

## THE SAMĀ JĀTAKA

“WHO is't with dart has wounded me?”—

This the Teacher told while living at the Jetavana about a monk who supported his mother. One of the very rich Sāvathi families, 'tis said, had an only son, dear and attractive. Seeing the multitude going along the street below his casement with offerings in hand to hear the Right taught at the Jetavana, he was minded to go too, taking his offerings. He listened, was induced thereby to leave the world, was bidden seek his parents' permission, extracted it by fasting for a week, and was ordained. After studying dhamma for five years, he felt the need of undistracted seclusion to complete the task of insight, and retired to the forest. And there he strove for twelve years without evolving anything remarkable.

Meanwhile his parents fell into great poverty, for want of a man to protect the estate and the staff. The house had to be sold and they in rags went about begging. Then a monk came to the son's retreat from Sāvathi, and the son, next after news of the Jetavana, asked after the health of such and such a family, namely his own. He was bidden not to, since it appeared their only son had left them as monk and they were then in great poverty. The son began to weep, and to the questioning monk said: “These are my parents, I am their son.” He was bidden go and tend them, since their distress was his fault. Thinking that for twelve years he had reaped no good result, and that to him incapable the holy life was no good, that he would return to house-

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life, keep his parents, give gifts and then go to the Bright World, he handed over his forest quarters to the elder, and the next day set out, arriving in due course at the back of Jetavana which is near Sāvathi. There two ways were, one to Jetavana, one to Sāvathi. Standing and considering which should he do first, see parents or the Ten-Powered, he thought: “I shall not often be able to see him, I will go to see him to-day, and to-morrow my parents.” And leaving the road to Sāvathi he arrived in the evening at the Jetavana.

Now early that morning the Teacher, contemplating the world, had seen the ripening conditions in this man, and when he came was praising parental qualities as in the Parent-tending Sutta. He listening at the edge of the congregation thought: “I can support my parents once I'm in the house-life again; but the Teacher has said that a son in orders is a help. I went away without seeing the Teacher; for such a religious life I proved no good. But now, without becoming a houseman, still a monk, I will support them.” And he took his ticket and by it got food and gruel, but feeling as if after twelve years of forest life he really deserved expulsion. Going next morning to Sāvathi he . . . took gruel and went to the wall of the home now another's and saw the parents sitting after their alms-round. His eyes filled, but they did not know him, and the mother said: “He will be standing there for alms. . . . Pass on, reverend sir, there's nothing fit to give you.” At length they knew him as he wept, and fell at his feet and there was a mighty pitying.

Then he said, “Do not be thinking about it; I will support you . . .” and from that time he shared with them all the alms he got. But the monks noticed he grew white and thin, and they brought him, when

they heard of his sharing alms with laymen, before the Teacher. The Teacher asked him, "Is it true that you are supporting laymen with the gifts of faith?" He admitting it was, the Teacher, desiring to praise his well-doing and to publish his own past conduct, asked, "Supporting laymen, monk, whom is it you are supporting?" "My parents, reverend sir." Then the Teacher, desirous of stirring up zeal in him, applauded him with "Well done!" three times, adding, "You are standing in the way I have gone; I once went about supporting my parents." And that monk acquired zeal. The monks asked about this and the Teacher brought up the past.

In the past, not far from Benares, on the hither side of Ganges, was a hunter's village, and on the further side another. In each dwelt five hundred families, and the two hunter-headmen were friends and in their youth had made a compact that if the one had a son the other a daughter there should be a sending and welcoming of a bride. And this did happen; the boy of this side was called Dukūlaka, the girl of the further side, Pārikā. Both were beautiful, and though born in a hunter-family they hurt no living thing. At sixteen years of age, against the wish of both, their parents married them, but they lived celibate, and at length got leave to renounce the lay life. They went up Ganges, entering the Himālaya region where the Migasammata emerges to join the Ganges.

Now Sakka's throne showed heat, and he discerning the cause said to Viṣṣakamma: "Tāta, two great beings have left home and entered Himavanta; it behoves that they find a dwelling; come, build them leaf-huts not far from the river and put monk-requisites there." He did so, making a footpath to it

and driving away wild beasts and unpleasant noises. Here they dwelt, Dukūlaka as a rishi, Pārikā as a nun, practising goodwill in the range of sense-experience. By the power of their goodwill all beasts and birds there acquired mutual goodwill, none did injury to the other. Pāri fetched water and things to eat, swept out the hermitage and did all necessary chores; both gathered fruits, and ate, then entered each his own leaf-hut for religious duties. Sakka ministering to them, and foreseeing they would lose their sight, admonished Dukūlaka he should get a son to tend him. He was shocked, nevertheless he promised to touch his wife with his hand, and so, said Sakka, would Pāri obtain a son. The Bodhisat decreasing in deva-world was born to her, and named Suvanna-Sāma. Fairy nymphs of the hills came and served as nurses.

When he was sixteen, and his parents were coming home with gathered fruits, a great storm-cloud arose. They stood under a tree on an anthill, within which lived a serpent. The sweat from their bodies dripped and the serpent, smelling it, got angry and blasted their eyes and blinded them. And this happened because they in a former life had been unfair to a physician and harmful to his sight.

Sāma went out looking for them and led them home. And as he looked at them he both wept and laughed, saying "I was weeping because while you are yet young you have lost your eyes; I laughed because I shall now take care of you. Do not be thinking about it. I will take care of you." And he brought them in, and did everything for them, also fixing cords to guide them to this and that room.

Now at that time the king of Benares was named Piliyakka, and he, lusting after venison, made over the government to his mother, and came to Hima-

vant to shoot deer. Coming to where Sāma used to go to draw water, he put up an ambush, and laid in wait with a poisoned arrow fitted to his bow. And Sāma came. Never had he before seen a man in that region, and he wondered was he a deva or a sprite? Unwilling to return to his courtiers unable to tell, he decided to wound him and so weaken him and then ask him. For the Great Being was surrounded by a herd of deer, and on the backs of two of them he had placed his water-jars, leading them with his hand. The deer went down first and drank; then Sāma, in bark-garment and deerskin, went with jar on shoulder and dignity down to the river. Then the king shot him through the side so that the arrow came out at the other side. The deer seeing this fled affrighted, but the wise Golden Sāma, though wounded, adjusted his jar, and keeping his head came slowly up the bank. Scooping out sand he laid down, facing the direction of his parents' abode, like a golden image on a silver plate, with lucid mind thinking, "In this Himavant region there are no enemies of mine, nor am I at enmity with anyone." So saying he wiped the blood from his mouth and as if not seeing the king said the verse:

"Who is't with dart hath wounded me zestful and water-fetching?  
Noble, Brahman, trader, who, me wounding, liest low?"

So saying he went on to show the worthlessness of his body for food:

"Not eatable my flesh, there is no profit in my skin,  
What vantage didst thou deem to get that I should wounded be?"

And asking name, etc.:

"Who art thou or whose son art thou? How may we come to know?  
I ask thee, good man, tell me why, me wounding, liest low?"

Hearing that, the king thinking "I have felled and wounded him with poisoned arrow, yet he neither upbraids nor berates me; he speaks kindly as if to comfort my heart, I will go up to him," and going he said:

"I am king of the Kāsians, as Piliyakkha known;  
From lust I left my kingdom and wander seeking deer.

In archery am I skilled, famous in use of bow am I;  
No elephant could 'scape from me were he in my shaft's range.

But thou, whose son art thou, and thee how may we come to know?  
Reveal to me thy father and what thy name and clan."

The Great Being thought, "If I were to say I was deva, or cobra-man, or fairy, or else a noble or the like, he would believe me, but I ought to say the true," and he said:

"A hunter-man—with compliments—Sāma the name my folk  
Called me while living, but to-day I lie and pass away.  
Wounded am I with arrow broad, poisoned, as were I deer.

With my own blood bedabbled, king, behold me  
outstretched here.

By dart gone through, my skin transfixed, behold  
me spitting blood.

Sick am I; once again I ask: why wounding me  
ifst low?"

The king then lied to him:

"The deer that present was had come within my  
arrow's range,  
And seeing thee it fled, Sāma; I was not wrath  
with thee."

And Sāma said:

"Since I myself remember, since I have come to  
know,  
No deer has been afraid of me, nor forest thing  
with legs.

Since I in bark-gear go about, since adolescent I,  
No deer has been afraid of me, nor forest thing  
with legs.

Grim beings, king, in mountain and in the scented  
wood:

We hail each other pleasantly on hillside or in  
glade.

What, then, the reason that a deer should betray  
fear at me?"

And the king:

"Not thee the deer beheld, Sāma—why should I  
tell a lie?  
By wrath and lust bemastered I did aim the shot  
at thee."

Then, thinking "He will not be all by himself, he  
will have folk here," he asked:

"Whence, good man, didst thou come, or who is it  
did send thee here  
As water-bearer to the river Migasammata?"

He in pain and with flowing blood said:

"Blind are my mother and my sire, my charge in  
the great wood;  
Their water-bearer I am come to Migasammata.

And wailing over them he added:

"Scanty the food their life to keep; but six days  
will it last;  
And in that they no water get, methinks they,  
blind, will die.

To me this (fate) is not so ill, all men must come  
to this,

But not to see my mother is for me the greater ill.  
And not to see my father is for me the greater ill.  
They verily now many days will weep in misery.  
For me to rise and tend them and chafe their feet  
for them

They'll wail aloud Sāma! Tāta! and wander through  
the wood.

This is a second arrow that tears the heart of me,  
That I my blind ones no more see, that I lay down  
my life."

The king, smitten with remorse at his sin in harm-  
ing one so holy, formed a resolution:

"Weep not so sorely, Sāma who art so fair to see!  
I'll be their worker, I'll maintain them in the  
mighty wood.

In archery am I skilled, famous in use of bow  
am I,  
I'll be their worker," etc.

"The track of deer pursuing and forest roots and  
fruits,  
I'll be their worker . . .

Which is the wood where are, Sāma, mother and  
father thine?

I will support them in such ways as thou'st sup-  
ported them.

. . . . .

That is the footpath, king, the one which goes  
where lies my head;

Go down it half a kosa, to their cottage you will  
come.

There are the mother, father, mine; hence go and  
bring them aid."

So showing him and having borne great suffering  
from his affection and because of their maintenance,  
he prayed, saluting with outstretched hands:

"Hail to thee, Kāsi king, all hail the luck of Kāsi-  
land!

Blind are my mother, father: nourish them in  
mighty wood.

I stretch my hands out to thee, Kāsi-king, all hail  
to thee!

Tell what I said to parents mine, bid them render  
salute."

. . . . Then he lost consciousness. . . .

Now a deva-daughter named Bahusodari, dwelling  
on Gandhamadana, and who had been mother to

the Great Being in his seventh previous life, had  
always watched the Bodhisat with mother-love, but  
for a time had been in her deva-bliss unmindful.  
But at this moment she remembered him, and fore-  
seeing much misery to parents and king, she decided  
to rescue them and restore her son by making be-  
fore them an Act of the True. She first went and  
upbraided the king, bidding him go to the parents,  
that, in supporting them, he might go to the Bright  
World. The king, restraining his sorrow, and deem-  
ing Sāma dead, paid honour to the body with flowers,  
sprinkling and luck-tour,<sup>1</sup> then took the jar and  
sadly went. Finding them he gradually broke the  
news to them, and offered his services. They in such  
misery treated him gently and with respect.

"This were not right, your majesty, it would not  
us befit.

A king for us thou art, and at thy feet we thee  
salute."

The king in pleased amazement thought, "Oh,  
but this is marvellous: to me working them such  
ill-will there is not one harsh word!" and he said:

"The Right ye utter, hunter-folk. Honoured am I  
by you.

Father art thou to me, and thou my mother  
Pārikā!"

They asked him only to lead them to their son.  
He could not face the scene but gave way to their  
entreaties. They took Sāma's head and feet to their  
bosoms and uttered their dirge. Then the mother,  
placing his hand in her breast and finding it warm,  
thought: "My son's (life-)warmth persists; he will

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 161.

have become senseless by the swiftness of the poison; to get him disempoisoned I will make an Act of the True for him”:

“The truth that in the past Sāma was man of righteous life,  
By this true word for Sāma let the poison be destroyed.

The truth that in the past Sāma was man of godly life,  
By this true word . . .

The truth that in the past Sāma was man of truthful speech,  
By this true word . . .

The truth that in the past Sāma was parent-fosterer,  
By this true word . . .

The truth that in the past Sāma honoured the head of house,  
By this true word . . .

The truth that in the past Sāma better I loved than life,  
By this true word . . .

Whatever of merit he hath wrought for father and for me,  
By all that good for Sāma let the poison be destroyed!”

When the mother had thus made the Act, Sāma turned over as he lay. Then said the father: “My

son lives! I too will make for him an Act of Truth!” And he spoke as she had done. Then Sāma turned over on the other side as he lay. Then that deva-daughter made her Act of Truth:

“A mountain woman I have long in Gandhamadana dwelt.

Dearer than Sāma is to me no one hath ever been.  
By this true word for Sāma let the poison be destroyed.

All woods are sweet with odours in Gandhama-dana’s hill,  
By this true word . . .

To them thus babbling many runes their pity to express  
Swiftly there rose up Sāma, young and lovely for to see.”

Thus, that Sāma was restored, that the parents were able to see this, and the dawn of day and the manifestation to all four at the hermitage by the deva-daughter’s power took place at the same moment. The parents were exceeding glad, and then Sāma the wise uttered verses:

“Sāma am I, and I will you well; safe have I risen up.  
Weep not so sore, to me your happy salutation give.

And be thou welcome, majesty, not far is’t thine to go,  
For with thee rests authority and what thou needst make known.

Fruits have we here of many kinds; thou mayst not know the names,

Taste for thyself and eat, sir king, the best of this  
and that.

And sweet cold water have I brought, drawn from  
the mountain's womb,  
From that drink, majesty, if thee desire thereto  
doth move."

The king, seeing the miracle, said:

"I am confused, bewildered I, the world's all in a  
maze!

I saw thee one gone hence, Sāma; how art thou  
now alive?"

Sāma, to explain his "undead-state," said:

"Although a man be living, sire, be his sensation  
strong,  
Suspended is his work of mind, men deem the  
living dead.

Although a man be living, sire, be his sensation  
strong,

He to a state of stoppage come, men deem the  
living dead."

Then to apply this to the king's welfare he taught  
him the Right and said:

"Who righteously his mother and his father doth  
maintain,

Even the devas watch him well as bearing filial  
load,

E'en here him they commend, hereafter welcome  
him."

Then the king: "Marvellous, sir, is this! Of one sup-  
porting his parents even devas heal the sickness.  
Exceedingly beautiful is Sāma!"

"Lo! more bewildered yet am I, the world is all a  
maze,  
To thee, Sāma, I come, do thou a refuge be to  
me!"

Then said Sāma: "If, majesty, you are fain to go  
to deva-world, fain to enjoy divine bliss, walk in  
these ten right farings:

"Fare in the Right with parents, sire,  
So thou't to Bright World go.

Fare in the Right to wife and child,

So . . . .  
Fare in the Right with friends and staff,

So . . . .  
Fare in the Right with world of war,

So . . . .  
Fare in the Right with towns and villages,

So . . . .  
Fare in the Right with realm and countryfolk,

So . . . .  
Fare in the Right with holy men,

So . . . .  
Fare in the Right with beast and bird,

So . . . .  
Fare in the Right, for, sire, the Right  
Practised brings happiness along.

Fare in the Right, for, sire, devas and gods  
By practice right win thing divine.

Never be heedless as to Right!"

The king, accepting the admonition with his head  
and having done homage, went to Benares and  
working merit became one bound for the Bright  
World. The Bodhisat with his parents became goers  
to Brahmā-world.

The Teacher, saying "This is the lineage of the wise who tend their parents, added: "Then the king was Ananda, the deva-daughter was Uppalavannā, the parents were Kassapa and Bhaddā of the Kapilas, but the wise Golden Sāma was just I."

[No. 541]

## THE NIMI JATAKA

(Nimi-jataka)

"A WONDROUS thing in sooth it was when in the world."—This the Teacher told, when staying in the Makhadeva Mango Wood near Mithilā, about his smiling. One day namely, when the Teacher with many monks was walking about that wood, he saw a pleasant spot, and being wishful to talk of his conduct in the past, and the venerable Ananda having asked the reason why he was smiling, he said: "Ananda, in days of old this spot is where I used to stay, when, in king Makhadeva's time, I was playing the Musing-game."<sup>1</sup> And asked by the former he sat down on the seat prepared and brought up the past.

In<sup>2</sup> the past, in the kingdom of Videha, in the city of Mithilā, there was a king named Makhadeva. For eighty-four thousand years he played the games of young noblemen, for eighty-four thousand years he was viceroy, for eighty-four thousand years he was king. Having said "Good barber, when you may see on my head grey hairs, then you should tell me," the barber later on having seen them, drawing them out with pincers, placing them on his hand, the king looking at them, and seeing death drawing nigh and as it were hanging to his brow, said, "Now 'tis time for me to leave the world," and giving the barber the boon of a village, and sending for his

<sup>1</sup> *Yhāna-kīlam kīlanto.*

<sup>2</sup> This Jataka I have condensed by omitting lists of names in verses.