

85 *Bodhirājakumāra Sutta* To Prince Bodhi

[91] 1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Bhagga country at Sumsumnāragira in the Bhesakaḷā Grove, the Deer Park.

2. Now on that occasion a palace named Kokanada had recently been built for Prince Bodhi, and it had not yet been inhabited by any recluse or brahmin or any human being at all.⁸¹⁶

3. Then Prince Bodhi addressed the brahmin student Sañjikāputta thus: "Come, my dear Sañjikāputta, go to the Blessed One and pay homage in my name with your head at his feet, and ask whether he is free from illness and affliction and is healthy, strong, and abiding in comfort, saying: 'Venerable sir, Prince Bodhi pays homage with his head at the Blessed One's feet, and he asks whether the Blessed One is free from illness...and abiding in comfort.' Then say this: 'Venerable sir, let the Blessed One together with the Sangha of bhikkhus consent to accept tomorrow's meal from Prince Bodhi.'"

"Yes, sir," Sañjikāputta replied, and he went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said: "Master Gotama, Prince Bodhi pays homage with his head at Master Gotama's feet and asks whether he is free from illness...and abiding in comfort. And he says this: 'Let Master Gotama together with the Sangha of bhikkhus consent to accept tomorrow's meal from Prince Bodhi.'"

4. The Blessed One consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Blessed One had consented, Sañjikāputta rose from his seat, went to Prince Bodhi, and told him what had happened [92], adding: "The recluse Gotama has consented."

5. Then, when the night had ended, Prince Bodhi had good food of various kinds prepared in his own residence, and he had

the Kokanada Palace spread with white cloth down to the last step of the staircase. Then he addressed the brahmin student Sañjikāputta thus: "Come, my dear Sañjikāputta, go to the Blessed One and announce that it is time thus: 'It is time, venerable sir, the meal is ready.'"

"Yes, sir," Sañjikāputta replied, and he went to the Blessed One and announced that it was time thus: "It is time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready."

6. Then, it being morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went to Prince Bodhi's residence.

7. Now on that occasion Prince Bodhi was standing in the outer porch waiting for the Blessed One. When he saw the Blessed One coming in the distance, he went out to meet him and paid homage to him; and then, allowing the Blessed One to precede him, he proceeded to the Kokanada Palace. But the Blessed One stopped at the lowest step of the staircase. Prince Bodhi said to him: "Venerable sir, let the Blessed One step on the cloth, let the Sublime One step on the cloth, that it may lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time." When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.⁸¹⁷

A second time...A third time Prince Bodhi said to him: "Venerable sir, let the Blessed One step on the cloth, let the Sublime One step on the cloth, that it may lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time."

The Blessed One looked at the venerable Ānanda. [93] The venerable Ānanda said to Prince Bodhi: "Prince, let the cloth be removed. The Blessed One will not step on a strip of cloth; the Tathāgata has regard for future generations."⁸¹⁸

8. So Prince Bodhi had the cloth removed, and he had seats prepared in the upper apartments of the Kokanada Palace. The Blessed One and the Sangha of bhikkhus ascended the Kokanada Palace and sat down on the seats that had been prepared.

9. Then, with his own hands, Prince Bodhi served and satisfied the Sangha of bhikkhus headed by the Buddha with the various kinds of good food. When the Blessed One had eaten and had withdrawn his hand from the bowl, Prince Bodhi took a low seat, sat down at one side, and said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, we have thought thus: 'Pleasure is not to be gained through pleasure; pleasure is to be gained through pain.'⁸¹⁹

10. "Prince, before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I too thought thus: 'Pleasure is not to be gained through pleasure; pleasure is to be gained through pain.'

11-14. "Later, prince, while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life... (as *Sutta 26*, §§15-17)...And I sat down there thinking: 'This will serve for striving.'

15-42. "Now three similes occurred to me spontaneously, never heard before... (as *Sutta 36*, §§17-44, but in the present *sutta* in §§18-23 - corresponding to §§20-25 of *Sutta 36* - the sentence "But such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain" does not occur; and in the present *sutta* in §§37, 39 and 42 - corresponding to §§39, 41, and 44 of *Sutta 36* - the sentence "But such pleasant feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain" does not occur)...as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute.

43-53. "I considered: 'This Dhamma that I have attained is profound'... (as *Sutta 26*, §§19-29) [94]...and the six of us lived on what those two bhikkhus brought back from their almsround.

54. "Then the bhikkhus of the group of five, not long after being thus taught and instructed by me, by realising for themselves with direct knowledge, here and now entered upon and abided in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness."

55. When this was said, Prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, when a bhikkhu finds the Tathāgata to discipline him, how long is it until by realising for himself with direct knowledge, he here and now enters upon and abides in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness?"

"As to that, prince, I shall ask you a question in return. Answer it as you choose. What do you think, prince? Are you skilled in the art of wielding a goad while riding an elephant?"

"Yes, venerable sir, I am."

56. "What do you think, prince? Suppose a man came here thinking: 'Prince Bodhi knows the art of wielding a goad while riding an elephant; I shall train in that art under him.' If he had no faith, he could not achieve what can be achieved by one who has faith; if he had much illness, he could not achieve what can

be achieved by one who is free from illness; if he was fraudulent and deceitful, he could not achieve what can be achieved by one who is honest and sincere; if he was lazy, he could not achieve what can be achieved by one who is energetic; if he was not wise, he could not achieve what can be achieved by one who is wise. What do you think, prince? Could that man train under you in the art of wielding a goad while riding an elephant?"

"Venerable sir, even if he had one of those deficiencies, he could not train under me, so what of the five?"

57. "What do you think, prince? Suppose a man came here thinking: [95] 'Prince Bodhi knows the art of wielding a goad while riding an elephant; I shall train in that art under him.' If he had faith, he could achieve what can be achieved by one who has faith; if he was free from illness, he could achieve what can be achieved by one who is free from illness; if he was honest and sincere, he could achieve what can be achieved by one who is honest and sincere; if he was energetic, he could achieve what can be achieved by one who is energetic; if he was wise, he could achieve what can be achieved by one who is wise. What do you think, prince? Could that man train under you in the art of wielding a goad while riding an elephant?"

"Venerable sir, even if he had one of those qualities he could train under me, so what of the five?"

58. "So too, prince, there are these five factors of striving. What five? Here a bhikkhu has faith, he places his faith in the Tathāgata's enlightenment thus: 'That Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed.'

"Then he is free from illness and affliction, possessing a good digestion that is neither too cool nor too warm but medium and able to bear the strain of striving.

"Then he is honest and sincere, and shows himself as he actually is to the Teacher and his companions in the holy life.

"Then he is energetic in abandoning unwholesome states and in undertaking wholesome states, steadfast, launching his effort with firmness and persevering in cultivating wholesome states.

"Then he is wise; he possesses wisdom regarding rise and disappearance that is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete destruction of suffering. These are the five factors of striving.

59. "Prince, when a bhikkhu who possesses these five factors of striving finds a Tathāgata to discipline him, he might dwell seven years until by realising for himself with direct knowledge, he here and now enters upon and abides in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness. [96]

"Let alone seven years, prince. When a bhikkhu who possesses these five factors of striving finds a Tathāgata to discipline him, he might dwell six years...five years...four years...three years...two years...one year...Let alone one year, prince,...he might dwell seven months...six months...five months...four months...three months...two months...one month...half a month...Let alone half a month, prince,...he might dwell seven days and nights...six days and nights...five days and nights...four days and nights...three days and nights...two days and nights...one day and night.

"Let alone one day and night, prince. When a bhikkhu who possesses these five factors of striving finds a Tathāgata to discipline him, then being instructed in the evening, he might arrive at distinction in the morning; being instructed in the morning, he might arrive at distinction in the evening."

60. When this was said, Prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One: "Oh the Buddha! Oh the Dhamma! Oh, how well proclaimed is the Dhamma! For one instructed in the evening might arrive at distinction in the morning, and one instructed in the morning might arrive at distinction in the evening."

61. When this was said, the brahmin student Sañjikāputta said to Prince Bodhi: "Master Bodhi says: 'Oh the Buddha! Oh the Dhamma! Oh, how well proclaimed is the Dhamma!' But he does not say: 'I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus.'"

"Do not say that, my dear Sañjikāputta, do not say that. I heard and learned this from my mother's lips: [97] There was an occasion when the Blessed One was living at Kosambī in Ghosita's Park. Then my mother, who was pregnant, went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, she sat down at one side and said to him: 'Venerable sir, the prince or princess in my womb, whichever it may be, goes to the Blessed One for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. Let the Blessed One remember [the child] as a lay follower who has

gone to him for refuge for life.' There was also an occasion when the Blessed One was living here in the country of the Bhaggas at Sumsumāragira in the Bhesakaḷā Grove, the Deer Park. Then my nurse, carrying me on her hip, went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, she stood at one side and said to him: 'Venerable sir, this Prince Bodhi goes to the Blessed One for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. Let the Blessed One remember him as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life.' Now, my dear Sañjikāputta, for the third time I go to the Blessed One for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. Let the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

- 813 MA: The good practice is being broken by a virtuous bhikkhu when he thinks, "I cannot obtain arahantship" and does not exert energy. It has been broken by a corrupt bhikkhu. It is being continued by the seven *sekhas*. It has been continued by the arahant.

SUTTA 84

- 814 See n.230.
815 From this passage it seems that despite a tendency to rigidification, the Indian class system was at the time considerably more elastic than the later caste system that evolved from it.

SUTTA 85

- 816 Prince Bodhi was the son of King Udena of Kosambī; his mother was the daughter of King Caṇḍappajjota of Avanti. The portion of the sutta from §2 through §8 is also found at Vin Cv Kh 5/ii.127-29, where it leads to the formulation of the rule mentioned in the following note.
817 MA explains that Prince Bodhi was childless and desired a son. He had heard that people can fulfil their wishes by making special offerings to the Buddha, so he spread the white cloth with the idea: "If I am to have a son, the Buddha will step on the cloth; if I am not to have a son, he will not step on the cloth." The Buddha knew that by reason of past evil kamma, he and his wife were destined to remain childless. Hence he did not step on the cloth. Later he laid down a disciplinary rule prohibiting the bhikkhus from stepping on a white cloth, but subsequently modified the rule to allow bhikkhus to step on a cloth as a blessing for householders.
818 *Pacchimam janatam Tathāgato apaloketi*. The Vin version here reads *anukampati*, "has compassion," which is preferable. MA explains that Ven. Ānanda said this with the thought in mind: "In later times people will come to regard honour to the bhikkhus as a way of ensuring the fulfilment of their mundane wishes and will lose faith in

the Sangha if their displays of honour do not bring the success they desire."

- 819 This is the basic tenet of the Jains, as at MN 14.20.

SUTTA 86

- 820 The name "Angulimāla" is an epithet meaning "garland (*mālā*) of fingers (*anguli*)."
He was the son of the brahmin Bhaggava, a chaplain to King Pasenadi of Kosala. His given name was Ahimsaka, meaning "harmless one." He studied at Takkaṣilā, where he became his teacher's favourite. His fellow students, jealous of him, told the teacher that Ahimsaka had committed adultery with his wife. The teacher, intent on bringing Ahimsaka to ruin, commanded him to bring him a thousand human right-hand fingers as an honorarium. Ahimsaka lived in the Jālinī forest, attacking travellers, cutting off a finger of each, and wearing them as a garland around his neck. At the time the sutta opens he was one short of a thousand and had made a determination to kill the next person to come along. The Buddha saw that Angulimāla's mother was on her way to visit him, and aware that Angulimāla had the supporting conditions for arahantship, he intercepted him shortly before his mother was due to arrive.
821 MA explains that Angulimāla had just realised that the monk before him was the Buddha himself and that he had come to the forest for the express purpose of transforming him.
822 MA: By virtue of his merit from past lives, Angulimāla acquired the bowl and robes through the spiritual power of the Buddha as soon as the Buddha said, "Come, bhikkhu."
823 Even today this utterance is often recited by Buddhist monks as a protective charm (*paritta*) for pregnant women close to their time of delivery.
824 MA explains that any volitional action (*kamma*) is capable of yielding three kinds of result: a result to be experienced here and now, i.e., in the same life in which the deed is committed; a result to be experienced in the next