know how to deal with a disobedient person like you. Go back home.'

When the gang leader heard this, he thought, 'If we steal the property of such a devoted and pious lady, Indra's lightning will fall on our head and break it.' He went back and told his friends, 'Hurry up! Put back all the wealth where it was.'



Verse 376: Paṭisanthāravuty assa ācāra kusalo siyā
Tato pāmojja bahulo dukkhass antaṃ karissati.

Verse 376: He should associate with the energetic, noble friends of pure livelihood. He should be cordial and have good behaviour. Thus full of joy he will put an end to dukkha (sorrow, round of rebirths).

Be cordial in all ways
Story of a devout lady

The thieves went to the pavilion and heard the Dhamma. After listening to the discourse, the gang leader fell at the feet of the lady disciple and prayed for the pardon. She pardoned them. Then the thieves told the lady, 'Lady! If you have pardoned us then get us admitted in the Sangha under your son.' So, the thieves were ordained. After sometime they went to the mountains for meditation. Then the Buddha sent his radiance and recited these nine verses to them.

Note: It is invariably true, we are told, that righteousness keeps, whoever walks in righteousness, safe.

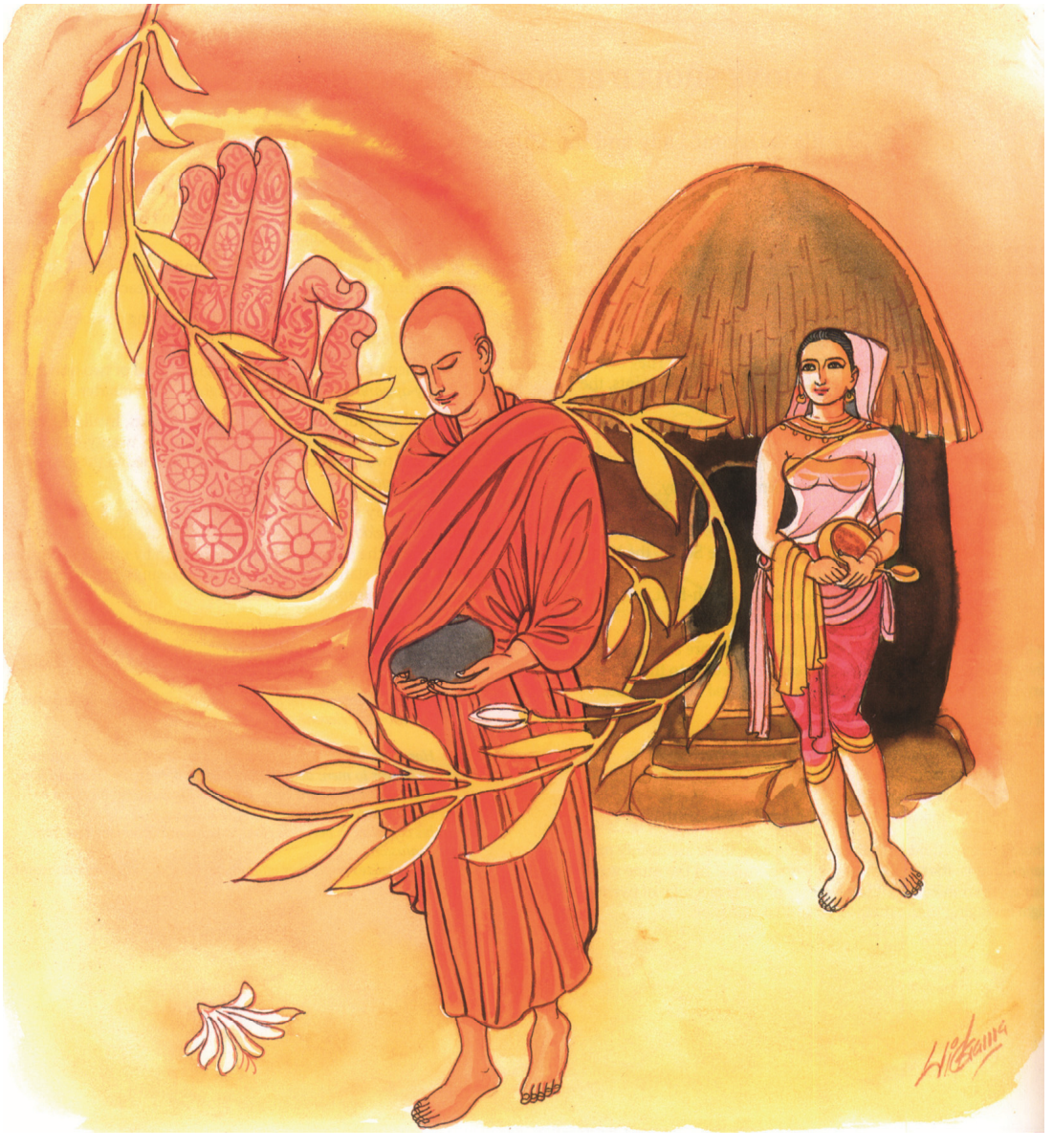
The Buddha has already said,

'Righteousness truly protects him who walks in righteousness;

Righteous living brings happiness.

Herein is the advantage of living righteously:

He who walks in righteousness will never go to a state of suffering.'



Verse 377: Vassikā viya pupphāni maddavāni pamuñcati
Evaṃ rāgañ ca dosañ ca vippamuñcetha bhikkhavo.

Verse 377: As the jasmine creeper sheds its dried flowers, even so, O bhikkhus! Abandon lust and hatred.

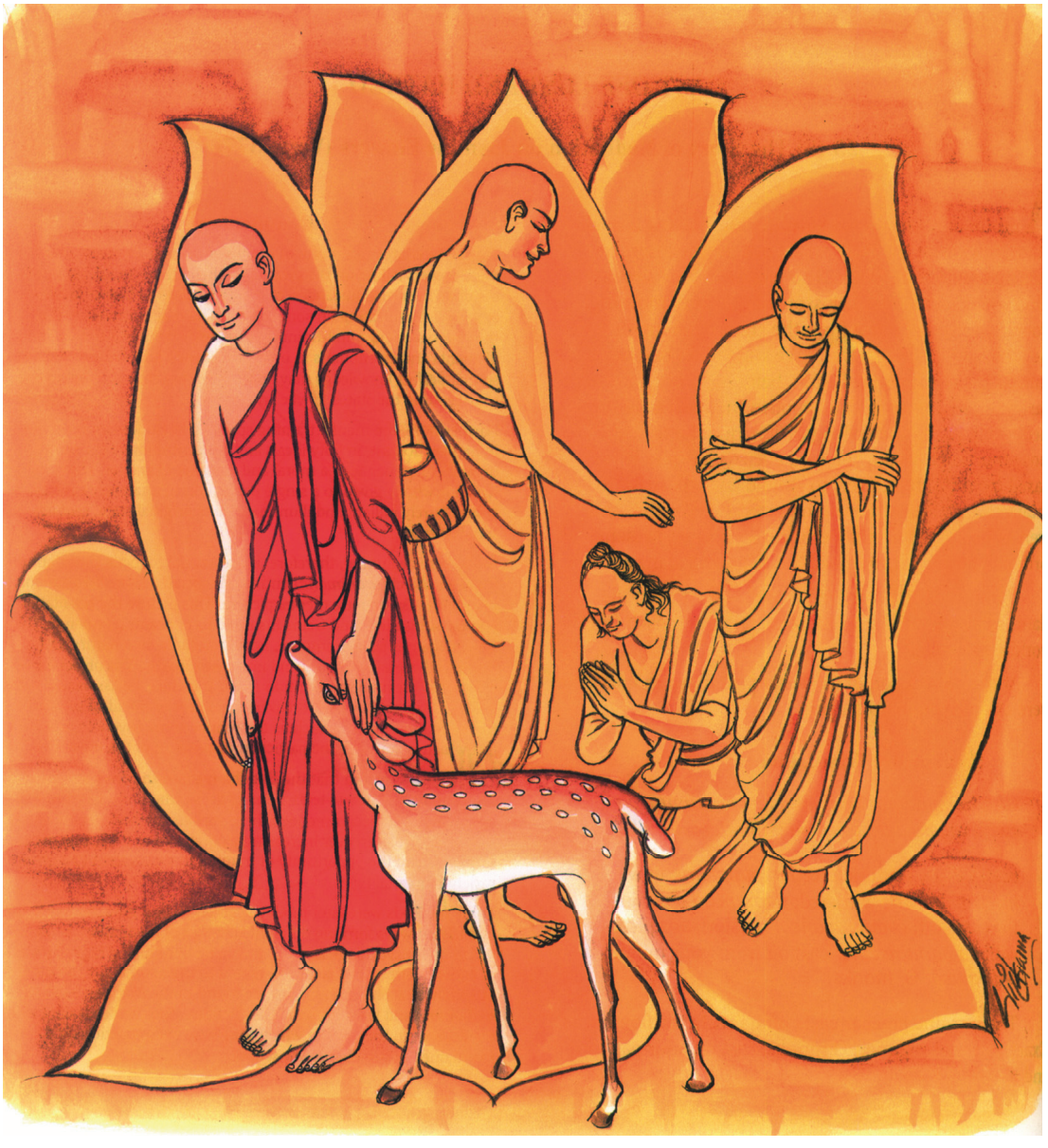
Cast off lust and hatred
Meditation on jasmine flowers

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

A group of bhikkhus from Sravasti took a topic of meditation from the Buddha and proceeded to the forest for meditation. There they saw the jasmine flowers. They bloomed beautifully in the morning with fragrance but withered away by the evening. Looking at these flowers and addressing them, they pondered, 'We shall obtain release from lust, hatred, and delusion before you obtain release from your stems.'

Thinking so, they started meditating more vigorously. The Buddha saw these bhikkhus through his vision and sent them message through radiance, 'Bhikkhus, just as a flower is released from its stem, even so a bhikkhu should strive to release himself from the pain of birth and death.' He further added, 'Bhikkhus! As the withered flower is shed from the plant, so also should a bhikkhu strive to free himself from worldly suffering.'

At the conclusion of the message, these bhikkhus attained Arahanthood.



Verse 378: Santa kāyo santa vāco santavā susamāhito
Vantalokāmiso bhikkhu upasanto ti vuccati.

Verse 378: The bhikkhu who is calm in body, calm in speech, calm in mind and is gently composed, who has given up the worldly enjoyments, is truly called ‘a peaceful one.’

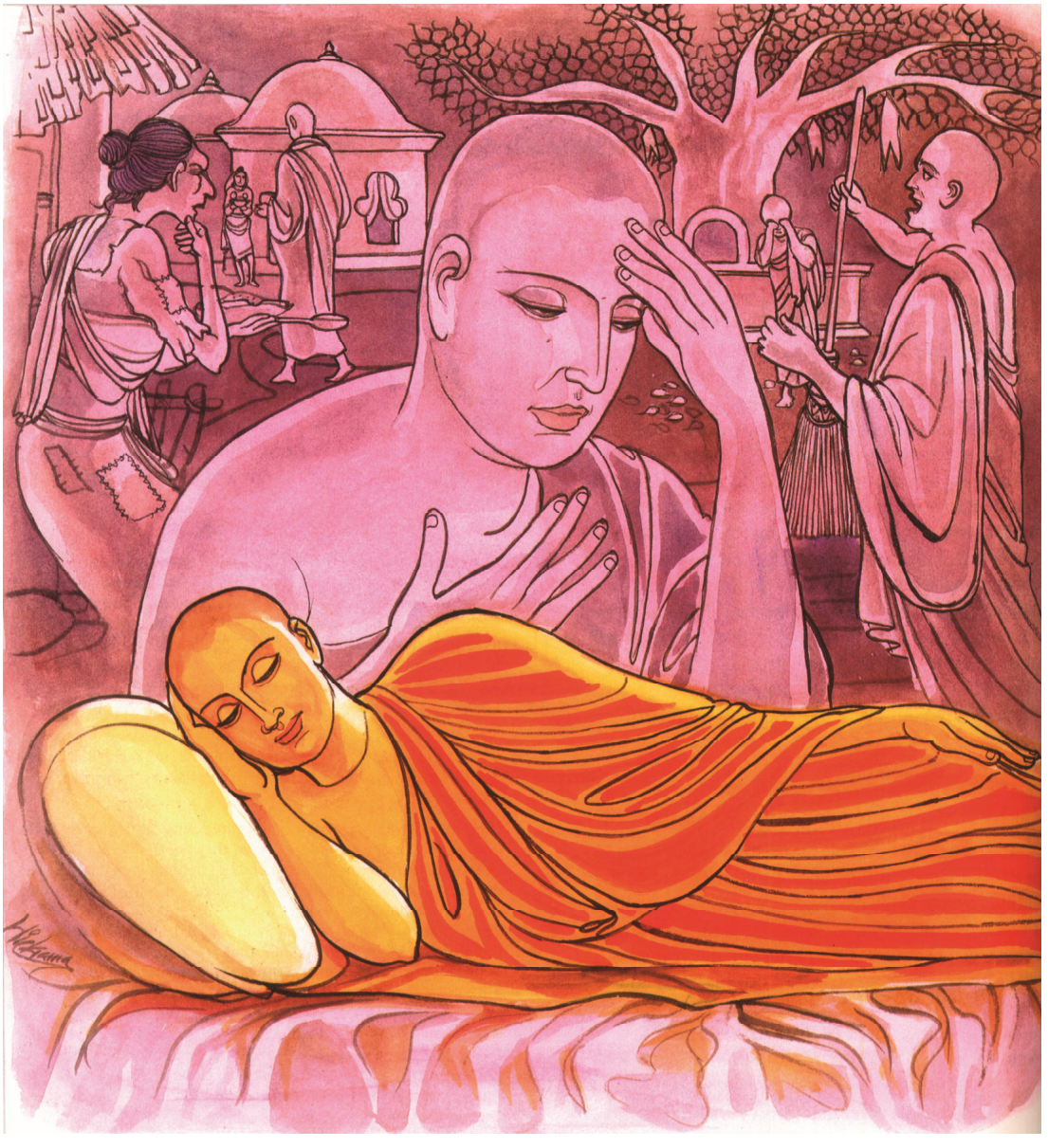
Who is peaceful?
Story of Santakaya

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Bhikkhu Santakaya had been a lion in one of his previous lives. It is said of the lions that they usually go out for prey and when they get the prey, they remain contented with it and do not go out for the prey again for the next few days. They rest during this period.

As this bhikkhu was a lion in his previous birth, he behaved very much like a lion. He was never guilty of any improper movement of hand or foot. He moved about very little in a measured way. The movements were slow and steady and he was usually calm and composed. He always carried out himself with dignity.

The composure and dignity of this monk attracted the attention of other bhikkhus. They took his behaviour to be very strange and reported the matter to the Buddha, 'Bhante! We have never seen a monk like Santakaya. When he takes a sitting posture, he never moves his hands, he never moves his feet, never yawns or stretches out his arms and legs.' On hearing this, the Buddha said, 'Bhikkhus, All bhikkhus should behave like Santakaya. They should be calm and composed in thought, words and deeds.'



Verse 379: Attanā coday attānaṃ paṭimāse attam attanā
So attagutto satimā sukhaṃ bhikkhu vihāhisi.

Verse 379: By self, one examines oneself. By self, one improves oneself. O bhikkhu! Be self-guarded and mindful. You will live happily.

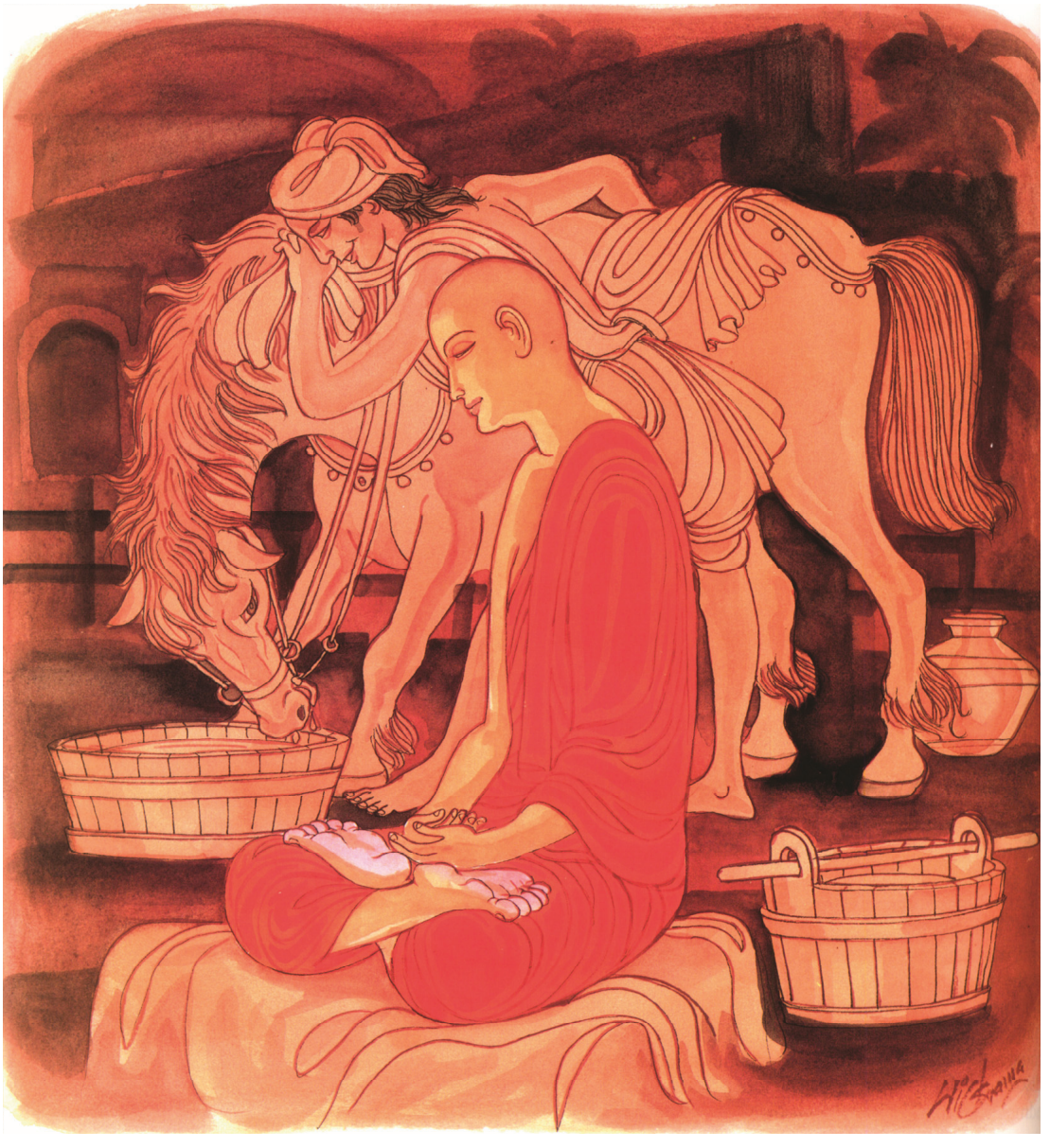
Who lives happily?
Story of Bhikkhu Nangala Kula

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Nangala Kula was a poor ploughman. He earned his living by doing work for others. One day, a bhikkhu saw him ploughing a field in old, torn clothes. Seeing his condition, the bhikkhu took pity on him and asked him, 'If this is the way you earn your living, why don't you become a bhikkhu?' 'Bhante, who will admit a person as a bhikkhu, who earns his living like this?' 'If you are agreeable to become a bhikkhu, then I shall admit you.' 'Very well, Sir! If you are ready to ordain me as a bhikkhu, I am ready to become one.' Thus the ploughman became a bhikkhu.

The newly ordained bhikkhu did not throw away his old loin cloth. Rather he kept it along with the plough on the branch of a tree, very near the gate of the monastery. He was called as bhikkhu Nangala Kula, the ploughman.

As the bhikkhu was getting good food without much physical effort, he started gaining weight. He became discontented with the life of a bhikkhu and thought of returning back to the old life of a householder. Whenever this feeling arose in him, he would go to the tree and look at the cloth and the plough. It appeared as if they reprimanded him, 'You, shameless fellow! You still want to put on those old clothes and earn your livelihood through the hard life of a labourer.' Hearing this admonition, the bhikkhu would feel ashamed; his dissatisfaction would disappear and he would return back to the meditation centre and start working more diligently.



Verse 380: Attā hi attano nātho attā hi attano gati
Tasmā saññamay attānaṃ assaṃ bhadraṃ va vānijo.

Verse 380: Self, indeed, is the protector of the self. Self, indeed, is the refuge of the self. Control the self, as a merchant controls his noble horse.

You are your own saviour
Story of Bhikkhu Nangala Kula

Other young bhikkhus would ask him, 'Brother Nangala Kula, why do you go to the tree frequently?' 'I go to see my teacher.'

In the course of time, the bhikkhu attained Arahanthood. So, he stopped going to the tree. The bhikkhus asked him in a taunting way, 'Why don't you go to your teacher now?' 'I went to my teacher because I needed him. But I do not need him now.' Other bhikkhus did not believe him. So, they went to the Buddha and asked him, 'Bhante, Is bhikkhu Nangala Kula telling the truth?' The Enlightened One replied, 'My son is telling the truth. Bhikkhu Nangala Kula has already attained Arahanthood.'

Verse 381: Pāmojja bahulo bhikkhu pasanno Buddha sāsane
Adhigacche padaṃ santaṃ saṅkhārū pasamaṃ sukhaṃ.

Verse 381: Full of joy, full of confidence in the Buddha's Teachings, the bhikkhu attains the Peaceful State, the ending of conditioned things, the bliss supreme.

How to win your goal?
Story of bhikkhu Vakkali

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

Brahmin Vakkali lived in Sravasti. One day, when he saw the Buddha going for the almsround, he became so attracted to the calmness and aura around him, that he joined the Sangha just to be close to him. As a bhikkhu, Vakkali was greatly attached to him and always kept himself near him. He, thus, neglected his duties and spiritual development. So, the Buddha advised him, 'Vakkali, It is not desirable for you to look at my body which is full of impurities. Only those who see the Dhamma, see me. Those, who don't see the Dhamma, don't see me. So, you must leave my presence.'

The Buddha admonished the bhikkhu because he wanted that the chain of attachment should be broken. Attachment hinders spiritual advancement. When Vakkali heard the admonitions, he felt very depressed and could not tolerate it. He left the monastery and wanted to commit suicide by jumping from the peak of a mountain.

The Enlightened One knew very well the extent of Vakkali's grief and pain. He also knew that if he takes some wrong step, then he will miss the opportunity to attain Sainthood. Accordingly, he sent forth his radiance to Vakkali, made him feel his presence and appeared as if he were in the presence of Vakkali. With the Buddha near him, Vakkali soon forgot all his sorrows, calmed down and became mindful. Thus calmed, he developed new resolution to purify his mind and worked diligently and soon after, attained Arahanthood.

Verse 382: Yo have daharo bhikkhu yuñjati Buddha sāsane
So imaṃ lokaṃ pabhāseti abbhā mūtto va candimā.

Verse 382: The bhikkhu, who, while still young, devotes himself to the Teachings of the Buddha, illumines this world like the moon freed from a cloud.

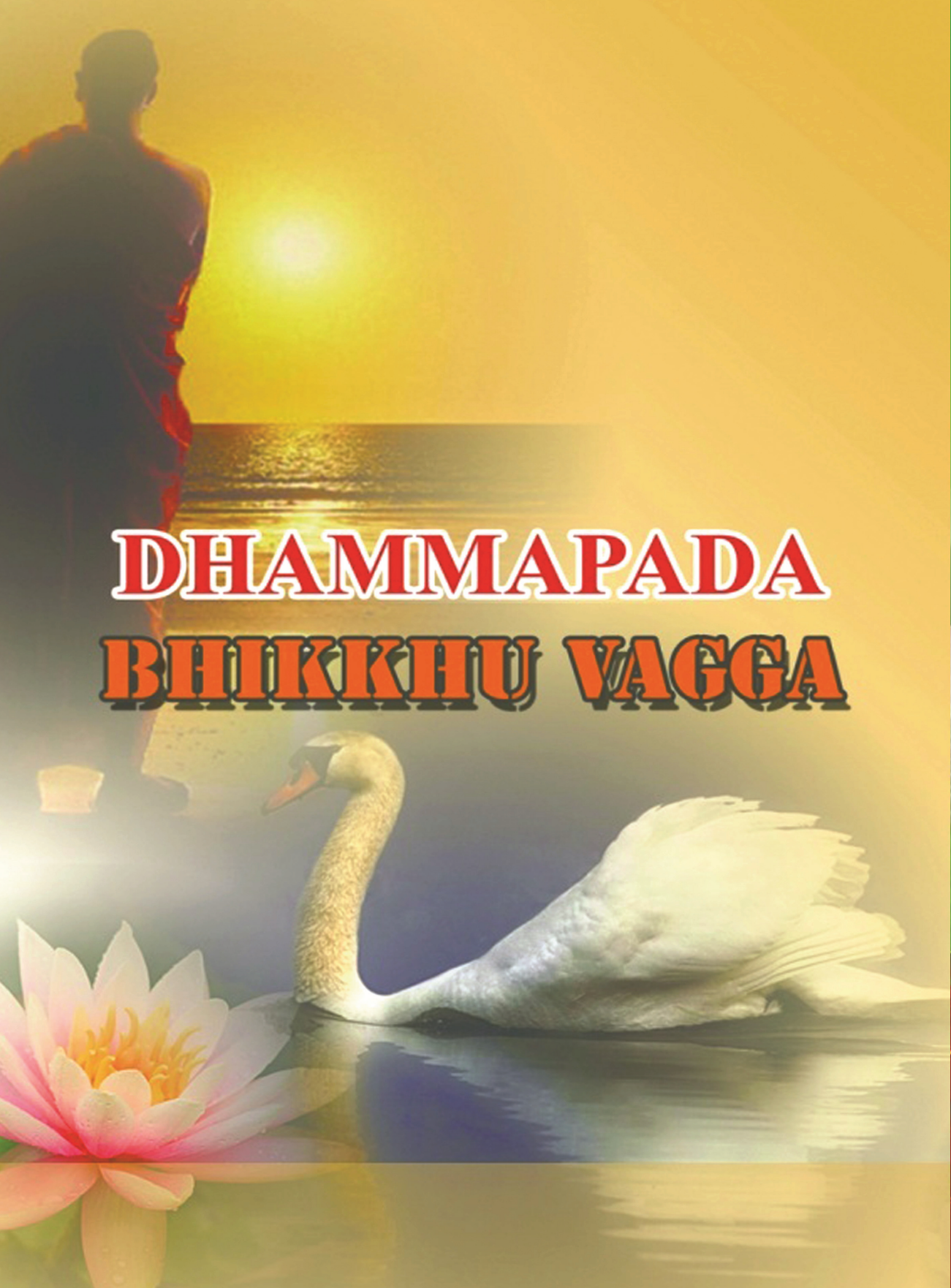
Age has no meaning
Story of Novice monk Sumana

Place: Pubbarama, Sravasti

Bhante Aniruddha had a pupil by name Samanera Sumana. Although he was young, due to his previous good karma, he became an Arahant endowed with supernatural powers. Once, when his teacher Aniruddha was ill, he fetched water from the Anotatta lake which was far away from the monastery and difficult to reach. But because of his supernatural power, he was able to perform the journey by air. Sometime later, Aniruddha took Sumana with him to pay homage to the Buddha at Pubbarama monastery.

At the monastery, many samaneras teased Sumana because he was very young. The Buddha wanted to make these samaneras see the rare qualities of Sumana. So, the Buddha announced that he wanted some samanera to get a jar of water from the Anotatta lake. However, none of the samaneras was able to undertake the job. Finally, at the request of bhikkhu Ananda, Sumana went to bring a jar of water for the Buddha. As before, he went to the Anotatta lake and came back through the air by his supernatural power.

In the evening congregation, Sumana was the topic of discussion. The bhikkhus told the Buddha about the wonderful trip made by Sumana. The Buddha said, 'Bhikkhus, one who practises the Dhamma jealously is capable of acquiring supernormal powers, even though he is young.'


DHAMMAPADA
BHIKKHU VAGGA

DHAMMAPADA

The Brahmana

Brahmana Vagga

Chapter XXVI

BRAHMANA VAGGA

The Brahmana

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Verse 383: Chinda sotaṃ parakkamma kāme panuda brāhmaṇa
Saṅkhārānaṃ khayaṃ ñatvā akataññū si brāhmaṇa.

Verse 383: O Brahmana! Cut off the stream of craving with diligence and abandon all sense desires. Knowing the destruction of conditioned things, O Brahmana! Be a knower of the Nirvana.

Cut the stream
All bhikkhus: Not Arahants

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, there lived a brahmin in Sravasti who was extremely devoted to the Buddha and the bhikkhus. He always invited the bhikkhus for almsfood to his house. When they arrived at his house, he took their bowls in his hands and said, 'May the Arahant bhikkhus enter inside.' He thus addressed them as 'Arahant' and then requested them to enter his house. When the bhikkhus, who had not yet attained Arahanthood, heard this, they felt embarrassed and avoided going to his house, thinking, 'This layman does not know that we have not yet attained Arahatship.'

When the bhikkhus avoided coming to his house, the brahmin felt sad and depressed. He reported to the Buddha that the bhikkhus were avoiding his house. When questioned, the bhikkhus told the Buddha that the layman addressed all of them as 'Arahants'. He then asked them whether they felt false pride and undue elation when they were addressed as 'Arahants'. They replied in the negative.

The Buddha addressed the monks, 'Bhikkhus! The brahmin is using this form of address only out of his respect, because of his boundless devotion for the Arahants. Bhikkhus should strive seriously to attain Arahanthood by uprooting the stream of craving.'

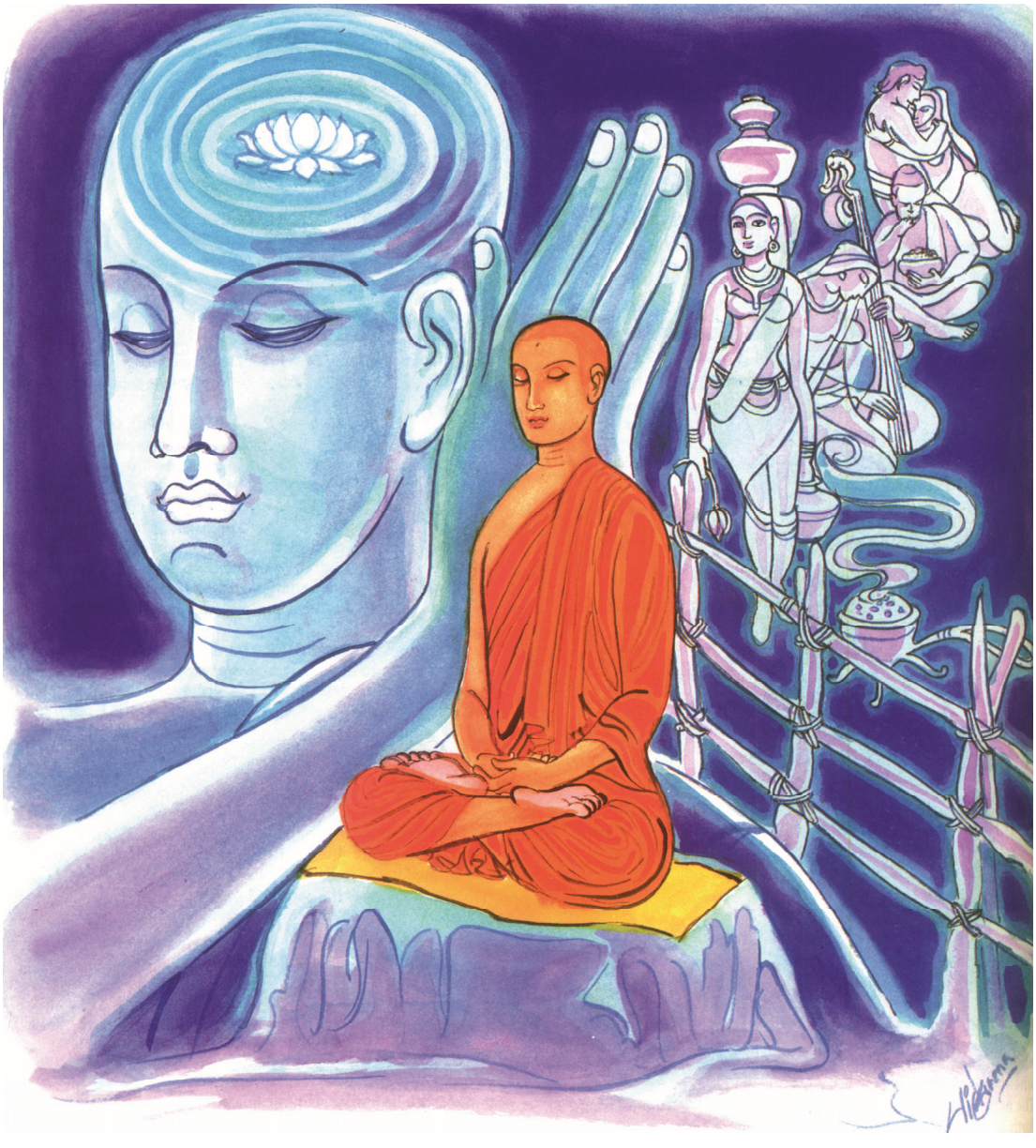
Verse 384: Yadā dvayesu dhammesu pāragu hoti brāhmaṇo
Atha ssa sabbe saṃyogā atthaṃ gacchanti jānato.

Verse 384: When the Brahmana has reached the other shore, then all the ties of that holy man are broken from the root.

Go beyond duality
Story of thirty monks

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

On one occasion, a group of thirty monks, who were residing in different parts of the country, came to the Jetavana monastery to pay homage to the Buddha. Bhikkhu Sariputta knew that the time was ripe for these bhikkhus to attain Arahanthood and he wanted to help them. So, he approached the Buddha, solely with the purpose to help them, and asked the question, 'Bhante! What are the two Dhammas?' The Buddha replied, **'Sariputta! Calmness and Insight Meditation are the two Dhammas for maintaining peace and reality in life. To a person who knows these, all the fetters diminish and fade away.'**



Verse 385: Yassa pāraṃ apāraṃ vā pārāpāraṃ na vijjati
Vitaddaraṃ visaṃyuttaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 385: Him I call a Brahmana, who makes no difference between this and that shore, and is free from fear and moral impurities.

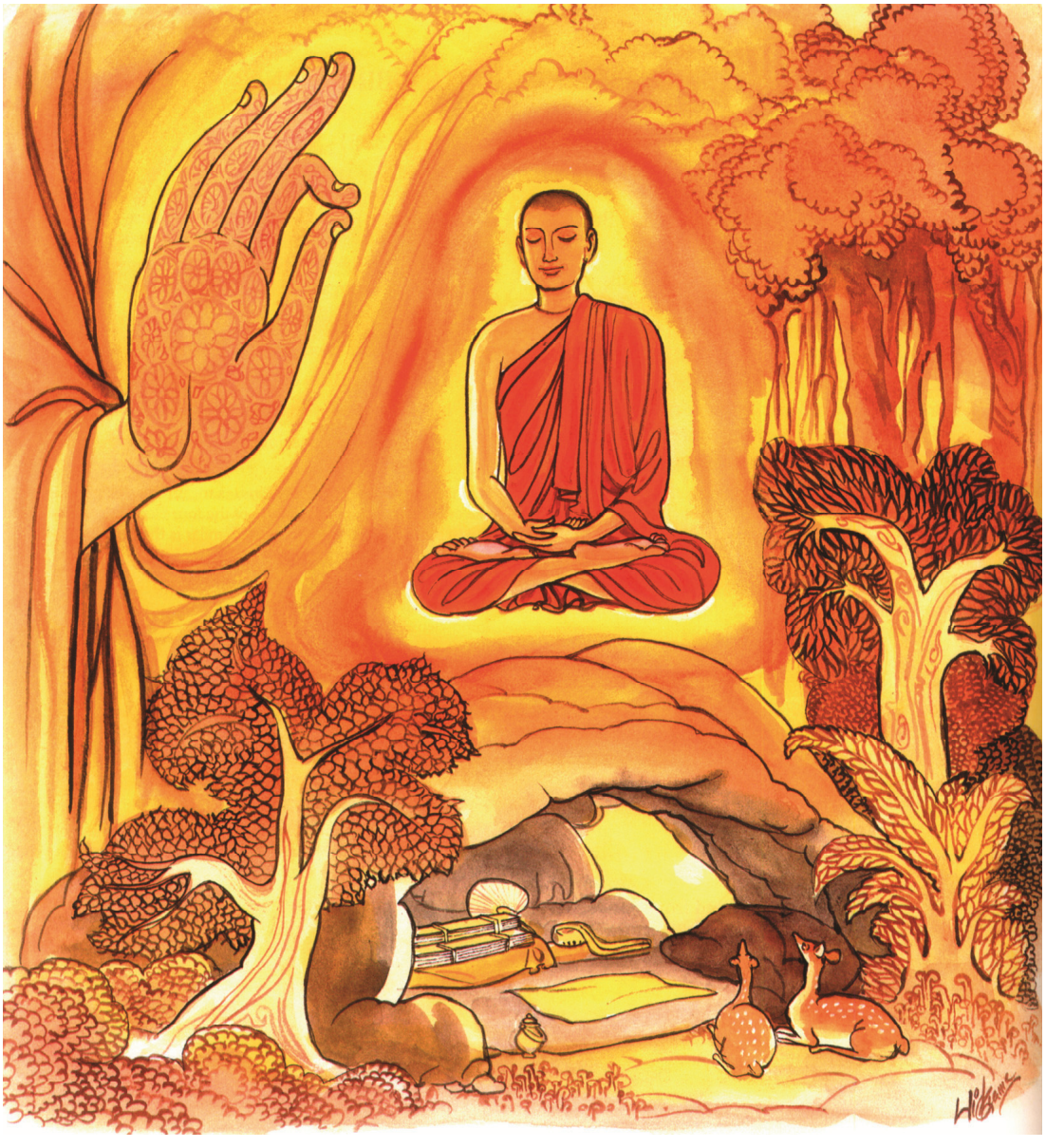
Brahmana is unbound
Story of other shore & Mara

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, Mara came to the Buddha disguised as a man and asked him, 'Sir! You often quote the word "Param". What is the meaning of this word?' The Buddha knew that it was Mara who was asking this question. He admonished him, 'O wicked Mara! The words 'Param' and 'Aparam' have nothing to do with you. **'Param' which means the 'other shore' can be reached only by the Arahants who are free from moral impurities.**'

Note: 'This shore' and 'the other shore' are used in the sense of internal and external ayatanas. The internal ayatanas are the sense bases, viz., eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; the external ayatanas are the sense objects, viz. visible object, sound, odour, taste, touch and mind-object.

For a true Brahmana (i.e. Arahant) there is neither 'this shore' nor 'the other shore'; which means that the senses of the Arahant are calmed, and his passions are extinguished.



Verse 386: Jhāyiṃ virajam āsinaṃ katakiccaṃ anāsavaṃ
Uttamatthaṃ anuppattaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 386: Him I call a Brahmana who is meditative, pure and secluded, who has done his duty and is free from impurities, who has attained the highest goal, Nibbana.

Pure is a Brahmana
Who is a real Brahmana?

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, a brahmin thought, 'Gotama Buddha calls his disciples as "Brahmana." I am also a brahmin by caste. Therefore, I should also be called a Brahmana.' So thinking, he approached the Buddha and posed this question to him. The Buddha replied, 'I do not call someone a Brahmana simply because of his caste. I only call one a Brahmana, who has attained Arahanthood.'

In Buddhism, Sainthood is earned, it is not conferred. We have to work hard to attain Arahanthood. Also, all beings have the potential to become Saints by purifying their minds of all mental impurities and defilements.

Note: A meditative person practises concentration (samatha) and insight meditation (vipassana). One becomes free from corruptions by realising the four Noble Truths and eradicating the fetters.

Verse 387: Divā tapati ādicco rattiṃ ābhāti candimā
Sannaddho khattiyo tapati jhāyi tapati brāhmaṇo
Atha sabbam ahorattiṃ Buddho tapati tejasā.

Verse 387: The sun shines by the day, the moon by the night. A king shines when armoured. An Arahant shines when in meditation. But the Buddha shines all the day and night.

The Buddha shines at all times
Story of bhikkhu Ananda

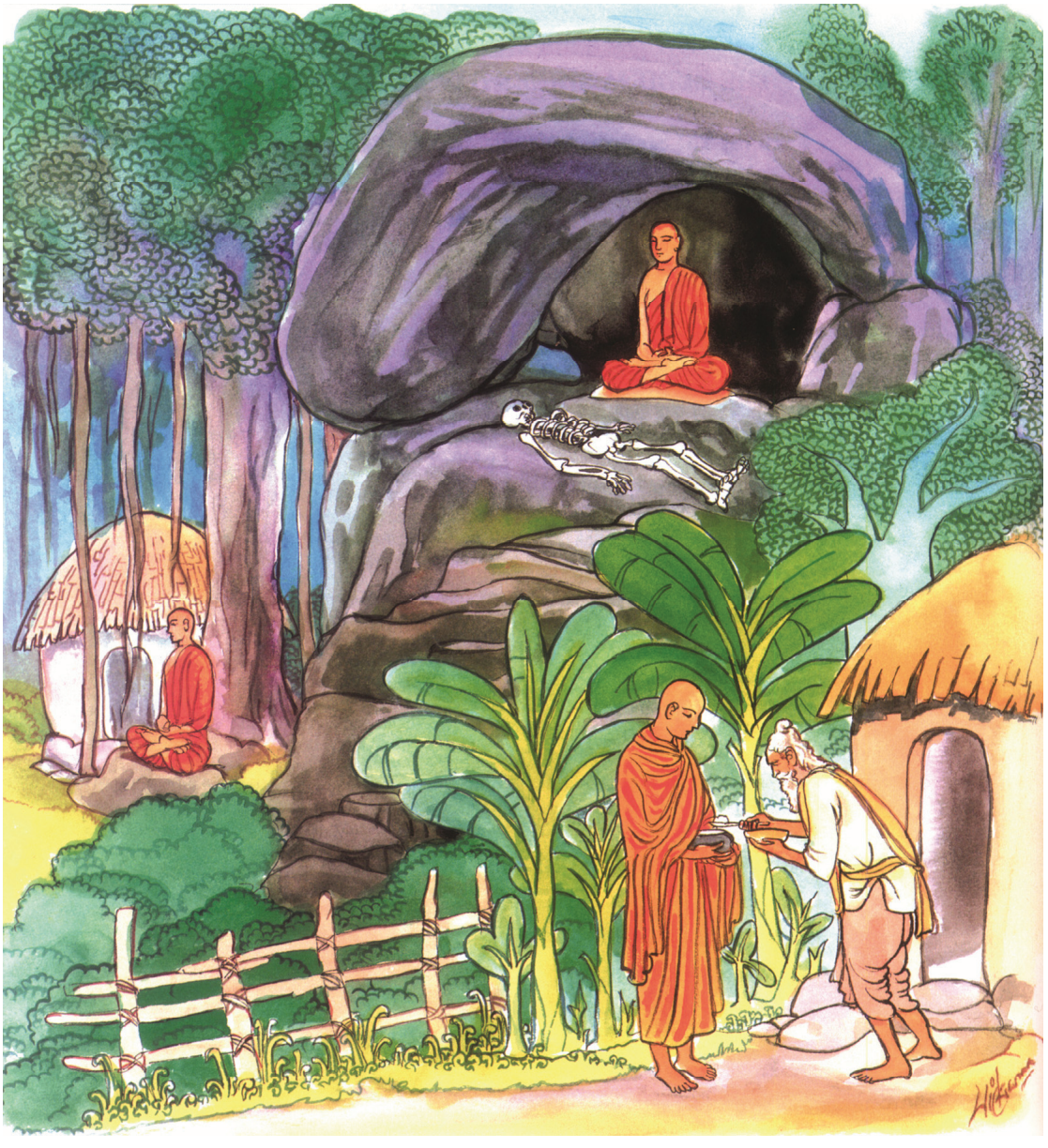
Place: Migarmatu Prasaad

On the full moon day of the seventh month, when the Great Terminal Festival was held, King Pasendi of Kosala came to see the Buddha. He was fully decorated with royal insignia worn at coronation ceremonies. Bhikkhu Kaludayi was also present there, sitting in the outer congregation. He was in deep mental trance. Due to the deep mental absorption, his body was looking bright and golden.

Bhikkhu Ananda looked at the sky. The sun was setting down and the moon was just coming up. Both the sun and the moon were radiating beautiful colours of light. When Ananda looked at the Buddha, he suddenly realised that the light emitted from the Buddha far exceeded in beauty as compared to the other lights.

Seeing the Buddha in his glory and splendour, Ananda immediately exclaimed, 'O Venerable Sir! The light that radiates forth from your noble body far surpasses the light from the king, the light from bhikkhu Kaludayi and the light from the sun and the moon.' The Buddha replied, **'All the Buddhas shine both by night and by day, and shine with fivefold brightness.'**

The Buddha eclipses immorality by the power of morality (sila), vice by the power of virtue, ignorance by the power of wisdom, demerit by the power of merit.



Verse 388: Bāhitapāpo ti brāhmaṇo samacariyā samaṇo ti vuccati
Pabbājay attano malaṃ tasmā pabbajito ti vuccati.

Verse 388: Because he has discarded all evils, he is called a Brahmana. Because he lives in peace, he is called a monk. Because he has given up impurities, he is called a pabbajita-recluse (hermit).

Holy men discard all evil
All recluse: Not bhikkhus

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, there lived a brahmin ascetic in Sravasti. He had retired from the world under a teacher, other than the Buddha. After he was ordained, the thought occurred to him, 'The Buddha calls his disciples "Pabbajita-bhikkhus". Since I have also been ordained and I am a recluse, I should also be called "Pabbajita"'.

So, he went to the Buddha and put his question to him. The Buddha replied, 'It is not alone for the reason you have given me that I call a man a bhikkhu. **I do not call all recluses as pabbajita. A pabbajita is one who has uprooted all impurities and evil passions from within.**'

Note: How does a monk get peace? He gets peace by subduing all evils. In normal conversation, a pabbajita is one who leaves the household life for the homeless life of a recluse. In Buddhism, however, it means one who has given up the impurities of the household life to become a bhikkhu.

Verse 389: Na brāhmaṇassa pahareyya nāssa muñcetha brāhmaṇo
Dhi brāhmaṇassa hantāraṃ tato dhi yassa muñcati.

Verse 389: One should not hit a Brahmana, nor should a Brahmana show his anger on one who has hit him. Shame on him who hits a Brahmana! More shame on him who reacts to it!

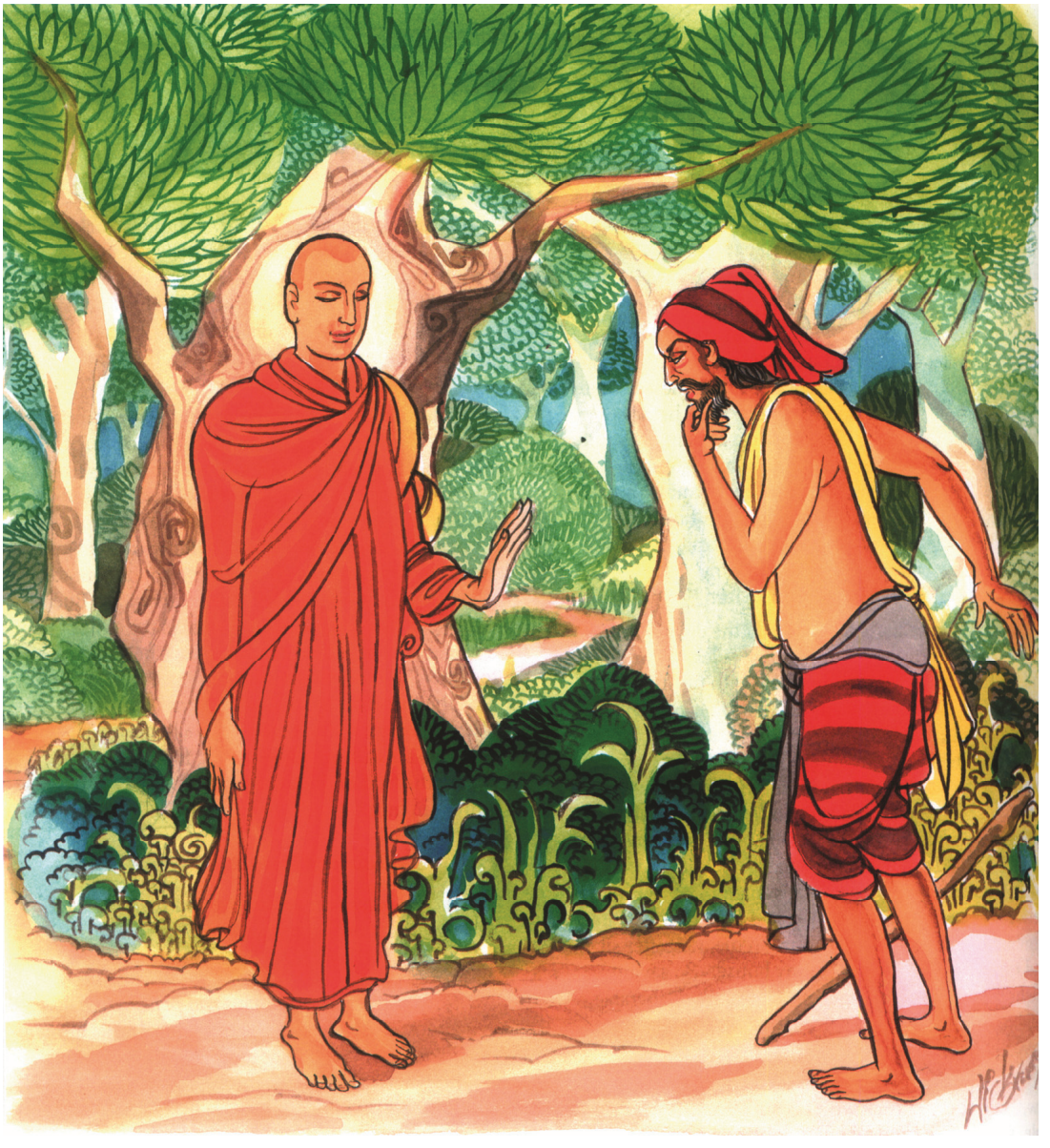
Harm not the Holy men
Story of bhikkhu Sariputta

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Bhikkhu Sariputta was often praised by the people for his patience, kindness and forgiveness. His pupils usually talked, 'Our teacher is a man of great patience and extreme endurance. If he is abused or even beaten by others, he does not lose his temper but remains calm and quiet, totally composed. He never gets angry.'

A brahmin, who held wrong views, was hearing this conversation. He asked, 'Who is this that never gets angry?' 'Our teacher does not get angry, friend!' 'It must be that nobody ever provoked him to anger in a proper way.' 'That is not the case brahmin! He is like that only.' 'Well then, I will provoke him to anger.' 'Provoke him to anger, if you can! But believe me, you will fail.' 'Trust me!' declared the brahmin, 'I know just what to do to him to provoke him to anger.'

Just about the time this conversation was going on, Sariputta entered the town for alms. When the brahmin saw him going on his alms round, he went behind him and hit him forcefully on his back with his hand. Sariputta did not even turn around to see who this man was who had hit him. Instead he proceeded ahead on his path, as if nothing had happened.



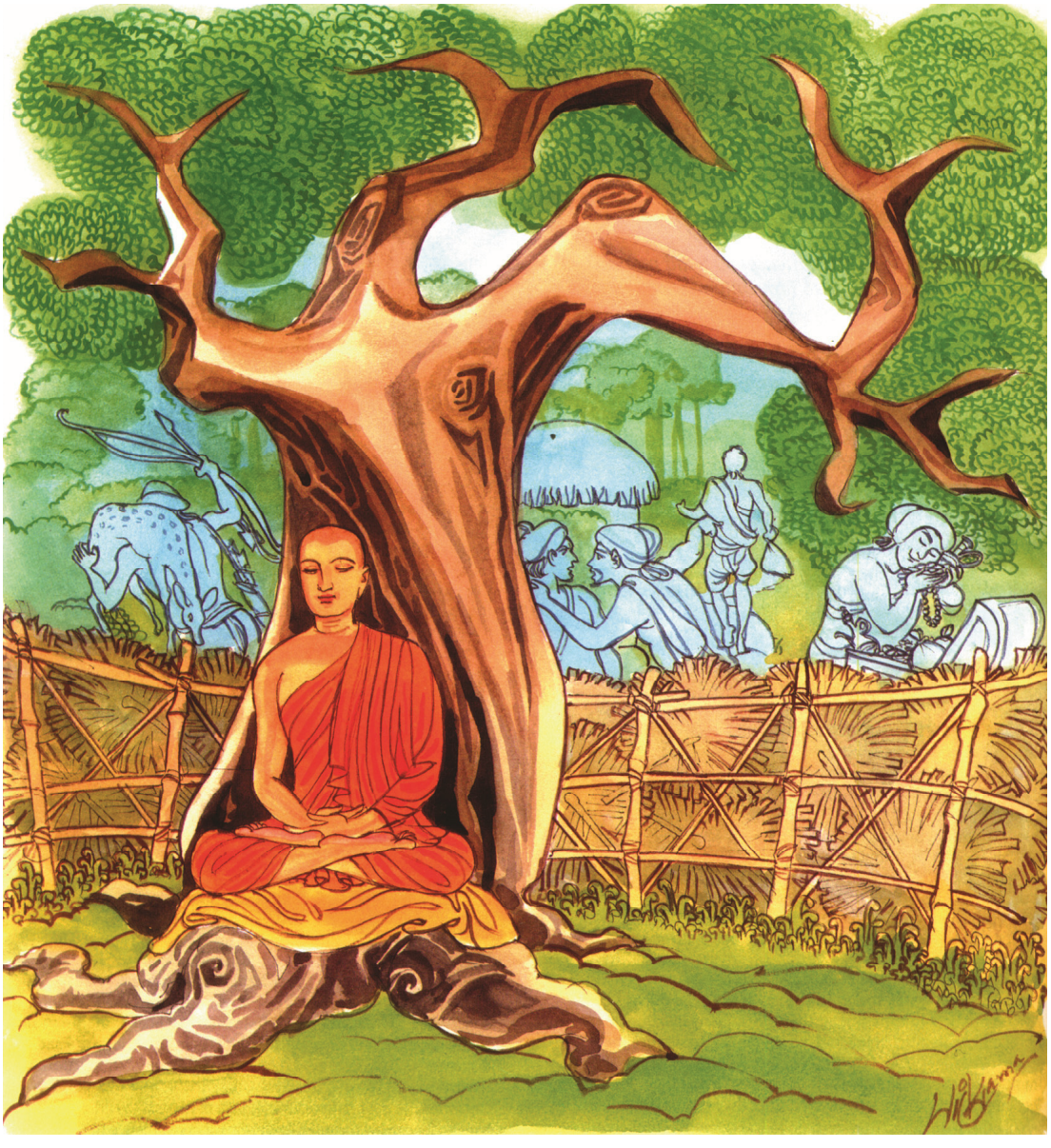
Verse 390: Na brāhmaṇass etada kiñci seyyo, Yadā nisedho manaso piyehi
Yato yato hiṃsamano nivattati, Tato tato sammatimeva dukkhaṃ.

Verse 390: It is no small achievement that a Brahmana checks himself from retaliation (i.e. tit for tat). Whenever malicious thought to harm others ceases, sorrow ceases thereby.

Holy men don't hurt
Story of bhikkhu Sariputta

The brahmin felt ashamed of what he had done. He sat down on his knees at the feet of Sariputta, admitted his sinful mistake and prayed for pardon. 'Very well, I pardon you', said Sariputta. The brahmin continued, 'Respected Sir! If you have forgiven me, then kindly come to my residence for almsfood.' Sariputta agreed. He yielded willingly. The brahmin took his bowl, conducted him to his house and served him food.

During the evening congregation, the matter was reported to the Buddha, 'Venerable Sariputta went for almsfood to the house of a brahmin who had beaten him. The brahmin is sure to get bolder. He will soon be assaulting other bhikkhus as well.' The Buddha clarified their query, 'Bhikkhus, a true brahmin does not beat another true brahmin. Only an ordinary man or an ordinary brahmin can beat an Arahant out of anger or ill-will.'



Verse 391: Yassa kāyena vācāya manasā natthi dukkataṃ
Saṃvutaṃ tihi ṭhānehi tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 391: Him I call a Brahmana who commits no wrong through the body, speech or mind. One who has checked himself in these three respects is called a Brahmana.

Holy men are restrained
Story of Maha Prajapati Gotami

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Maha Prajapati Gotami was the stepmother of Gautama Buddha. When his real mother, Queen Maya passed away after seven days of his birth, she took him as her son. Her own son, Nanda was brought up by some nurse. Thus queen, Maha Prajapati Gotami played a very important role in the upbringing of Siddhartha.

When Prince Siddhartha returned to Kapilvastu as the Buddha, his mother requested him to ordain her and others as bhikkhunis in the Order but the Buddha was against the women joining the Sangha and, therefore, did not accept her proposal. Later on, when King Suddhodana passed away after attaining Arahanthood, Maha Prajapati made another attempt to get ordained as bhikkhuni. At that time the Buddha was staying at Mahavana forest near Vaishali. Maha Prajapati along with five hundred women walked all the way from Kapilvastu to Vaishali. They had already shaved their heads and put on the robes of bhikkhunis. The mother requested the Buddha second time to ordain them in the Sangha. Bhikkhu Ananda also pleaded on their behalf and finally the Buddha consented to admit them in the Sangha with certain conditions. He made the rule that Maha Prajapati had to abide by eight special conditions (guru dharmas). She agreed to observe the guru dharmas, as required. Thus the Buddha admitted her into the Order and she became the first bhikkhuni to be admitted to the Order. The other five hundred bhikkhunis accompanying her were also admitted in the Sangha.

In the course of time, some bhikkhus thought, 'Maha Prajapati has not been ordained in a proper way. She does not have a teacher. Therefore, she is not a true bhikkhuni.' With this thought in mind, they stopped conducting religious ceremonies with her. The matter was brought to the notice of the Buddha. He observed, 'Why do you say that she has not been properly ordained? I myself gave her the eight guru dharmas. She learnt them all and has practised them as required by me. I am myself her teacher. You should harbour no doubt whatsoever about an Arahant.'

Verse 392: Yamhā dhammaṃ vijāneyya sammā sambuddha desitaṃ
Sakkaccaṃ taṃ namasseyya aggihuttaṃ va brāhmaṇo.

Verse 392: One should honour him, from whom one learns the Dhamma, preached by the Perfect Buddha, as a Brahmana honours the sacrificial fire.

Honour the holy men
Story of bhikkhu Sariputta

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Sariputta and Moggallana were born on the same day in two villages near Rajagriha. They both took Sanjaya as their teacher but they were not happy and satisfied with him. After sometime, the two friends parted company with the understanding that one who would find out the true Dhamma first would inform the other one.

During that time the Buddha arrived at Rajagriha with bhikkhus including Assaji, who was one of the first five disciples to receive the teachings from the Buddha at Sarnath. While Assaji was on almsround, Upatissa (previous name of Sariputta) saw him and was greatly impressed with his noble appearance. When Upatissa approached him, he told him about the presence of the Buddha at the Veluvana monastery in Rajagriha. **He also recited a small stanza:**

Ye dhamma hetuppa bhava, tesam hetum tathagato aha.

Tesan ca yo nirodho, evam vadi maha samano.

'The Tathagata has told of all things that proceed from a cause. He has also unfolded how they cease to be. This doctrine the Great Samana has told.' It simply means that the Buddha not only showed how a being came into existence but also how existence could cease for ever. If there is craving, there must be a way to end craving.

While the verse was recited only half way, the truth flashed upon Upatissa (Sariputta) and he comprehended the Dhamma. It was like opening a door to a familiar room. He attained Srotappan stage of sainthood. Now, as promised, Upatissa informed Kolita (previous name of Moggallana) about his meeting Assaji. Then they both entered the Sangha. Sariputta never forgot his sense of gratitude towards his teacher, Assaji. It was only because of him that he was able to meet the Buddha and realized Deathlessness. He always paid respects to the direction in which his teacher was and always went to bed with head in that direction. Other bhikkhus misinterpreted it and informed the Buddha, 'Sir! Sariputta still worships the various directions. It seems he has not given up his old beliefs.' After hearing Sariputta, the Buddha said, 'Bhikkhus! Sariputta is not worshipping the various directions. He is only paying respects to his teacher who paved the way for him to meet the Buddha. It is right for him to pay homage to such a teacher.'

Verse 393: Na jaṭāhi na gottena na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo
Yamhi saccañ ca dhammo ca so suci so ca brāhmaṇo.

Verse 393: One becomes a Brahmana not by matted hair, nor by family, nor by birth. Pure is he, a Brahmana is he, in whom, are found both truth and righteousness.

Who is pure?
Story of Jatila

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, a brahmin ascetic by name Jatila thought, 'The Buddha calls his disciples Brahmana. I am well born on my mother's side. I am also well born from my father's side. I am born in the family of a brahmin. As I am a brahmin by birth, he should call me also a Brahmana.' Thinking so, the brahmin approached the Buddha and told him what he was thinking. The Buddha did not accept his point of view and said, **'O brahmin! I do not call one a Brahmana because he keeps matted hair or simply because of his birth. I call him a Brahmana only if he fully comprehends the Four Noble Truths.'**

'One does not become a Brahmana merely by birth', represents the Buddha's revolutionary philosophy which disturbed the brahmin dominated Indian Society. The brahmins of the day considered themselves as the chosen ones by birth. The Buddha gave a severe blow to the concept.

The Buddhist system of thought provides an ethical realism in which the nature of the traditional social structure could be critically examined. Prior to the Buddha, high spiritual pursuits were allowed only to the privileged groups. But the Buddha opened up the path of Enlightenment to all who had the potential to achieve spiritual liberation. Since this was a direct attack on the established system, many brahmins were provoked to enter into arguments with the Buddha as to who a real Brahmana was. This verse and similar other verses have arisen from such discussions.

Verse 394: Kiṃ te jaṭāhi dummedha kiṃ te ajina sāṭiyā
Abbhantaraṃ te gahaṇaṃ bāhiraṃ parimajjasi

Verse 394: O fool! What is the use of your matted hair? What is the use of your wearing a garment made of deer skin? Within, you are full of passions, outside you show clean emotions.

Be pure within
Story of a rogue brahmin

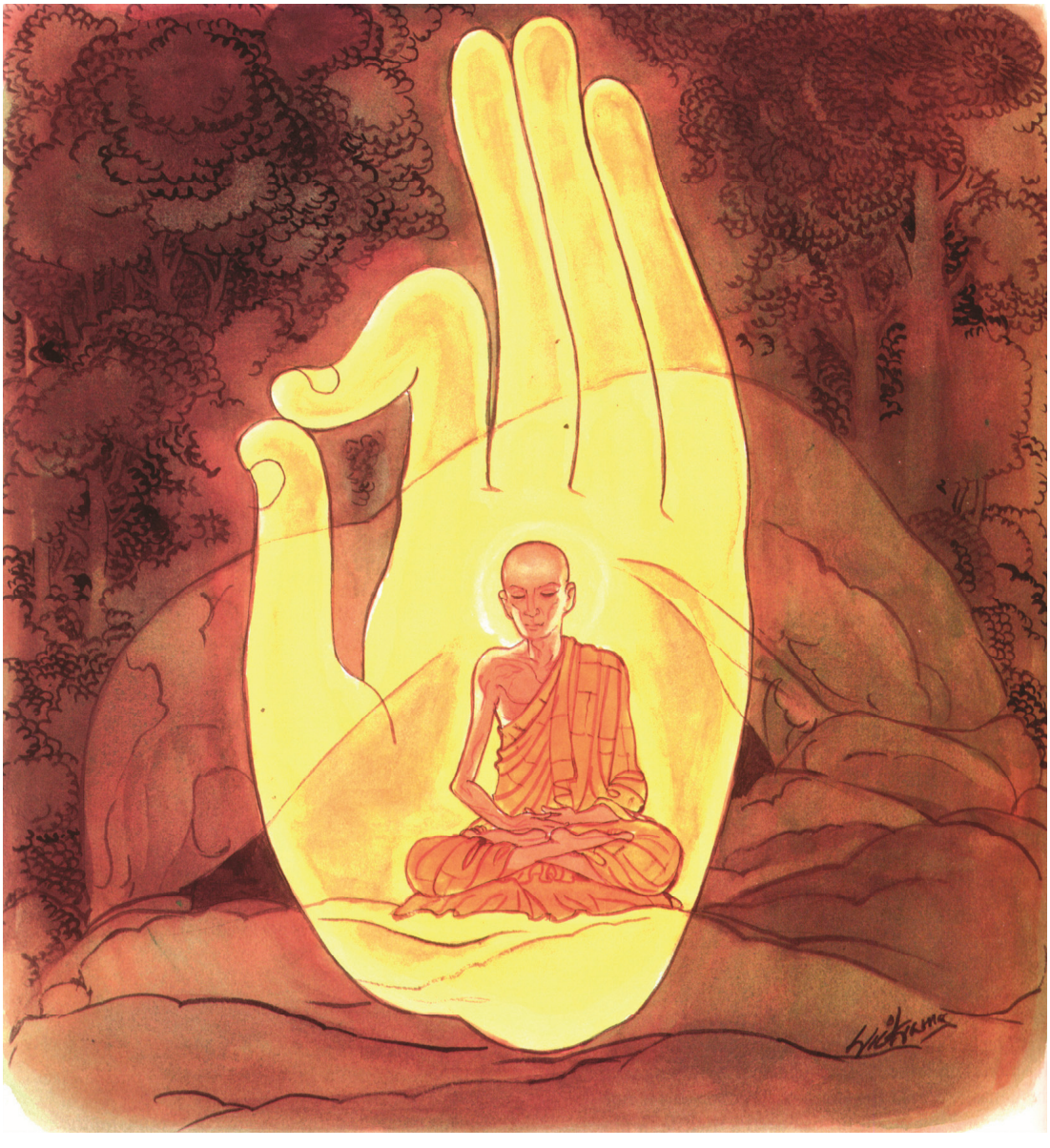
Place: Kutagarshala, Vaishali

Once, a rogue brahmin climbed up a tree near the city wall of Vaishali and kept on hanging himself upside down like a bat from one of the branches of the tree. From this awkward position, he kept on crying, 'O People! Give me a hundred head of cattle. Give me money. Give me a woman slave. If you don't give these to me and if I fall down and die, then your city is bound to go to the ruins.' The ignorant people of the town thought that they must comply with his demands. Otherwise, their city may be destroyed. Therefore, they supplied all the things he demanded and pleaded to come down.

The bhikkhus narrated the incidence to the Buddha who said, 'The dishonest deceiver could only cheat the ignorant people and not the wise ones.' The Buddha also added, 'This is not the first time that this brahmin has been a rogue.' Then the Buddha narrated the story of a false ascetic and the king of lizards.

The story went as follows:

Once, there lived a hypocrite ascetic near a village of farmers. There also lived a family in the village which looked after his needs sincerely. Not very far off from their house lived the king of lizards in an ant-hill. He used to pay regards to the rogue ascetic. But one day, the ascetic thought, 'I will kill that lizard and eat it.' He concealed a stick in his garment, lied down near the ant-hill and pretended to be asleep. When the lizard saw the ascetic, he thought, 'I do not like the way my teacher is behaving today.' Saying so, he turned back in the opposite direction. The ascetic threw the stick, but it missed him. The lizard went back to the ant-hill and addressed the ascetic, 'All this time I mistook you as an ascetic but today you have proved that you are not an ascetic. What is the use of matted locks to a man like you, who utterly lacks in wisdom? There is jungle within you. It is only the exterior that you are cleaning and polishing.'



Verse 395: Paṃsukūla dharaṃ jaṇtuṃ kisaṃ dhamani santhataṃ
Ekaṃ vanasmiṃ jhāyantaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 395: Him, I call a Brahmana, who wears soiled robes, who is lean and thin, whose veins stand out and who meditates alone in the forest.

Holy men meditate alone
Story of the Buddha praising Kisa Gotami

Place: Gridhkut Parbat, Rajagriha

On one occasion, Sakka, the king of the devas, came to pay homage to the Buddha along with his followers. At the same time, bhikkhuni Kisa Gotami came through the sky route to pay her regards to the Buddha. But when she saw Sakka and his followers standing there, she retreated back after paying homage to the Enlightened One. On seeing her, Sakka asked who she was.

The Tathagata replied, 'O Sakka! She is my daughter Kisa Gotami. She came to me when she had lost her son and was in great distress. I made her see the impermanent nature of all things. As a result of this, she could comprehend the Dhamma well, joined the Sangha and attained Arahanthood. She is one of my eminent female disciples.'

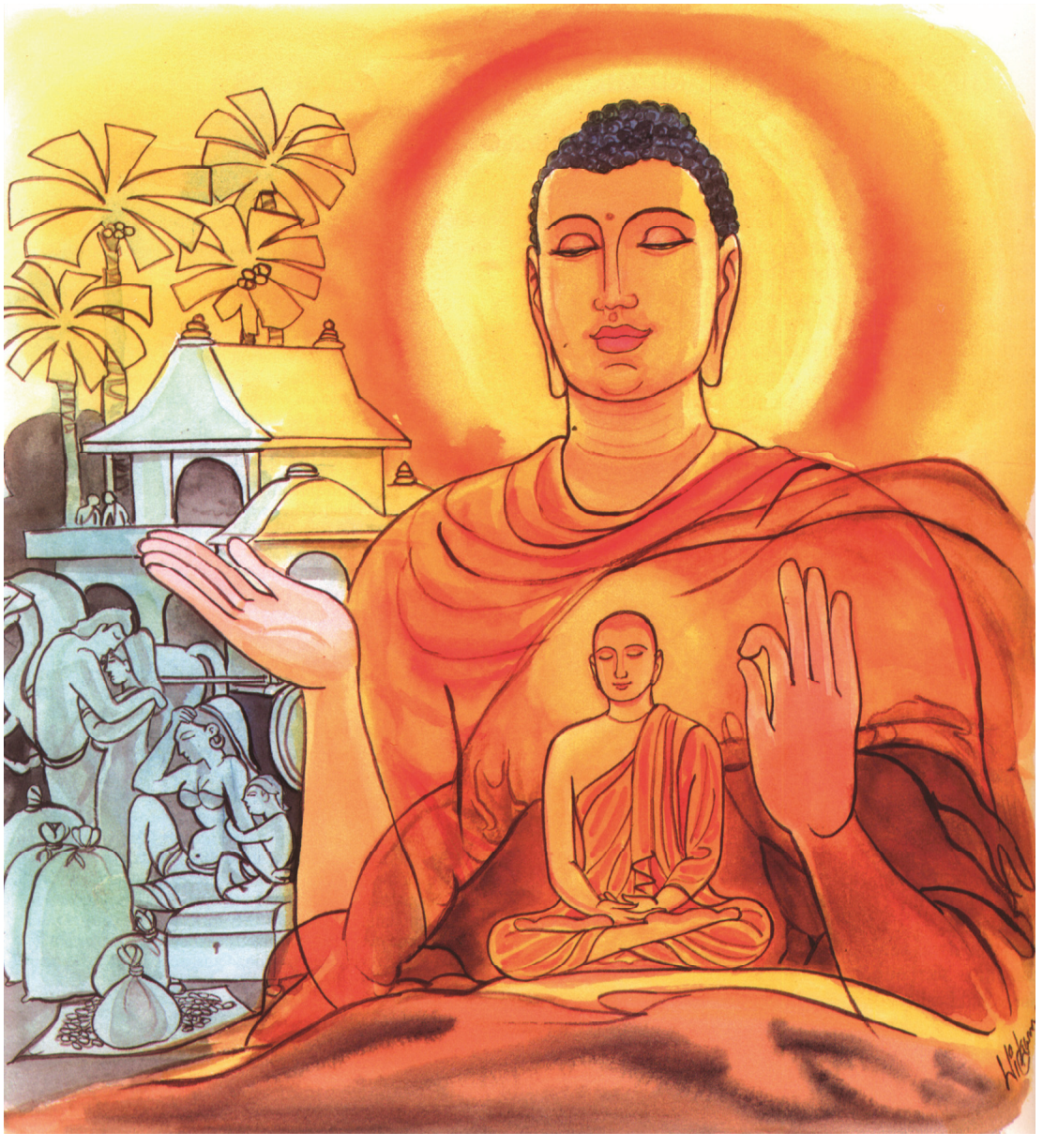
Verse 396: Na cāhaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ brūmi yonijaṃ mattisambhavaṃ
Bhovādi nāma so hoti sa ce hoti sakiñcano
Akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 396: I do not call him a Brahmana merely because of birth in the womb of a brahmin mother. One can become a man with a name preceded by 'Sir', if he happens to be a man of means. I call him a Brahmana who owns nothing, who receives nothing.

Holy men are non-attached
A Brahmana is not by birth

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, a brahmin said to himself, 'The monk Gotama calls his own disciples Brahmanas. I am born in the womb of a brahmin mother. Therefore, Gotama should address me also as a Brahmana.' So, the brahmin approached the Buddha for clarification. In answer to his query, the Buddha replied, **'O brahmin, I do not call one a Brahmana just because he is born of brahmin parents. I call him a Brahmana who is free from impurities and who has cut off clinging to existence.'**



Verse 397: Sabba saññojanaṃ chetvā yo ve na paritassati
Saṅgātigaṃ visamyūttaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 397: Him, I call a Brahmana, who has cut off all ties and is fearless, who is beyond attachment and is free from moral impurities.

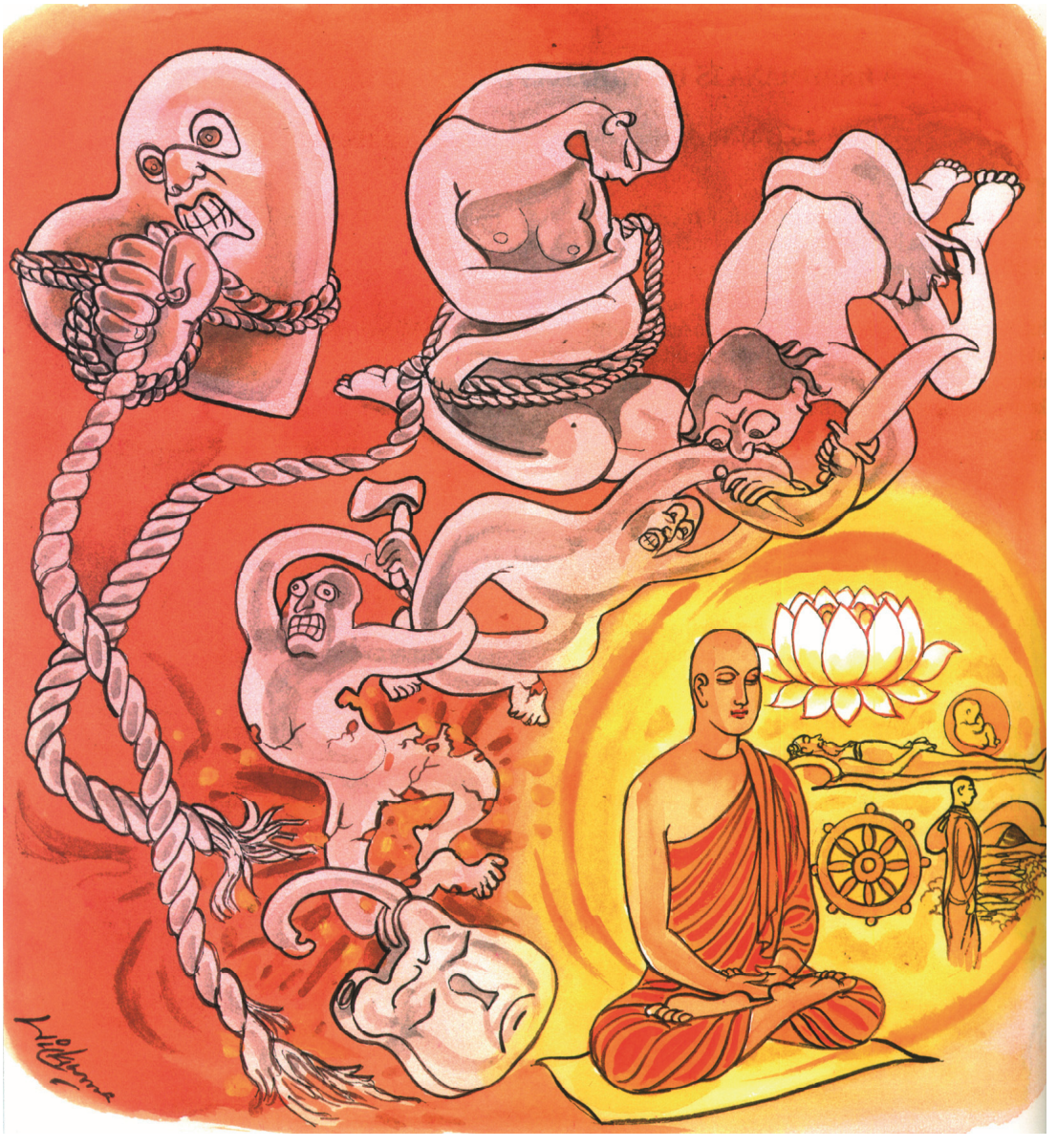
Destroy all fetters
Story of Ugrasena

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Story of Ugrasena also appears in verse 348 of Tanha Vagga.

Ugrasena was the son of a rich man from Rajagriha who gave his heart to a dancer from a theatrical company and married her. He learnt the tricks of acrobatics from his father-in-law and became very skilful in it. One day, he was demonstrating his skills before the public in Rajagriha, when the Buddha arrived there. After hearing the teachings of the Buddha, he attained Arahanthood then and there, while he was still on the top of the bamboo pole. When he got down from there, he paid homage to the Buddha and requested for admission in the Sangha. Accordingly, he was taken as a bhikkhu in the Sangha.

One day, the bhikkhus asked Ugrasena if he felt scared while he was on the top of the pole. To this, he replied in the negative. The bhikkhus did not believe him and asked the Buddha, 'Sir! Ugrasena claims to be an Arahant. Is he telling the truth?' The Enlightened One replied, 'Bhikkhus! One, who has cut off all bondages like Ugrasena has done, has no fears. He indeed is an Arahant.'



Verse 398: Chetvā naddhiṃ varattañ ca sandāmaṃ sahanukkamaṃ
Ukkhitta palighaṃ Buddhaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 398: Him I call a Brahmana who has cut off the strap of hatred, the ropes of cravings and wrong beliefs with the appendages of latent tendencies and attained the enlightenment by throwing away the cross bar of ignorance.

Holy men hate none
Story of tug of war

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, there lived in Sravasti two brahmins, each of whom had an ox. They were named Little Red, Chulla Rohita and Big Red or Maha Rohita. Each brahmin claimed that his ox was better and stronger.

One day, they fell in hot argument about the strength of their oxen, saying, 'My ox is stronger than yours! Your ox cannot stand before it.' When they were tired of arguing, they said, 'What is the use of our arguing about it? We can find it out by driving them.' So, they agreed to put their animals to test and went to the bank of the river Achiravati. There, they filled up the cart with sand and then yoked the cart one by one by their ox. One after the other, the oxen pulled the cart, but they pulled only in vain. The cart did not move at all and the ropes broke off. At that time, some bhikkhus came to the river to take bath. They saw that although the two brahmins whipped up their oxen, the cart did not move an inch. They also saw that the straps and the thongs broke down.

After seeing all this, the bhikkhus returned back to the monastery and told the Buddha about it. The Buddha said, **'Bhikkhus! It is easy to break off the straps which you can see with your own eyes. Anyone can break them or cut them. But my sons! A bhikkhu should cut the invisible straps of anger and craving which are within you and which bind you to this world.'**

Verse 399: Akkosaṃ vadha bandhañ ca aduṭṭho yo titikkhati
Khanti balaṃ balāṇikaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 399: Him I call a Brahmana, who endures abuse, beating and punishment, without ill-will and anger, whose strength of patience is like that of an army.

Holy men are patient
Story of the Buddha & four brothers

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

Once, there was a brahmin whose wife used to utter the sentence 'Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa' spontaneously whenever she sneezed or when someone or something touched her. She had attained the first stage of Sainthood. One day the brahmin invited some friends for a meal to his house. On that occasion, these words of veneration to the Buddha came out automatically from his wife's lips. On hearing these words of praise, the brahmin became furious. He immediately left for the monastery angrily to ask some challenging questions to the Buddha. He put the following two questions to him, 'What do we have to kill to live peacefully?' and 'What do we have to kill to live happily?' The Buddha replied, **'O brahmin! In order to live happily and peacefully, one has to kill anger. Killing one's anger has been praised by the Buddhas and Arahants.'** The brahmin was impressed and satisfied with the answer. He immediately became a bhikkhu and entered the Sangha.

The news that the eldest brother had entered the Sangha reached his younger brother. He was furious to hear it and went straight to the monastery to abuse the Buddha. But the Buddha asked him a counter question, 'Suppose you offer some food to the guests and they do not accept it. To whom that food will belong to?' 'The food would be mine.' 'In the same way, since I do not accept your abuse, it goes back to you.' The brahmin immediately developed great respect for the Buddha. He also entered the Sangha and became Arahant in due course of time. After this, the other two brothers also came to abuse the Buddha but they were also pacified and made to see the light by the Enlightened One. They also joined the Sangha as bhikkhus and became Arahants in due course of time.

One day, the bhikkhus remarked in the evening congregation, 'How wonderful and great are the qualities of our Teacher? These four brothers abused him but still through his wisdom, he made them realise the Truth and became their refuge.' The Buddha replied, **'My sons, because I am patient and tolerant, I do no wrong to those who do me wrong, that I have become a refuge to many.'**

Verse 400: Akkodhanaṃ vatavantaṃ silavantaṃ anussutaṃ
Dantaṃ antima sāriraṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 400: Him I call a Brahmana, who is above anger but is dutiful and virtuous, free from lust, self-controlled and now in his final birth.

Holy men have no anger
Story of Sariputta & his mother

Place: Venuvana, Jetavana

This is the story of the time when the Buddha was staying in Veluvana monastery. One day, bhikkhu Sariputta, accompanied by some bhikkhus entered his old village, Nalaka for almsfood. Rahula also accompanied him.

There they happened to stand before the house of the mother of Sariputta. His mother invited them for food inside the house. But she was full of anger towards Sariputta as he had abandoned all the wealth and fortunes of the family and had become a bhikkhu. So, while she offered food to her son, she also commented sarcastically, 'O you consumer of the left overs! You have abandoned all wealth and become a bhikkhu. You have ruined us all.' And to the bhikkhus, while serving the food, she said rudely, 'You all have used my son as your attendant. Now eat your food.'

Sariputta did not react at all to what his mother said to him and to the other bhikkhus. He maintained his noble composure and silence. Back at the monastery, Rahula and other bhikkhus told the Buddha, 'Venerable Sariputta has patiently heard the scolding and abuses of his mother. He did not show any sign of annoyance or irritation and remained calm and quiet even in great provocation.' The Buddha commented, **'Arahants never get angry. They also never lose their temper.'**

Verse 401: Vāri pokkharapatt eva āragger iva sāsapo
Yo na limpati kāmesu tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 401: Him, I call a Brahmana who clings not to sensual pleasures like water on a lotus leaf or a mustard seed on the point of a needle.

Holy men cling not to pleasures
Story of Uppala Varnna

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

In chapter V, Verse 69, we have read about the story of bhikkhuni Uppala Varnna who stayed alone in Andhavana. Her cousin, Nanda who was fascinated by her even before she became a bhikkhuni came to the forest knowing that she was all alone and raped her. As a result of this grave sin, Nanda was swallowed away by the earth. After this incidence, the Buddha decided that henceforth the bhikkhunis shall not stay in the forest. Their resting places were made near the cities. Later on, Uppala Varnna attained Arahanthood.

One day, the bhikkhus were discussing whether the Arahants enjoy sensual pleasures or not. One group of the bhikkhus opined, 'The bhikkhus are also like any other human beings. They are not like the dead branches of trees. Therefore, they also enjoy sensual pleasures.' The other group argued, 'Though the Arahants have the same physical make-up like other people, they do not enjoy sensual pleasures as they have risen above the senses.' As there was divergence of opinion, they approached the Buddha for clarification.

The Buddha explained, **'Bhikkhus! Arahants do not enjoy sensual pleasures. They do not indulge in it, for they do not cling to the objects of sensual desires, just as water does not cling to the lotus leaf.'**

Verse 402: Yo dukkhassa pajānāti idh eva khayam attanō
Pannabhāraṃ visaṁyuttaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 402: Him, I call a Brahmana who has realised well the nature of sufferings and its ending, has laid aside the burden and is enlightened.

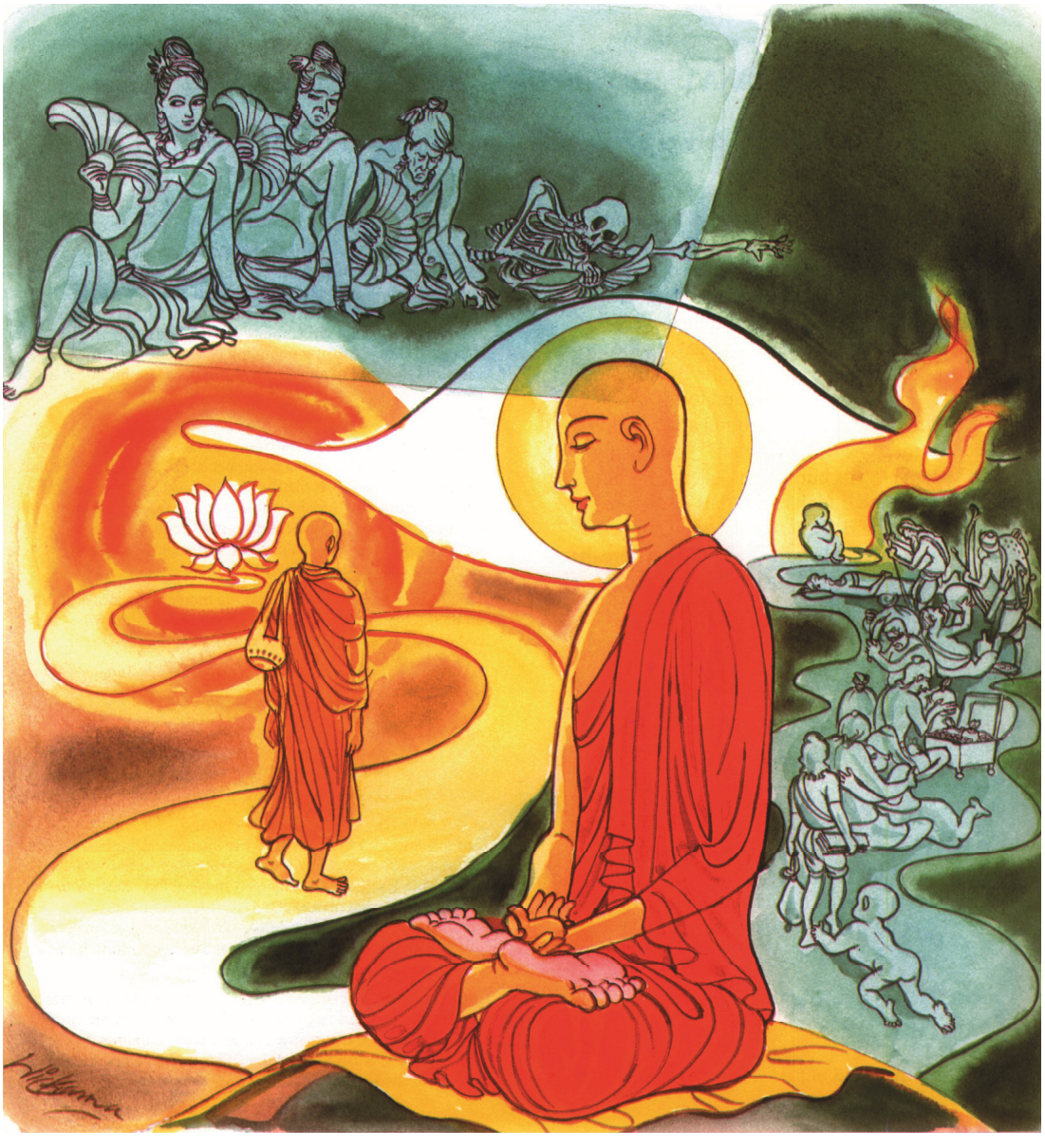
Holy men lay the burden aside
Story of a bonded servant

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, a brahmin had a bonded servant who lived with him and did his jobs. The servant was not happy and satisfied with the worldly life. So, one day, he fled away from the house of his master, became a bhikkhu and joined the Sangha of the Buddha. In due course, he attained Arahanthood.

One day, he went out on almsround with the Buddha. His former master saw him. He grabbed him firmly by the robe from his back. When the brahmin was asked why he was doing so, he explained that at one time the bhikkhu had been his bonded servant. The Buddha replied, 'The bhikkhu has already laid down all the bonds and the burden of life. He is no longer attached to the world.' From this the brahmin concluded that his former slave had become an Arahant.

But to be sure, he asked the Buddha, 'Sir! Is it true that the young bhikkhu has become an Arahant?' The Buddha confirmed, 'Yes, He has really attained Arahantship.'



Verse 403: Gambhira paññaṃ medhāviṃ maggāmaggassa kovidaṃ
Uttamatthaṃ anuppattaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 403: Him, I call a Brahmana, who is wise and endowed with deep knowledge, well acquainted with the ways right and wrong and has reached the supreme goal.

Holy men reach the goal
Story of the Buddha praising Khema

Place: Gridhakoot hill, Rajagriha

On one occasion, Sakka, the king of devas, came to pay homage to the Buddha along with his followers. At the same time, bhikkhuni Khema, by her supernatural power, came through the sky route to pay her regards to the Buddha. We have already read the story of Khema in chapter XXIV, Verse 347.

Khema had been the chief queen of King Bimbisara. She was very proud of her beauty but understanding the decaying nature of the body; she became a bhikkhuni and joined the Sangha of the Buddha. She worked diligently and attained Arahanthood.

When she saw Sakka and his followers standing there, she retreated back after paying homage to the Enlightened One. On seeing her, Sakka asked the Buddha who she was. The Tathagata replied, 'O Sakka! She is my daughter Khema. She is one of my most eminent female disciples. She is matchless amongst the bhikkhunis in wisdom.'

Verse 404: Asaṃsaṭṭhaṃ gahaṭṭhehi anāgārehi c ūbhayaṃ
Anokasāriṃ appicchaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 404: Him, I call a Brahmana, who has no intimacy with both house-holders (laymen) and homeless ones (monks), has no desires and wanders without home.

Holy men have no intimacy
Story of bhikkhu Tissa

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Bhikkhu Tissa spent three months of the rainy season in a cave on a mountain. He went to the village everyday in the morning for almsfood. An elderly woman offered him almsfood regularly. In the cave there also lived a guardian spirit. Since Tissa was a bhikkhu of morality and was a pure person, the guardian spirit found it difficult to stay in that cave. Also, she did not have the courage to ask him to leave it. So, she thought of a plan to find fault with him and force him to leave the cave. The spirit took possession of the son of the elderly lady to whose house Tissa usually went for almsfood. She made the boy behave in a peculiar way. When the elderly woman saw what had happened and screamed, the evil spirit in the form of the boy said, 'I have taken over your son. Let the monk wash his feet with water and sprinkle that water on the head of your son. Only then will I release your son, otherwise not.'

The next day, when the bhikkhu came, the lady did as she was told, she sprinkled washed water on her son and the boy became alright. The evil spirit went back to the cave and waited at its entrance. When Tissa came to the cave, she revealed herself and said, 'I am the spirit guarding the cave. You, who are practising witchcraft, do not enter the cave.' The bhikkhu knew that he had lived a virtuous life ever since he became a monk. So, he answered that he had not broken any precept. Then the evil spirit replied that he had practised witchcraft by treating the boy possessed by the evil spirit at the house of the elderly lady. He reflected that he had not practised any witchcraft and that the evil spirit could find no fault in him. That gave him delightful satisfaction and happiness and he attained Arahanthood while standing at the entrance of the cave.

Since Tissa had now become an Arahant, he told the spirit, 'You have wrongly accused a monk who is pure and virtuous. You should not cause any further disturbance.' Tissa continued to stay in the cave till the end of the vassa and then returned to the Jetavana monastery. When he narrated the entire story to the other bhikkhus, his encounter with the spirit, they asked him, 'Did you get angry with the spirit when you were forbidden to enter the cave?' 'No', he replied. They did not believe him and told the Buddha, 'Sir! Bhikkhu Tissa says that he does not get angry any longer. Is it true?' The Buddha replied, 'Bhikkhu Tissa is speaking the truth. He has indeed become an Arahant. He is no longer attached to anyone or anything. He has no reason to get angry with anyone.'

Verse 405: Nidhāya daṇḍaṃ bhūtesu tasesu thāvaresu ca
Yo na hanti na ghāteti tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 405: Him, I call a Brahmana, who has given up using force against all beings, weak or strong, and neither harms, nor kills.

Holy men are harmless
Story of a monk being beaten

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, a bhikkhu took a subject of meditation from the Buddha and went to the forest to practise it. After he attained Arahanthood, he started back for the Jetavana monastery to pay respects to the Buddha and to express deep sense of gratitude to him.

On the way, he passed through a village. Just as he was passing through the village, a woman ran out of her house after quarrelling with her husband. As she went along the road, she saw the bhikkhu moving on the road and closely followed him.

The husband coming after her saw the lady walking behind the monk. He wrongly thought that the bhikkhu was taking his wife away. So, he shouted at the bhikkhu and threatened to beat him. His wife requested him earnestly not to do so. But this made him more furious and he beat the monk. After beating the monk, he took his wife back. The monk went his way.

On arrival at the Jetavana monastery, the other bhikkhus saw the bruises all over his body and attended to him. They also asked him, 'Were you angry with the man while he was beating you so severely?' 'No', was his reply. The bhikkhus reported this matter to the Buddha, 'Bhante, This bhikkhu claims that he suffers no more from anger. Is it true?' The Buddha replied, **'Bhikkhus! Arahants lay aside the stick and the sword. They don't get angry even if they are beaten.'** Thus the Buddha confirmed that the bhikkhu had indeed become an Arahant.

Verse 406: Aviruddhaṃ viruddhesu attadaṇḍesu nibbutaṃ
Sādānesu anādānaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 406: Him, I call a Brahmana, who remains friendly amongst the hostile, peaceful amongst the violent and unattached amongst the attached.

Holy men are friendly to all
Story of a lady & four novices

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once, the wife of a brahmin sent her husband to the Jetavana monastery to invite four bhikkhus for almsfood at their house. She asked him specifically, 'Invite four senior bhikkhus who are true Brahmanas.' But four Arahant samaneras were sent along with him. When she saw the young samaneras, she was very much disappointed and blamed her husband for bringing the young bhikkhus and not the senior ones. She sent him back to the monastery to get back senior bhikkhus. In the meantime, she refused to give the samaneras higher seats and also refused to serve them food.

When the brahmin arrived at the monastery, he met bhikkhu Sariputta and invited him to his house. When Sariputta arrived there, he saw the four samaneras sitting there and also that food had been prepared for only four persons and that they had not been served the food as yet. On learning that the samaneras had not been provided the food as yet, bhikkhu Sariputta left for the monastery. The brahmin again went to the monastery and this time he came back with Venerable Moggallana. When he saw the true situation, he also went back without sitting or eating there.

By this time, the samaneras were feeling hungry. Sakka, the king of the devas, seeing the state of things, took the form of an old brahmin and came to the house. The brahmin and his wife paid respects to the old brahmin (Sakka) and offered him a seat of honour. But Sakka sat on the ground and paid respects to the four samaneras. Then he disclosed that he was Sakka. Seeing that the Sakka was showing respect to the samaneras, the brahmin and his wife offered almsfood to the samaneras and Sakka. After the food, the samaneras and Sakka showed their supernormal power to the brahmin and his wife. Sakka went back to his celestial abode and the samaneras to the monastery.

When this incidence was reported to the Buddha, he commented, 'Bhikkhus! **Arahants bear no ill-will towards those who are hostile to them.**'

Verse 407: Yassa rāgo ca doso ca māno makkho ca pātito
Sāsapor' iva āraggā tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 407: Him I call a Brahmana, from whom, lust, hatred, pride and sins have fallen off like a mustard seed from the point of a needle.

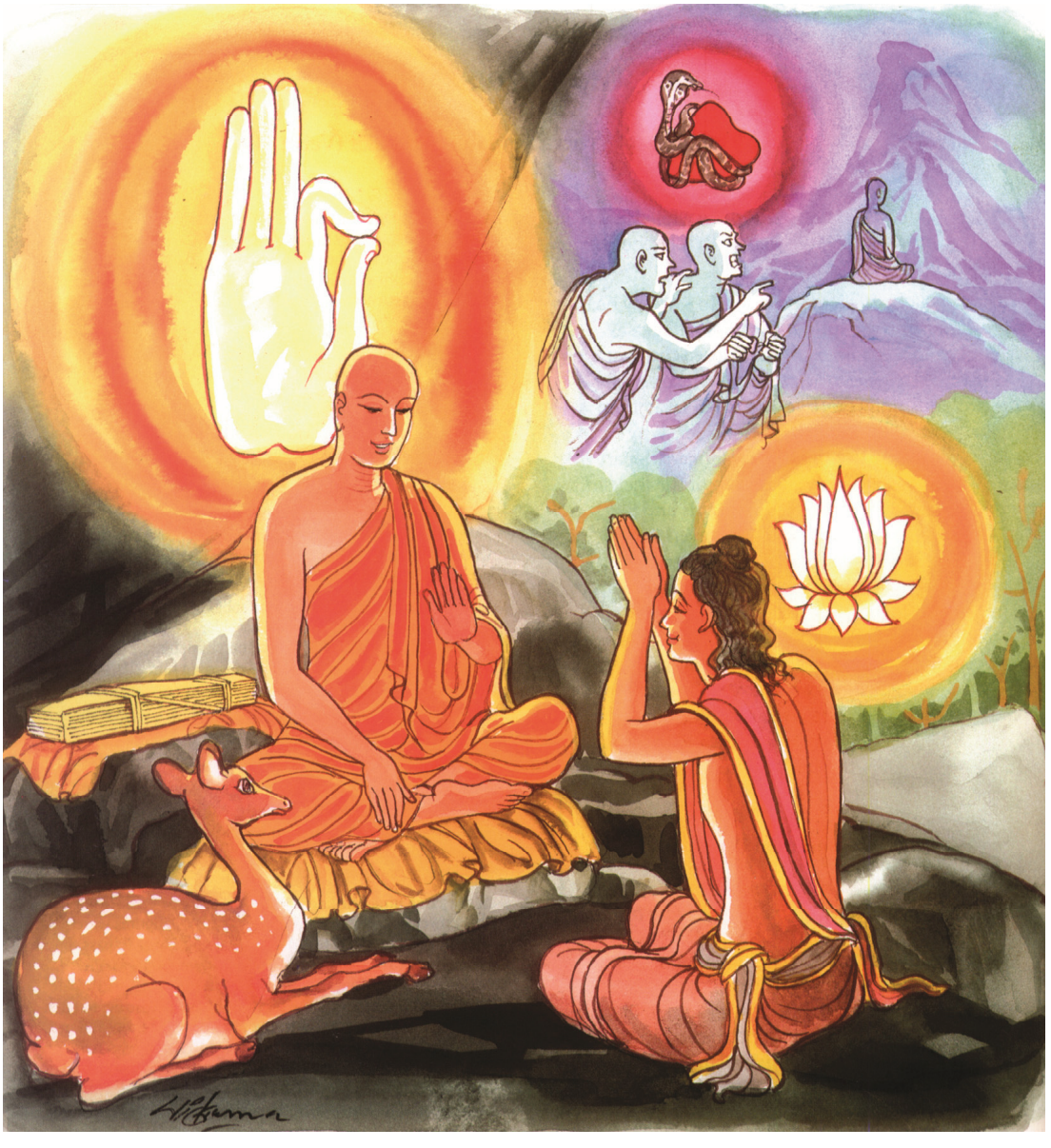
Holy men discard all passions
Story of Maha Panthaka

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

Bhante Maha Panthaka was already an Arahant when his younger brother Chula Panthaka joined the Sangha. As they were both born on the road, they were known as Panthaka. Maha Panthaka meant Big Road and Chula Panthaka meant Small Road. Chula Panthaka was born as a dullard because he had made fun of a dull bhikkhu in one of his past births. Chula Panthaka could not memorise even one verse in four months. Maha Panthaka then suggested that it would be better for his younger brother to leave the monastery. He ousted him from the monastery and closing the door, told him, 'You lack the capacity to receive religious instructions. You have also fallen away from the enjoyment of the life of a householder. Why should you continue to live here any longer? Depart henceforth.'

The bhikkhus began to discuss about this incidence, saying, 'Bhikkhu Maha Panthaka did this and that. Doubtlessly, anger springs up sometimes even within those who have rid themselves of the impurities.' Since they could not arrive at any conclusion, the bhikkhus sought clarification from the Buddha regarding this, 'Do the Arahants lose their temper? Do they still have mental impurities like ill-will in them?' The Buddha explained, 'Bhikkhus! **Arahants have no mental impurities like passion and ill-will in them.** My son Maha Panthaka acted with a view to help his brother and not out of any ill-will towards him.'

Note: A coach shows his anger and criticises a player. But why does he do it? He does it only with the purpose to help that sportsperson to improve his or her performance. The coach does not do so out of anger, ill will or his ego. He does so only to help the player. Similar is the case of an Arahant. The seeming anger was only for the purpose of improving the younger brother.



Verse 408: Akakkasaṃ viññāpaniṃ giraṃ saccaṃ udiraye
Yāya n ābhisaje kiñci tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 408: Him, I call a Brahmana, who speaks gentle, instructive and true words and does not offend anyone by speech.

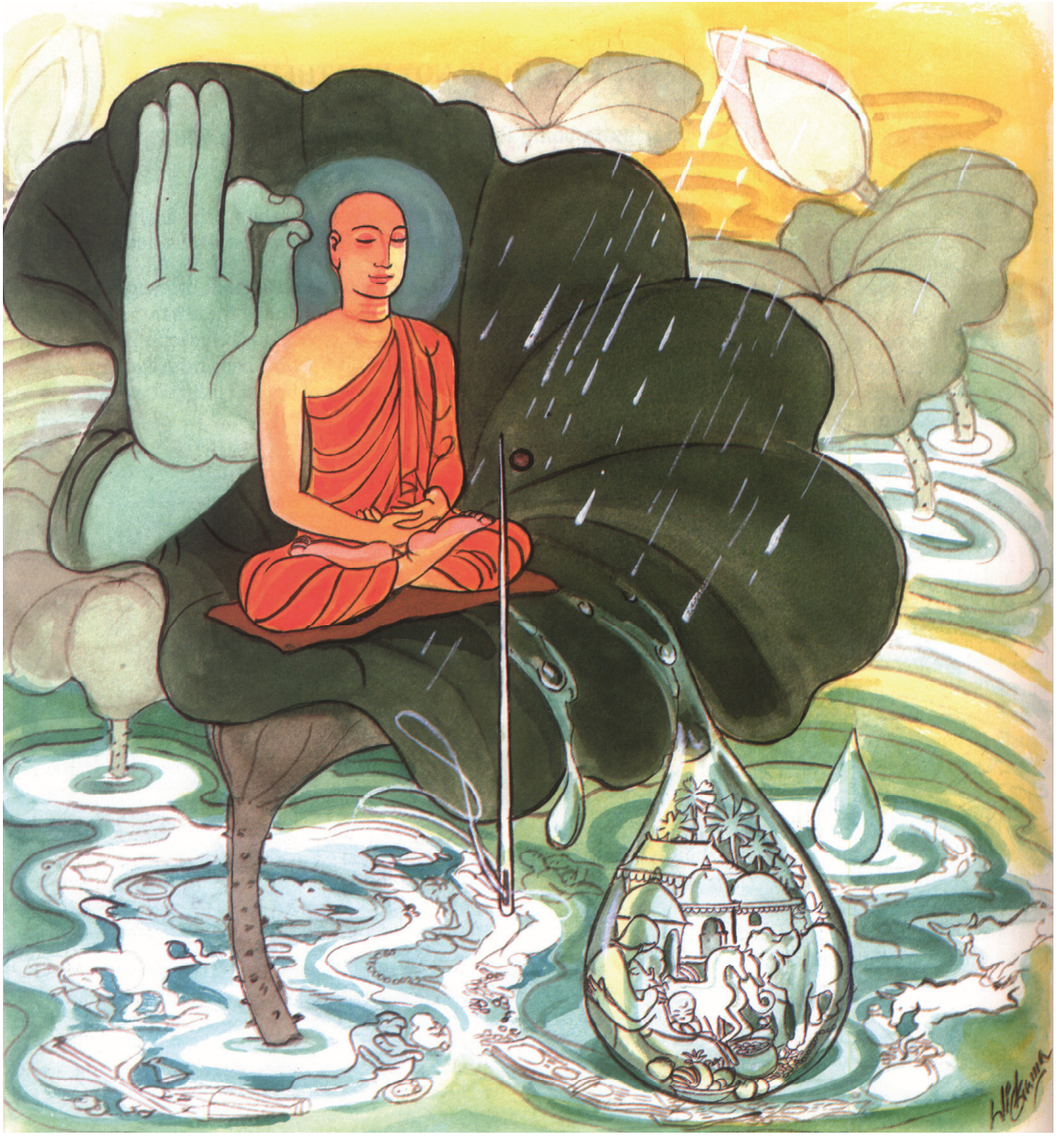
Holy men are not offensive
Story of Bhikkhu Pilinda Vachcha

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

Pilinda Vachcha was born in a brahmin family at Sravasti. After listening to a discourse of the Buddha he was converted instantaneously. He became a bhikkhu.

He had the habit of addressing all, both in the Sangha and outside it, by saying, 'Come here wretched,' or 'Go there, O wretched,' and such other language. He had acquired this habit during five hundred previous lives when he was born as a brahmin, because the brahmins normally consider others as below them. **Habit is said to be the second nature. In a person, even when he gets rid of all his impurities, the habits acquired during the previous births still continue. The Buddha has been the only exception.** Pilinda Vachcha could not get rid of this weakness of his habit. So, when it went beyond the tolerance limit of the bhikkhus, they came to the Buddha and complained to him.

The Buddha explained to the bhikkhus, 'Bhikkhu Pilinda Vachcha has no trace of ill-will when he addresses others as a wretch. It is only his past habit. He has no venom or malice. Don't feel offended with Vachcha. He has no intention of hurting others for an Arahant does not harm others.'



Verse 409: Yo' dha dighaṃ vā rassaṃ vā aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubhaṃ
Loke adinnaṃ nādiyati tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 409: Him, I call a Brahmana, who in this world takes nothing that is not given, great or small, long or short, fair or foul.

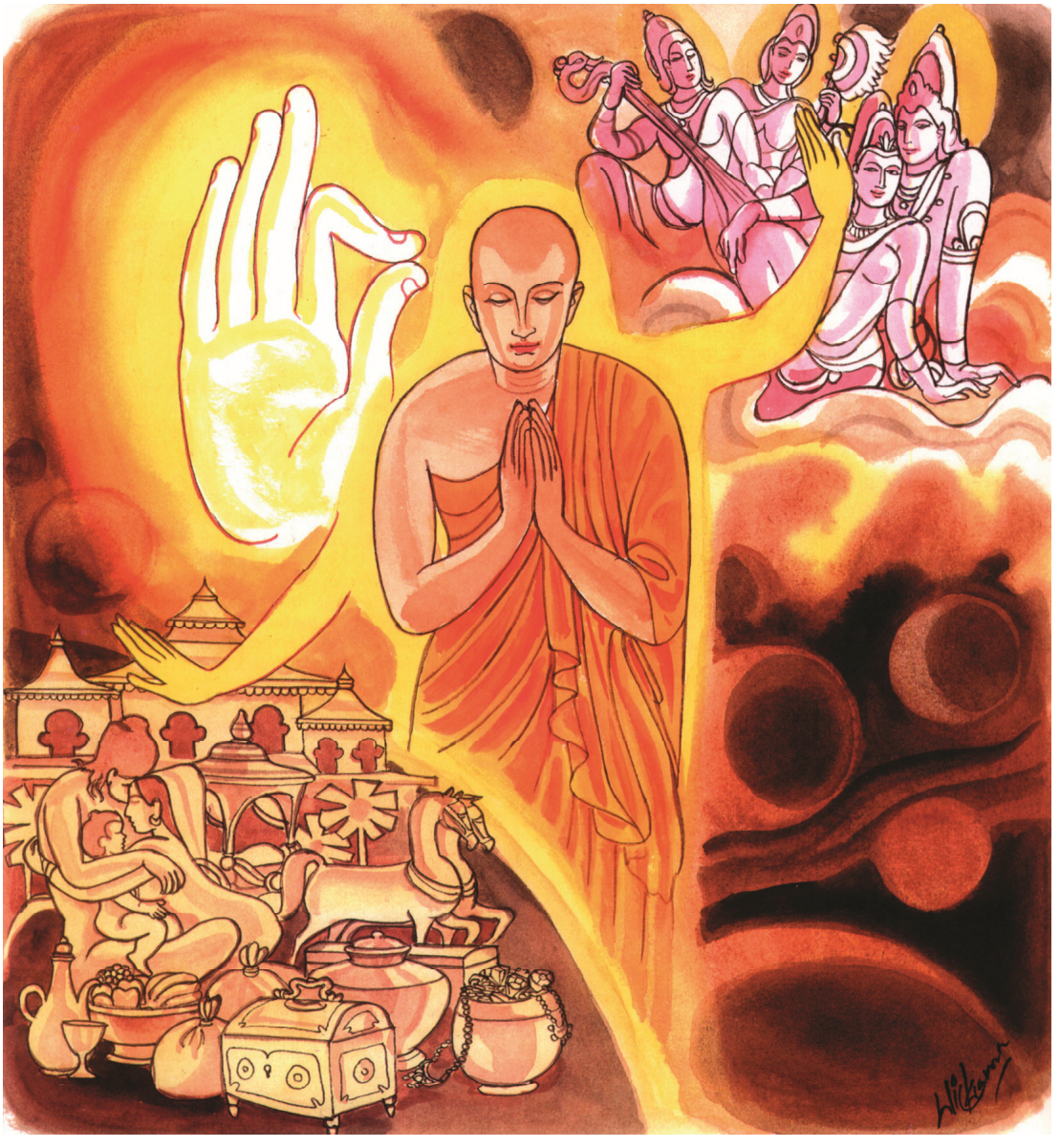
Holy men do not steal
Story of a monk accused of theft

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, a brahmin from Sravasti put his upper garment on the ground outside his house to dry it. A monk saw the garment as he was going back to the Jetavana monastery. After seeing it, he felt that it was a piece of cloth which had been thrown away by someone as waste material. So, he picked it up. The brahmin saw this and coming near him abused him and said, 'You shaven head! Why are you stealing away my cloth?' 'Is this your cloth, brahmin?' 'Yes bhikkhu.' 'I saw no one about, and thinking that it was a waste–cloth, I took it with me. Take it back please.' So saying, the monk immediately returned the piece of cloth to the brahmin.

Back in the monastery, the bhikkhu related the above incidence to other bhikkhus. The bhikkhus teased him and asked him whether the cloth was long, short, coarse or fine. The bhikkhu replied, 'Whether the cloth is long or short, coarse or fine does not matter to me. I am not attached to it.' The bhikkhus approached the Buddha and said, 'Sir! The monk says that he has no more attachments. Is he speaking truthfully?'

The Buddha replied, 'Bhikkhus! The bhikkhu speaks the truth. **An Arahant does not take anything that is not given to him. He is also not attached to material things.'**



Verse 410: Āsā yassa na vijjanti asmiṃ loke paramhi ca
Nirāsayaṃ visaṁyuttaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

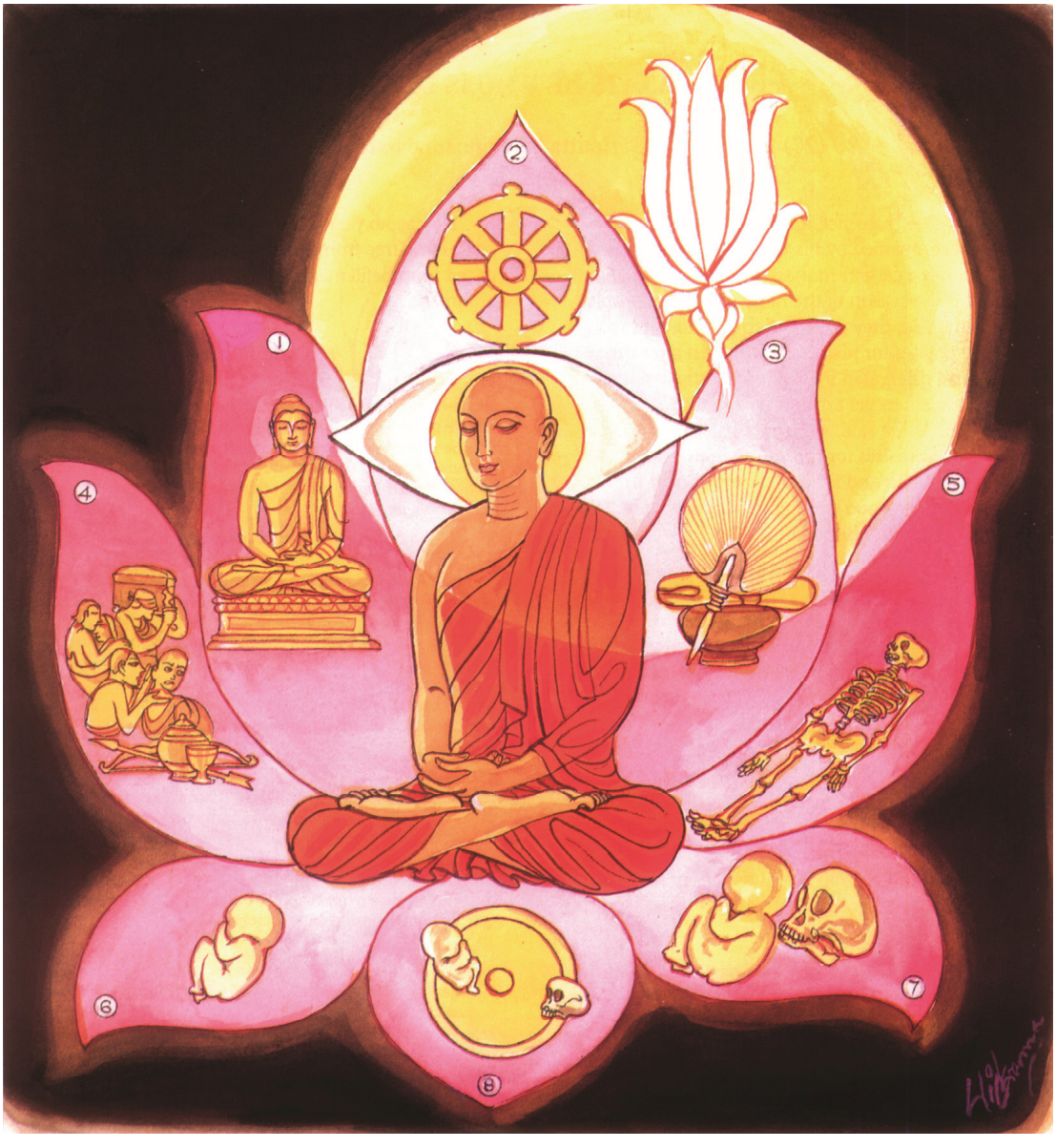
Verse 410: Him, I call a Brahmana, who has no desires for this world or for the next and is free from cravings and moral impurities.

Holy men are desireless
Story of Bhikkhus & Sariputta

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

One day, bhikkhu Sariputta along with other bhikkhus went to a monastery in a village to spend the vassa there. On seeing Sariputta, the villagers promised to provide all the requisites for the bhikkhus. However, all the requisites could not be received till the end of vassa.

So, Sariputta told the bhikkhus, 'If people come to offer robes, send them to me. If they do not, please inform me that also.' Then Sariputta left the monastery for Jetavana to pay regards to the Buddha. When the bhikkhus heard the instructions of Sariputta, they misunderstood him. They thought that Sariputta was still attached to material things like robes and other requisites of the bhikkhu. They went to the Buddha and reported the matter to him, 'Sir! Bhante Sariputta is still attached to the worldly things required by the bhikkhus.' The Buddha clarified to them, 'Bhikkhus! Sariputta has no more craving left in him. He only wants that there should be no loss of merit either for the laymen or for the bhikkhus. His intention in asking you to bring the robes is that there is no loss of merit to the householders. This would also lead to the holy gain for the bhikkhus and samaneras. Thus, when he made that statement, he had the well being of both the laymen and the bhikkhus in mind. He is above all cravings.'



Verse 411: Yassālayā na vijjanti aññāya akathaṃkathi
Amatogadhaṃ anuppattaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 411: Him, I call a Brahmana, who has no cravings and who through the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths is free from doubts, and has realised Nibbana, the Deathless.

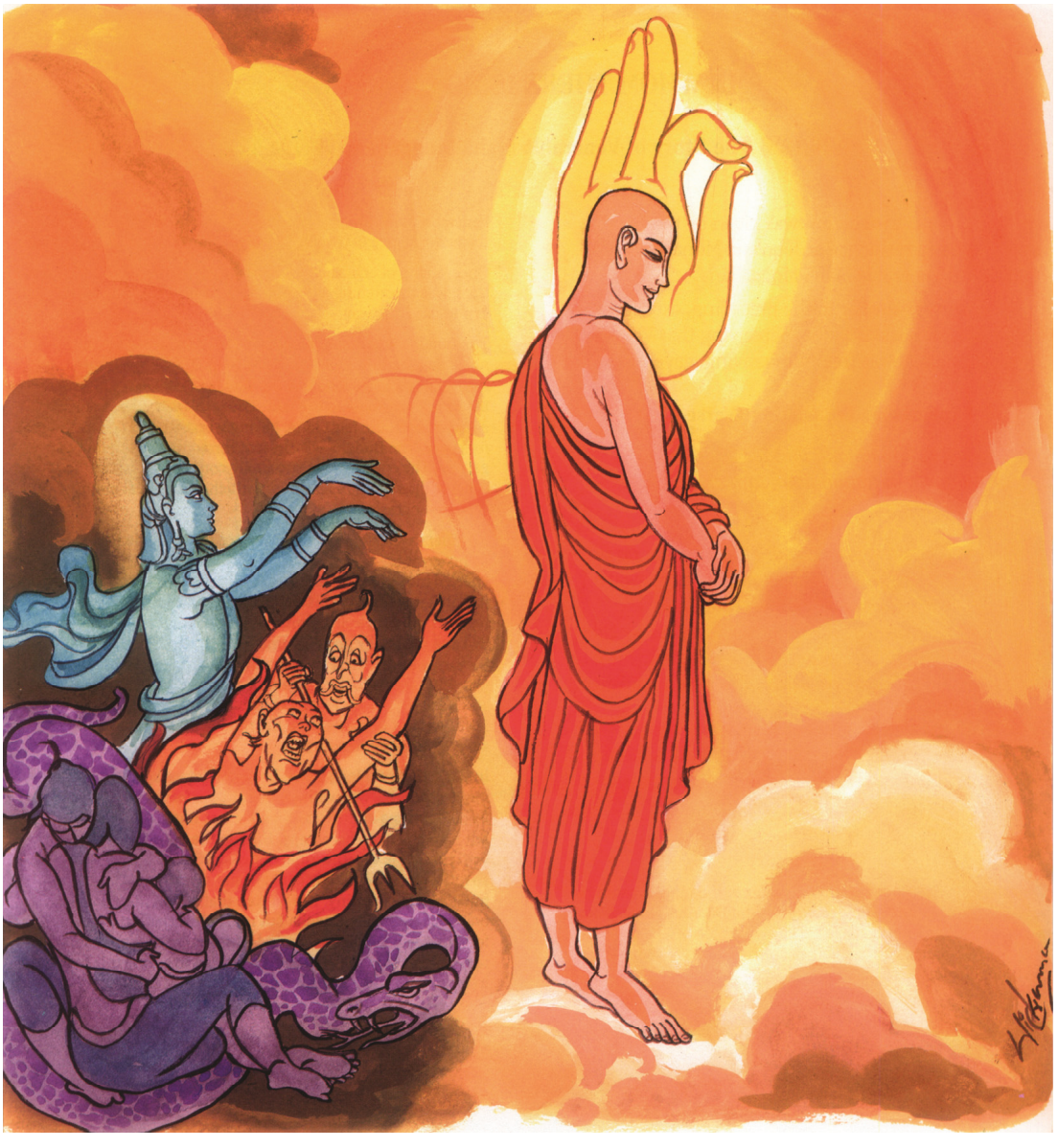
Holy men have no longings
Story of Bhikkhus & Moggallana

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

This story is similar to the story of verse no 410. In this case, Maha Moggallana gave some instructions and the bhikkhus came to the conclusion that this senior bhikkhu had still attachment left in him for the worldly things.

They went to the Buddha and told him similar things about bhikkhu Maha Moggallana that Moggallana had still attachment left in him for worldly things as they had told about Sariputta.

To this, the Buddha replied, 'Bhikkhu Moggallana has discarded all cravings. He is above all worldly things. He is an Arahant.'



Verse 412: Yodha puññañ ca pāpañ ca ubho saṅgaṃ upaccagā
Asokaṃ virajaṃ suddhaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 412: Him, I call a Brahmana, who has gone beyond both good and bad and the ties (Lust, hatred, delusion, pride and false views) as well and is sorrowless, unsoiled and pure.

Go beyond opposites
Story of Bhikkhu Revata

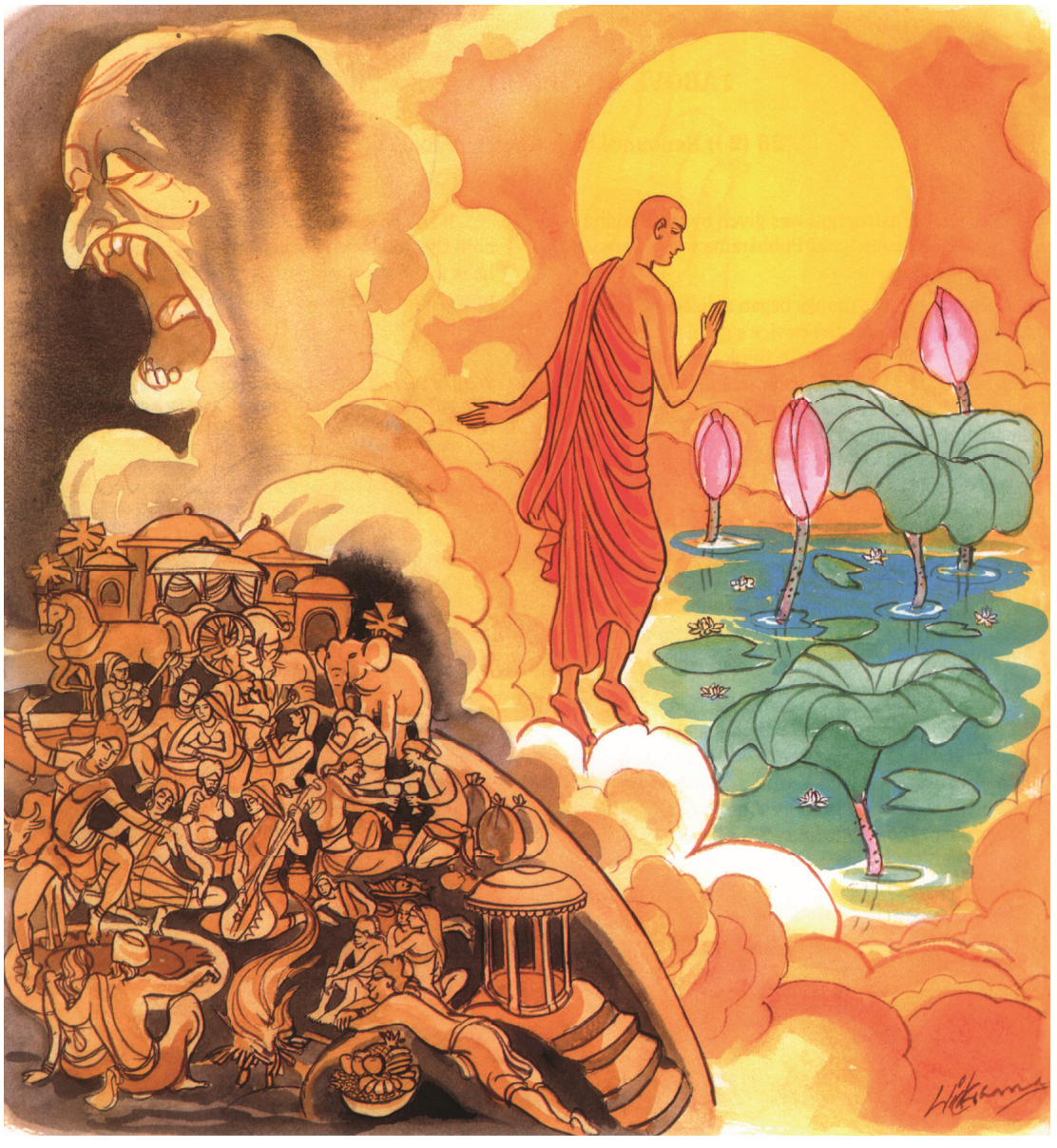
Place: Pubbarama

The Buddha gave this sermon while camping at Pubbarama monastery with reference to Arahant Revata.

Revata was called by this name because he did not take anything for granted. He always put scanner to everything and questioned before he came to any conclusion. He looked at everything with a question of doubt. He was in the habit of going into trance (jhana) and enjoyed the bliss of freedom (nirodha sampatti) again and again. He had the gift of going beyond the mundane world for seven days at a stretch; possessed by some Arahants. He is ranked amongst the most eminent disciples of the Buddha.

One day, a group of bhikkhus came to the Buddha and told him, 'Samanera Revata is getting a lot of offerings from the people. He is gaining name and fame as well as fortune. Even though he lives alone in the forest, through his supernatural power, he has now built many monasteries for a few hundred bhikkhus.' The Buddha clarified them, 'Bhikkhus, my son Revata is the foremost for his quick transition to trance (jhana) in the noble Sangha. He has given up all cravings. He has attained Arahanthood.'

To him are the why and wherefore,
His food. Subjects all to question.
He seeks solitude before
Seeking the bliss by meditation.



Verse 413: Candaṃ va vimalaṃ suddhaṃ vippasannam anāvilaṃ
Nandi bhava parikkhiṇaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 413: Him I call a Brahmana, who is like the clear moon, who has put an end to craving for becoming and who is pure, serene and undisturbed.

Holy men are pure
Story of Bhikkhu Chandabha

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

In a previous birth, bhikkhu Chandabha had made offerings of sandalwood to a stupa where the relics of Kassapa Buddha were enshrined. As a result, he was born in a brahmin family in Sravasti with the gift of circle of light radiating from his navel. As it resembled the moon, he was named Chandabha. Some brahmins took advantage of this natural gift. They took him to the city to exhibit his light and only those who paid money were allowed to touch him. On one occasion they came to a place near the Jetavana monastery. To the devotees going to the Jetavana monastery, they said, 'What is the use of your going to the Buddha and listening to his Dhamma? There is none who is as powerful as Chandabha. One, who touches him, becomes rich. Why don't you come and try?' The devotees of the Buddha replied, 'Only our teacher is powerful. He is unrivalled and matchless.'

Then the brahmins took Chandabha to the Jetavana monastery to compete with the Buddha. But when he was in the presence of the Buddha, the ring of light went off by itself. When he was taken out of the sight of the Buddha, the ring of light reappeared again automatically. It again disappeared when he went before the Buddha. Chandabha thought, 'Without doubt, the Buddha knows the skill, by which he can make this light disappear.' So, he urged the Buddha to teach him the skill. However, the Buddha asked him to enter the Sangha of the bhikkhus first and then he would teach him the skill. Chandabha then told his brahmin friends to wait till he entered the Holy Order and learnt the skill.

As a monk, he was instructed to contemplate on the body, i.e. to concentrate on its repulsiveness and the impurity of thirty-two constituents. Within a few days, Chandabha attained Arahanthood. When those brahmins came and enquired whether he had acquired the skill, he replied, 'You people may better go back now. As for me, I am not interested to go away from this place now.' When other bhikkhus reported what Chandabha had replied, the Buddha said, 'Chandabha speaks the truth. He has eradicated his all mental impurities.'

Note: The Buddha does not advocate showing miracles. On one occasion he observed that those who perform miracles to attract followers are like traders who engage dancing girls to sell their goods.

Verse 414: Yo imaṃ palipathaṃ duggaṃ saṃsāraṃ moham accagā
Tiṇṇo pāragato jhāyi anejo akathaṃkathi
Anupādāya nibbuto tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 414: Him I call a Brahmana, who, having crossed this dangerous swamp (of passions), this difficult road (of moral defilements), the ocean of worldly life (samsara), the darkness of ignorance (moha), and having crossed these fourfold floods has reached the other shore (Nibbana), who practices tranquility and insight meditation, who is free from cravings and doubts, who clings to nothing and remains in perfect peace.

Holy men cling to nothing
Story of pregnancy of Sivali

Place: Kundakoliya

Princess Suppavasa was in pregnancy for an unduly long period. When she was in labour pain for several days, she kept on contemplating on the unique qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Finally, she sent her husband to the Buddha to pay regards to him on her behalf. When informed of the condition of the princess, the Buddha said, 'May Suppavasa be free from danger and fear! May she safely give birth to a healthy noble son! ' As the verse was being recited, Suppavasa gave birth to a healthy son. On that very day, the Buddha and some other bhikkhus were invited to her house for almsfood to celebrate the arrival of the child.

When the child grew up, he became a bhikkhu and was known as Sivali. He attained Arahanthood as soon as his head was shaved. Later, he became famous as the bhikkhu who received abundant offerings. As a recipient of the offerings, he was unsurpassed.

On one occasion, bhikkhus asked the Buddha why Sivali was confined to his mother's womb for an unduly long period. He replied, 'Bhikkhus! In a previous birth Sivali was a prince who lost his kingdom to another king. In trying to regain his kingdom, he had besieged the city for an unduly long period, on the advice of his mother. As a result, the people of the city were without food or water for several days. It was due to this evil deed that Sivali and his mother had to suffer during the pregnancy and the delivery.'

Verse 415: Yo dha kāme pahatvāna anāgāro paribbaje
Kāma bhava parikkiṇaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 415: Him I call a Brahmana, who has given up pleasures and sense desires, renounced worldly life and wanders as a homeless one and come to the end of existences.

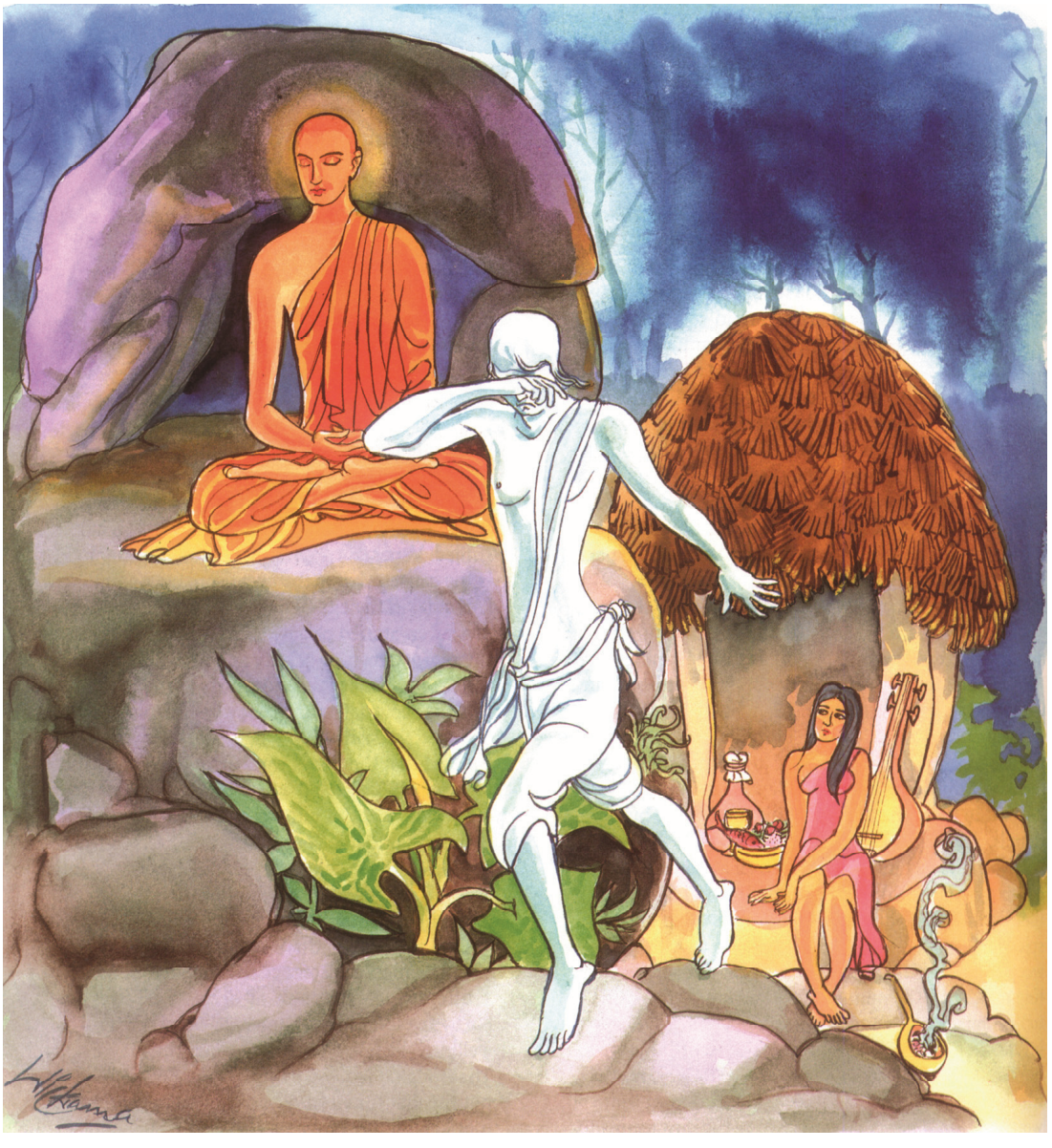
Holy men give up sense desires
Story of courtesan & Sundara Samudda

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Sundara Samudda was the son of a wealthy man in Sravasti. After he entered the Order, he left for Rajagriha, a place at considerable distance from Sravasti, to practise meditation. One day, while some festival was going on in Sravasti, his parents missed him very much. They felt very sorry for their son and started weeping. At that time, a courtesan saw them and asked what the matter was. On hearing about their son, she said, 'If I make your son leave the Order and return to the life of a householder; how much will you reward me?' The parents answered that they would make her rich. The lady then asked for a large sum of money and left for Rajagriha.

At Rajagriha, she rented a house on the way where Sundara Samudda came for his almsround. She prepared good food and waited for him. For the first few days, she offered the food to the bhikkhu on the ground floor, at her door. Later, she invited him to come inside. Meanwhile, she paid some money to the children to come and play just outside the house about the same time the bhikkhu usually came for the almsround. This gave her the excuse that it was very noisy and dusty on the ground floor. With this excuse, she invited him to the top floor of the house to have his meal there. He consented and went up. As soon as he entered the room, the courtesan closed the door. Then she started seducing him. She said, 'Venerable Sir! Please become my beloved husband and I will be your devoted wife. After our long and happy wedded life, we shall both enter the Order and make our best effort to attain Nirvana.' When the bhikkhu heard these words, he suddenly realised his mistake and got alarmed. Then he thought, 'I indeed, by being negligent and unmindful, have made grave mistake.'

At that moment, the Buddha realised what was happening to Sundara. He called Venerable Ananda and told him, 'Ananda! On the upper storey of a big building in Rajagriha, there goes on struggle between Sundara and a courtesan; but in the end the monk will be the winner.' Using his supernatural power, the Buddha sent his radiance and exhorted him, 'My son! Get rid of the craving for wealth and sensual pleasures and free yourself from lust!' Reflecting mindfully on the advice given, Sundara subsequently attained Arahanthood.



Verse 416: Yo dha taṇhaṃ pahatvāna anāgāro paribbaje
Taṇhā bhava parikkhiṇam tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 416: Him I call a Brahmana, who has given up cravings and desires for worldly life, has become homeless, and having destroyed cravings has thus come to an end of existences.

Holy men give up craving
Story of Bhikkhu Jatila

Soon after the passing away of previous Buddha (Kassapa), an Arahant bhikkhu went round for donations for building stupa where the relics of Kassapa Buddha were to be enshrined. He came to the house of a goldsmith. At that time, the goldsmith was having heated exchange of words with his wife. Seeing the monk, the goldsmith shouted, 'You may throw away the relics and go away.' Hearing this, his wife told him, 'If you are angry with me, you should abuse me only. You can even beat me if you like, but why do you have to abuse the Buddha or his monk? You have indeed done a great wrong!' Hearing her remarks, the goldsmith realised the enormity of the wrong he had done. Seeking to correct the wrong, he made three flowers of gold, put them in three gold pots and offered them to the stupa of Kassapa Buddha. In his subsequent birth (during the period of the Buddha), he was conceived in the womb of a rich man's daughter who had an illicit love affair. When the child was born, she put him in a pot and floated him down the stream. A young woman who was bathing in the river saw the baby, adopted him and named him Jatila. Later, on the advice of a monk, she sent the boy to Taxila for studies. While at Taxila, the monk arranged for his stay at the house of a merchant, who was his disciple. In due course, Jatila married the daughter of the merchant. Soon after the marriage a large mound of gold was found in the backyard of the house which was newly built for the couple. Three sons were born out of this marriage. After that, Jatila joined the Buddha's Order and attained Sainthood.

One day, the Buddha and the bhikkhus along with Jatila went on almsround and came to the house of the sons of Jatila. The sons offered almsfood to the Buddha and the bhikkhus for fifteen days. Sometime afterwards the bhikkhus asked Jatila if he was still attached to his mound of gold and the sons. He answered that he had no more attachment with them. The bhikkhus then reported to the Buddha what Jatila had said. The Buddha replied, 'Bhikkhus! Jatila has got rid of craving and pride. He has attained Arahanthood.'

Story of Jotika: Jotika was a famous rich man of Rajagriha. He had a beautiful stately mansion which had seven gates that were protected by some spirits. On one occasion, King Bimbisara visited his palace with Prince Ajatasatru. When Ajatasatru saw the palace, he took a vow that when he will become the king, he will grab this palace from Jotika. When Ajatasatru became the king, one day, he went to Jotika's palace to capture it. But the spirits were protecting it. So, he could not penetrate inside and had to retreat. When he reached the Veluvana monastery, he found Jotika listening to the discourse of the Buddha at his feet. Ajatasatru told Jotika, 'You made your guards fight me. And here you are pretending to be listening to a discourse!' Jotika understood that the king had gone to take over his palace but had to retreat back.

In his past birth Jotika had made a solemn wish that nobody could take away any property from him, against his wishes. His wish had been fulfilled. So, he told the king, 'O King! My property cannot be taken away against my wish by anyone.' Saying so, he stretched out his ten fingers. The king could not take out a single ring with all his efforts. Later, Jotika kept his fingers on a piece of cloth and all the rings fell down. He presented them to the king. Subsequently, Jotika joined the Sangha and became an Arahant.

Verse 417: Hitvā mānusakaṃ yogaṃ dibbaṃ yogaṃ upaccagā
Sabba yoga visaṃyuttaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 417: Him, I call a Brahmana, who, laying aside human ties and going beyond the celestial ones is completely freed from all ties.

Holy men discard all bonds
Story of Nata Puttaka

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

Once, a dancer named Nata Puttaka had the chance to listen to the discourse given by the Buddha. After hearing the discourse, he entered the Sangha and attained Arahanthood.

One day, when Nata Puttaka and some other bhikkhus were going through the town for almsround along with the Buddha, they came across a dancer who was performing in the street. Seeing the young man dancing, the bhikkhus asked Nata Puttaka, 'Do you still like dancing?' The bhikkhu replied, 'No! I do not.' The bhikkhus reported the matter to the Buddha, 'Venerable! Nata Puttaka has told us that he does not like dancing any more. Is it correct?' Thereupon the Buddha said, 'Bhikkhus! He is telling truth. He has gone beyond all forms of attachment. He has become an Arahant.'

Verse 418: Hitvā ratiñ ca aratiñ ca sitibhūtaṃ nirūpadhim
Sabba lokābhibhuṃ viraṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 418: Him I call a Brahmana, who has given up likes (for sensual pleasures) and dislikes (for leading a holy life), is cool by nature, free of impurities, who is strenuous and has conquered the world of birth and death.

Holy men give up likes and dislikes
Story of a dancer monk

Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

The Buddha gave this religious discourse while staying at the Veluvana monastery in respect to a bhikkhu who was earlier a dancer. The story in this verse is similar to the one in the previous verse 417. But in this case, in reply to the query made by the bhikkhus, the Buddha said, 'Bhikkhus! Nata Puttaka has given up taking delight in all things.'

According to the Buddha, a Brahmana is one who has given up lust. He has also given up strong unwillingness for the practice of meditation. This way he is both lustful and lustless. He has achieved total tranquility. He is devoid of the blemishes that soil the hand. He has conquered the whole world and is full of effort. The dancer in the stories of verses 417 and 418 achieved the highest fruits of spiritual pursuit, through unfailing, sustained effort.

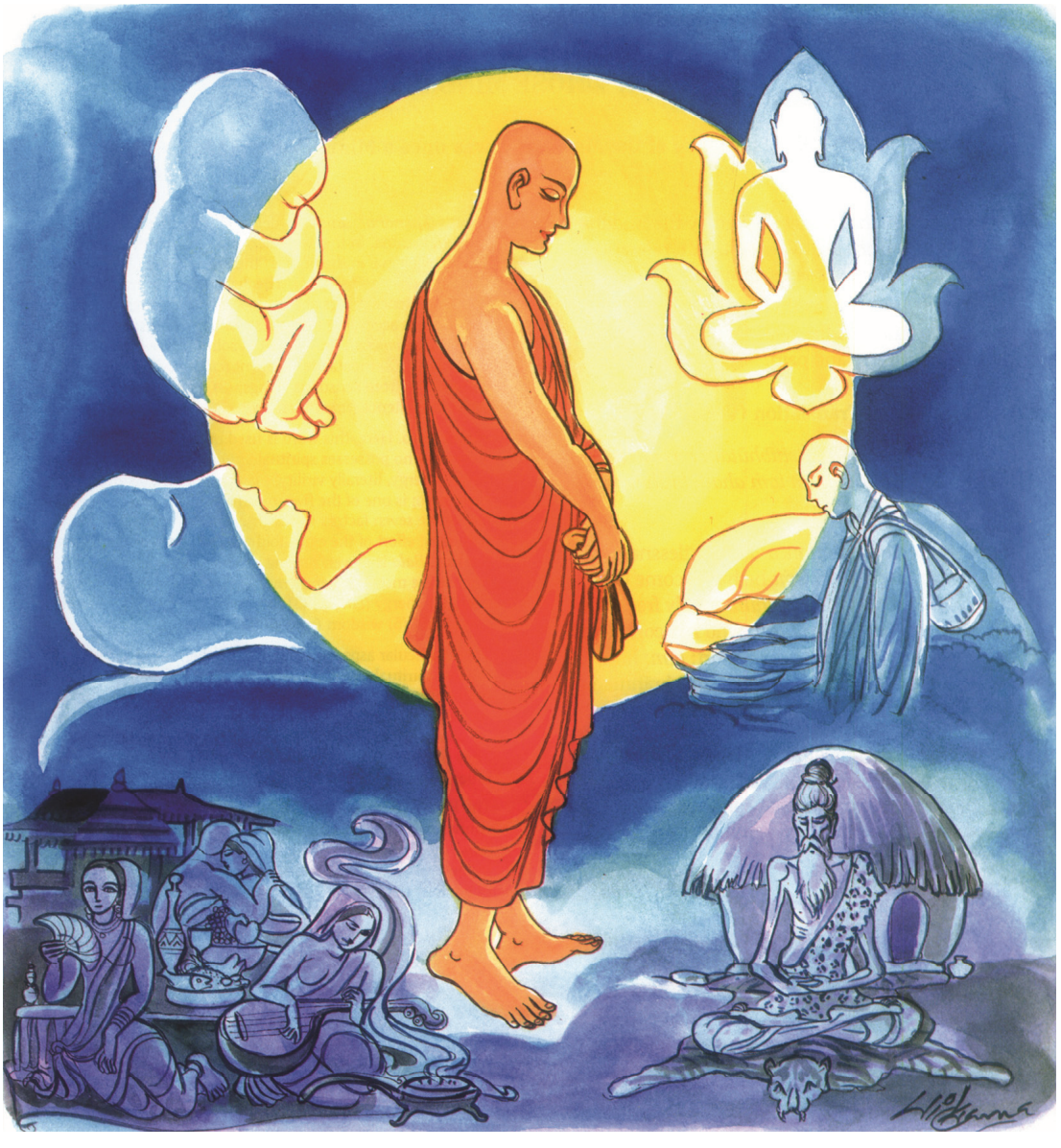
What are the types of efforts? They are of four types:

The effort to avoid: Perceiving a form, a sound, an odour, a taste, a bodily or mental impression, the monk neither adheres to the whole, nor to its parts. He strives to ward off, such as greed and sorrow, through which evil and unwholesome things might arise, if he remained unguarded. He watches over his senses, restrains his senses. This is called the effort to avoid.

The effort to overcome: The bhikkhu does not retain any thought of sensual lust or any other evil, unwholesome stages that may have arisen. He abandons them, dispels them, destroys them and causes them to disappear. This is called the effort to overcome.

The effort to develop: The monk develops the factors that lead to enlightenment, like solitude, detachment, extinction etc. It ends in deliverance, namely mindfulness, investigation of the Dhamma, concentration effort, joy, repose and equanimity. This is called the effort to develop.

The effort to maintain: The monk keeps firmly in the mind a favourable object of concentration, such as the mental image of a skeleton, a corpse infested by worms, a corpse blue-black in colour, a corpse swollen up, a rotten corpse, a corpse with innumerable holes.



Verse 419: Cutiṃ yo vedi sattānaṃ upapattiñ ca sabbaso
Asattaṃ sugataṃ Buddhaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 419: Him I call a Brahmana, who in every way knows the death and rebirth of beings, who is non-attached, who has reached the Nirvana well by practice and is awakened.

Holy men are not attached
Story of bhikkhu Vangisa

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

Once upon a time, there lived in Rajagriha a brahmin by the name Vangisa who by simply tapping the skull of a dead person could tell where this person was born—whether in the deva loka, hell or amongst the human beings. The brahmins took advantage of this super natural gift. They took him to different places where people in large number assembled. People paid him handsomely when they came to know where their dead relatives were reborn.

On one occasion, Vangisa and his group came to a place near the Jetavana monastery. The brahmins invited the devotees going to the Jetavana monastery to come to see Vangisa and said, 'What is the use of your going to the Buddha and listening to his Dhamma? There is none who is as powerful as Vangisa. He can tell you where your relatives are reborn. Why don't you come and try?' But the people replied to them, 'What does Vangisa know? Only our teacher knows and is powerful. He is unrivalled and matchless. He only is the Enlightened One.' As a result there was heated argument between the people and the brahmins. Finally one person said, 'Come now, let us go and find out who of the two persons knows more—Vangisa or the Buddha.' So the brahmins took Vangisa to the Jetavana monastery to compete with the Buddha.

Verse 420: Yassa gatiṃ na jānanti devā gandhabba mānusā
Khiṇāsavaṃ arahantaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 420: Him I call a Brahmana, whose destiny know, neither the devas, nor the gandharvas (demi gods), nor men, who is sinless and has removed all passions.

A Brahmana is an Arahant
Story of bhikkhu Vangisa

The Buddha, knowing their intention, asked a disciple to bring five skulls of people who were born in hell, animal world, deva world, human form and as an Arahant. All these five skulls were placed before Vangisa and he was asked to identify them. He identified all the four skulls correctly but he had no answer with regard to the skull of an Arahant. Then the Buddha said, 'Vangisa, don't you know? You do not know where the owner of that skull is but I know.' Then Vangisa requested the Buddha, 'Please teach me the skill by which I will be able to tell where that particular person is reborn.' However, the Buddha asked him, 'Enter the Sangha of the bhikkhus first and then I shall teach you the skill.'

So, Vangisa told his brahmin friends, 'Please wait till I enter the Holy Order and learn the skill.' As a monk, he was instructed to contemplate on the body, i.e. to concentrate on its repulsiveness and on impurity of the thirty-two parts of the body. He diligently practised meditation as instructed and within a short time attained Arahanthood.

When those brahmins came and enquired whether he had acquired the skill, he replied, 'You people may better go back. As for me, I am not interested now to go away from this place. There is no need for me to learn the skill any more. I am not coming with you.' When other bhikkhus reported what Vangisa had replied, the Buddha said, 'Vangisa speaks the truth. He really knows the death and rebirth of beings. He is an Arahant.'

Verse 421: Yassa pure ca pacchā ca majjhe ca natthi kiñcanaṃ
Akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 421: Him I call a Brahmana, who has no clinging to the past, present or future, being free from moral impurities and who owns nothing, who receives nothing.

Holy men yearn for nothing
Story of Dhammadinna

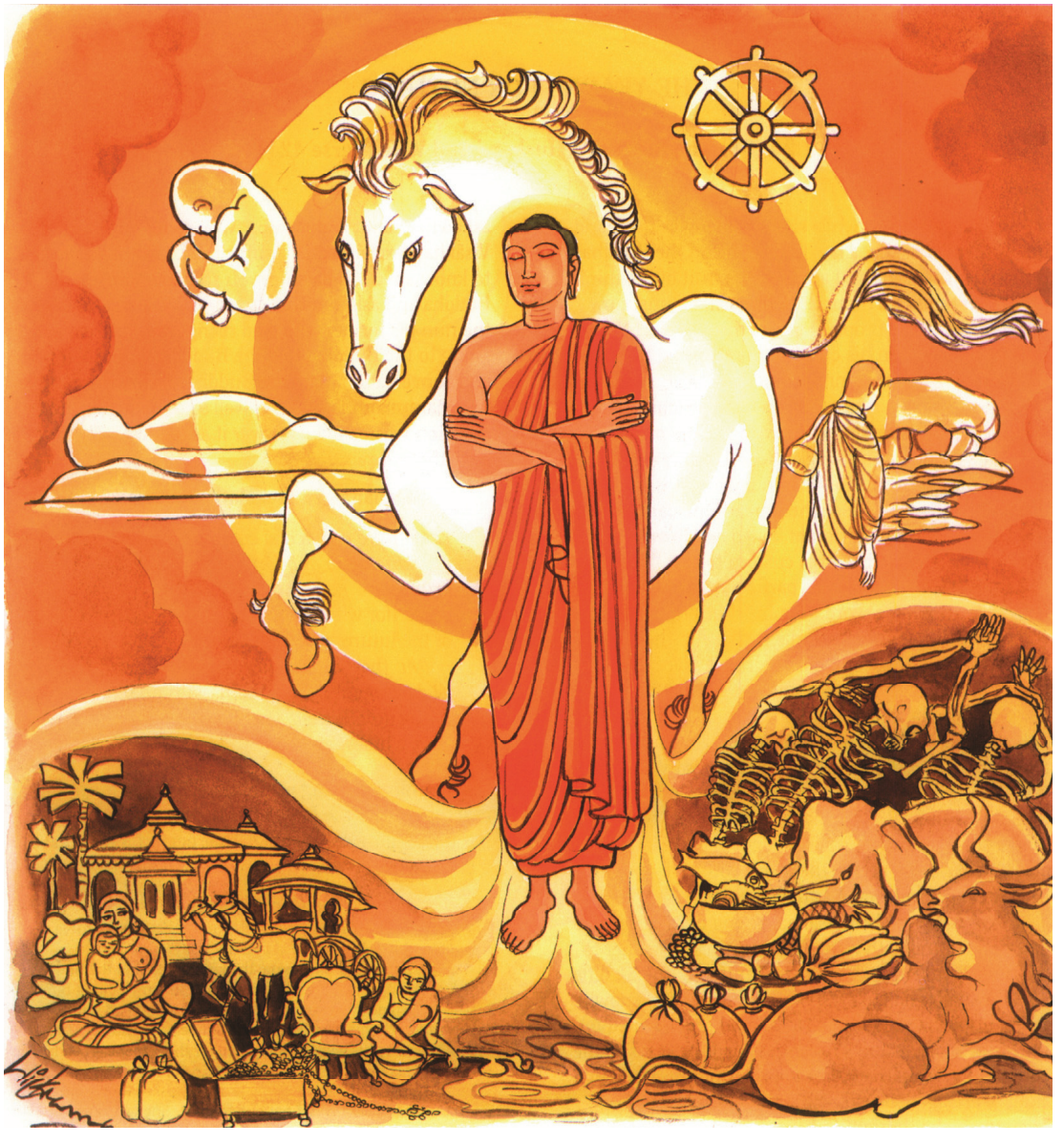
Place: Venuvana, Rajagriha

There lived a lay disciple of the Buddha in Rajagriha by the name Visakha. Once, he heard the discourse of the Buddha and attained the third stage of Sainthood. After this he proposed to his wife, 'You are the owner of all my property from today. Please accept it. I am not going to take interest from now onwards in worldly affairs.'

His wife named Dhammadinna replied to him, 'I am not going to eat your left overs. I am not going to accept your wealth and properties. Instead, permit me to join the Sangha of the bhikkhunis.' After becoming a bhikkhuni, she left Rajagriha and practised meditation sincerely and diligently. Very soon, she attained Arahanthood.

After sometime, she happened to come to Rajagriha. Her husband, on coming to know that she had come to Rajagriha, went to see her and in order to test her depth of knowledge, asked her some questions pertaining to the first three stages of Sainthood. She answered him all his questions. After this he asked her questions relating to the Arahanthood. To this she replied, 'This matter is out of your reach. You cannot reach that depth. If you are serious about it, you may go to the Buddha and ask him these questions.'

He went to see the Buddha and asked the same questions to him. The Buddha told him, 'Bhikkhuni Dhammadinna has already answered your questions. If you ask me, I shall also give you the same answers. She has already attained Arahanthood.'



Verse 422: Usabhaṃ pavaraṃ viraṃ mahesiṃ vijitāvinaṃ
Anejaṃ nahātakaṃ Buddhaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

Verse 422: Him I call a Brahmana, who is the fearless hero, the great sage, the self-conqueror, the desireless, pure and the Enlightened.

Holy men are enlightened
Story of Angulimala & the elephant

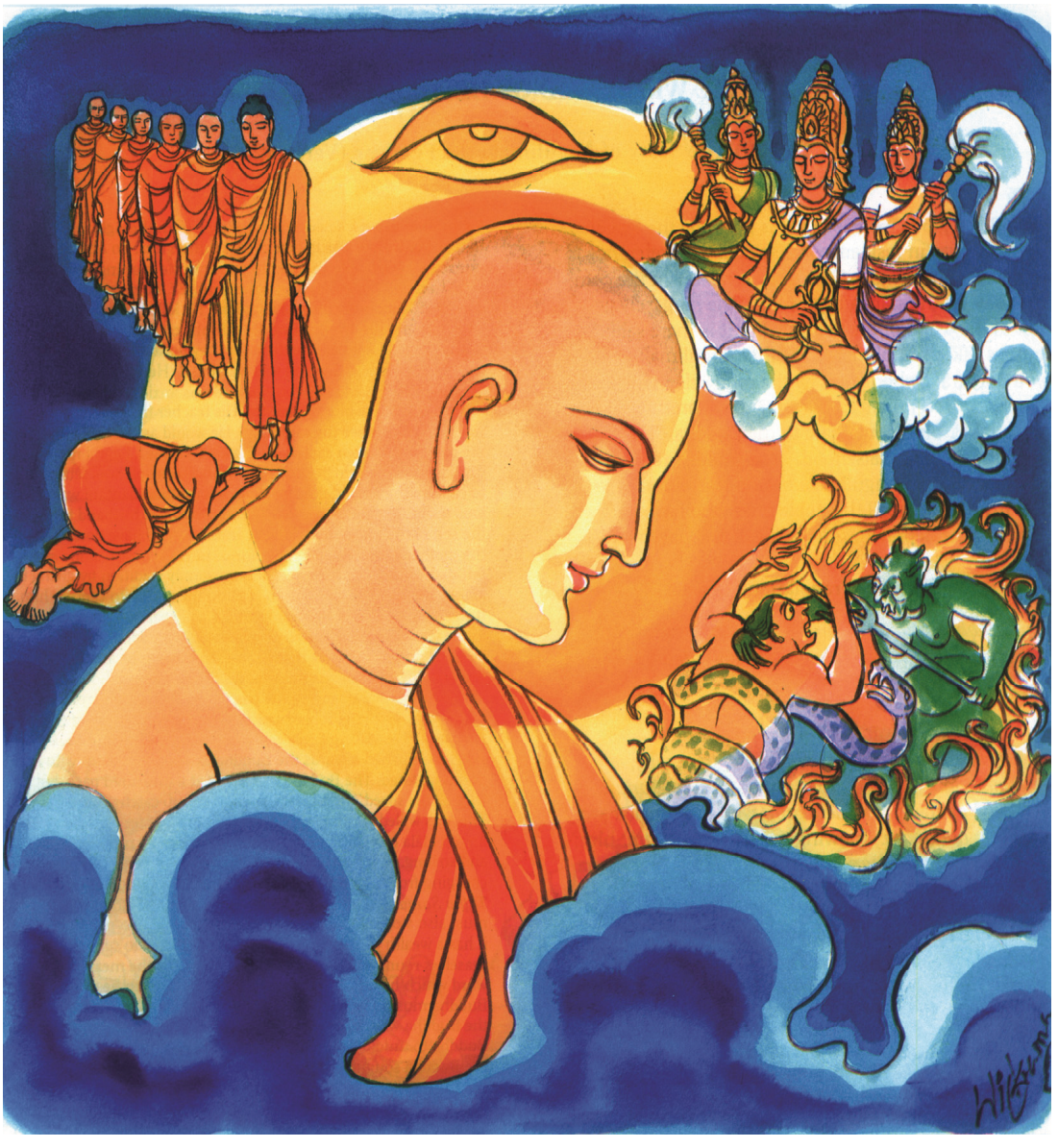
Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

We have already discussed in chapter XIII (Loka Vagga), Verse 173 how the dacoit and murderer Angulimala was converted into bhikkhu Angulimala. Also in the same chapter in Verse 177 we have seen how there was once alms-giving competition between King Pasendi and his family on one hand and the citizens, on the other hand. This almsgiving by King Pasendi and Queen Mallika to the Buddha and the bhikkhus was on such a grand scale that it could not be surpassed by anyone else.

The king had made arrangement that tamed elephants should hold white umbrellas as sunshades above the bhikkhus to protect them from the sun. However, it was found that there was shortage of one elephant. So, they had to put in duty an untrained elephant. This elephant was allotted to hold the umbrella over bhikkhu Angulimala. Everyone was scared that this rogue elephant may create trouble. But when it was brought near bhikkhu Angulimala, it calmed down and acted just like any other trained elephant.

After sometime the bhikkhus asked Angulimala regarding this ceremony. They wanted to know from him whether he was frightened when the untrained elephant was standing near him with the umbrella. 'No', was his answer.

The bhikkhus reported this matter to the Buddha who replied, 'Bhikkhus! It is true that Angulimala was not afraid. Arahants like him are not afraid.'



Verse 423: Pubbe nivāsaṃ yo vedi saggāpāyañ ca passati
Atho jātikkhayaṃ patto abhiññā vosito muni
Sabba vosita vosānaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.

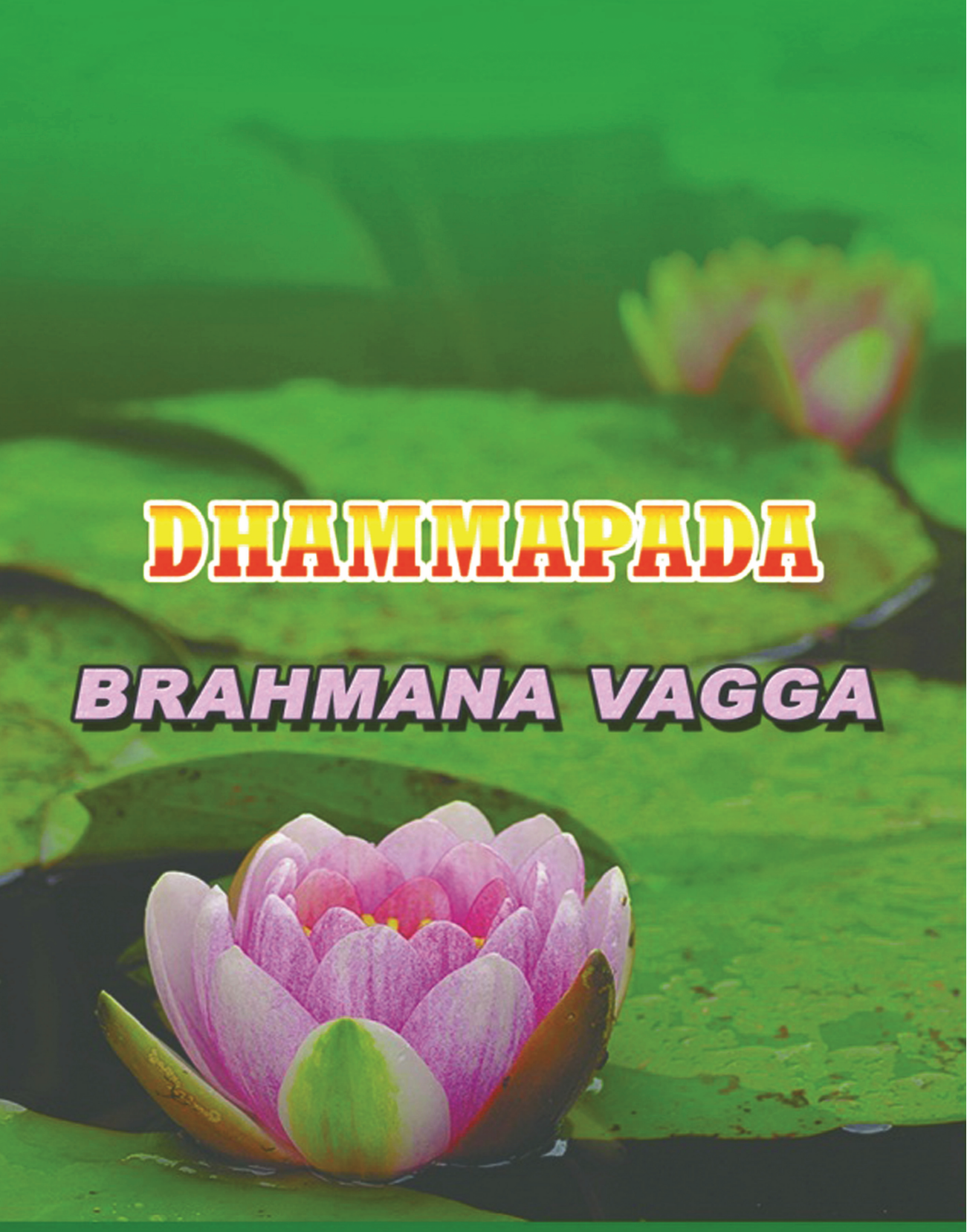
Verse 423: Him I call a Brahmana, who knows his past lives, can see the blissful and woeful states, has ended the cycles of rebirths, has perfected himself through super-knowledge, has completed the holy life as a sage and ended all passions.

A Brahmana is perfect
Story of offering of Devahita

Place: Jetavana, Sravasti

On one occasion, the Buddha suffered from gastric ailment and he sent Venerable Upavana to get some hot water from Devahita. Devahita was very pleased and thought, 'I consider myself fortunate to have this rare opportunity to offer something to the Buddha and be of some service to him.' So, in addition to hot water, he also gave him some molasses. At the monastery, Upavana prepared some hot water for the bath of the Buddha. After the bath, he offered him a mixture of molasses with hot water.

On taking the drink of molasses, the Buddha felt better. Devahita then came to the Buddha and asked, 'Venerable Sir! An offering made to whom, gives more benefit?' The Buddha replied, 'Devahita! An offering made to one who has given up all evil is the most beneficial.'


DHAMMAPADA
BRAHMANA VAGGA

"Wherever the Buddha's teachings have flourished,

either in cities or countrysides,

people would gain inconceivable benefits.

The land and people would be enveloped in peace.

The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.

Wind and rain would appear accordingly,

and there will be no disasters.

Nations would be prosperous

and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons.

People would abide by morality and accord with laws.

They would be courteous and humble,

and everyone would be content without injustices.

There would be no thefts or violence.

The strong would not dominate the weak

and everyone would get their fair share."

***THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF**
THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA OF
ADORNMENT, PURITY, EQUALITY
AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF
THE MAHAYANA SCHOOL*

With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of Limitless Light!

⁕ The Vows of Samantabhadra ⁕

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

⁕ The Vows of Samantabhadra Avatamsaka Sutra ⁕

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

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