

The *Sahassavatthupakaraṇa*, part I

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Abstract

The *Sahassavatthupakaraṇa*, ‘An Anthology of Amusing Tales’, was composed by a certain Raṭṭhapāla of the Guttavaṅka monastery in Sri Lanka, probably some time between 900-1250 AD. Its oldest surviving manuscripts date to the 16th century AD; this translation of its first few stories is based on the edition of Ver Eecke-Filliozat and Filliozat (Bangkok, 2003).

Introduction

Since 1944, when the Venerable Walpola Rahula originally published his article “The Sahassavatthu-aṭṭhakathā or Sahassavatthupakaraṇa” (Rahula 1944; updated Rahula 1956), several eminent scholars have continued his research up to the present day. Professor Sodo Mori, T. Rahula and Dr J. Matsumura have all made a large contribution towards the study of the forgotten *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* literature in Sinhalese, and the collections of stories in Pāli, still preserved in their original manuscript form, and now more easily accessible following the publication of catalogues listing the collections held in the monastic, private or national libraries in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, as well as in Europe (Somadasa 1987).

The first of the two oldest *Sahassavatthu* manuscripts recently discovered is that from Lanna, consisting of a fragment copied at the beginning of the sixteenth century and still preserved at Wat Lai Hin, Lampang (Hinüber 1996: 189, n. 667). The second is that from Burma, datable circa 1648 AD, and consisting of a fragmentary royal

copy now held in the Royal Asiatic Society in London (for a list of the *Sahassavatthu* manuscripts publicly available, see Ver Eecke-Filliozat & Filliozat, 2003).¹

Dr J. Matsumura has recently succeeded in identifying the author of the *Sahassavatthupakarana* as Raṭṭhapāla of the Guttavaṅka monastery in Sri Lanka, who is mentioned in the introduction to the *Rasavāhinī* (Matsumura 1992) as having produced a rather confused text (Rahula T., 1984). She has also demonstrated that the *Sahassavatthupakarana* and the *Sahassavatthu-aṭṭhakathā* are two different texts.²

Although some believe that the *Sahassavatthupakarana* is so named since it denotes a collection of a thousand stories, it in fact contains only one hundred (wrongly numbered in Buddhadatta 1959 and Gandhi 1991). Others, such as Malalasekera (see Rahula 1944), have therefore suggested that Pali *sahassa* here does not represent Skt. *sahasra*, one thousand, but rather *sva + harṣa*, or indeed *sva + hāsyā*. A more likely derivation is *sa + hassa*, hence our tentative translation: “An Anthology of Amusing Tales.”

The date of the composition of the *Sahassavatthupakarana* is uncertain. The *Mahāvamsa* and its *īkā* both make mention of a *Sahassavatthupakarana*, just as a reference is also made to the Uttaravihāravāsins, thereby placing the work anywhere between 900-1250 AD, in that the late-thirteenth century *Rasavāhinī* is based on the *Sahassavatthu* (Hinüber 1996).

It is a difficult task to translate the text literally into English, since the form that has reached us is derived from a number of different manuscripts belonging to a variety of periods, regions and scripts. The work, as we have it, is not well balanced, full of repetitions, contradictions, inconsistencies, and often corrupted by scribal alterations. The translation of the first few stories offered here is based on the edition of Jacqueline Ver Eecke-Filliozat and Jean Filliozat (Bangkok, 2003), itself based on Buddhadatta’s edition of 1959, but with an apparatus including variant readings from six Sri Lankan, Burmese and Thai (Khom) manuscripts.

¹ According to the general inventory of the Pagodas manuscripts of Cambodia, established by the Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient during the years 1920-1930, there was a *Sahassavatthu* in 8 *phūk* registered under No 59. (Archives EFEO Paris, box 37, see J. Filliozat “Pour mémoire d’un patrimoine sacré: les manuscrits pâli du Cambodge à l’École française d’Extrême-Orient” in BEFEO 87. 2, Paris 2001: 445-471). But the famous library of Wat Po Val was destroyed in 1975 and no other *Sahassavatthu* manuscript has been found in Cambodia since that time.

² See also Somadasa (1987, pp. 304-306) under *Sahassavatthupakaranaṃ*, which cites Hugh Nevill’s notes: “The original work from which *Rasavāhinī* was rearranged. Composed by Raṭṭhapāla thera of the Taṅguttara parivena at Anuradhapura, at so early a period that the author of *Mahāvamsaṣīkā* speaks of this work as an *aṭṭhakathā*. The only copies we have seen are in Burmese letters, and transcriptions into Sinhalese from those. See *Saddharmāṅkāra* [British Library Or. 6603(38)].”

Sahassavatthupakaraṇa

namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

[1]³ tilokanāthaṃ vanditvā dhammañ ca sukhamākaraṃ
saṅghaṃ niraṅgaṇaṃ c'eva Sīhaḷācariye pi ca.

Sahassavatthuṃ bhāsissaṃ Sīhaḷatthakathānayaṃ
gaṇhitvā cariyavādañ ca taṃ suṇātha samāhitā.

Buddho ca dullabho loka saddhammasavaṇaṃ pi ca
saṅgho ca dullabho loka sappurisā atidullabhā.

dullabhañ ca manussattaṃ Buddhuppādo ca dullabho
dullabhā khaṇasampatti dhammo paramadullabho.

saddhādhanaṃ sīladhanaṃ hiriottappiyaṃ dhanaṃ
sutadhanañ ca cāgo ca paññā ve sattamaṃ dhanaṃ.

yassa ete dhanā atthi itthiyā purisassa vā
adaliddo ti taṃ āhu amoghaṃ tassa jīvitaṃ.

tasmā saddhañ ca sīlañ ca pasādaṃ dhammasāvanaṃ
anuyuñjetha medhāvī etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.

tasmā cittaṃ pasādetvā sīlavantesu sakkaccaṃ
appakam pi kataṃ kāraṃ puññaṃ hoti mahapphalan ti.

imāni dullabhāni sulabhāni hontī ti vijānanattham imāni vatthūni kathetabbāni.

³ The numbers in square brackets indicate the page numbers of Buddhadatta's text (1959).

An Anthology of Amusing Tales

Homage to the Lord, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One

Having saluted the Saviour of the Triple World, the Dhamma that is a mine of bliss and the Saṅgha that is without blemish, as well as the Sinhala Masters,

I will relate the *Sahassavatthu*, adopting the method of the Sinhala Commentary and the views of the Masters. Listen to it attentively.

A Buddha is gained with difficulty in the world, as is also hearing the True Dhamma; the Saṅgha is gained with difficulty in the world; Good Men are gained with extreme difficulty.

Also gained with difficulty is the human state, and the arising of a Buddha; successful attainment of the moment⁴ is gained with difficulty, whilst the Dhamma is gained with the utmost difficulty.

The treasure of faith, the treasure of morality, the treasures of a sense of shame and a fear of reproach, the treasures of hearing and generosity, with insight as the treasure that is seventh:

Whichever woman or man possesses these treasures, they say, is never poor, his life is not in vain.⁵

Therefore, the intelligent should give themselves over to faith, morality, devotion and hearing Dhamma—this is the dispensation of the Buddhas.

⁴ Cp A IV 225f, which states that there are eight untimely moments for following the *brahmacariya*, and only one timely one: that is, when a Tathāgata has arisen in the world. See also the *Akkhanadīpanagāthā* (Sdhp vv 5ff: JPTS 1887 pp 36ff).

⁵ Cp S I 232, etc.

I. Dhammaṇḍakavatthu

paṭhamaṃ tāva Dhammaṇḍakavatthumhi atthuppatti evaṃ veditabbā:
[2] amhākaṃ sammāsambuddho Kassapa-sammāsambuddhassa
dhammarājassa sāsanantaradhānato na ciren' eva kālena Bārāṇasīrañño putto
Dhammaṇḍakarājakumāro pitu accayena rajje patitṭhāya Kassapadasabalena
desitaṃ dhammaṃ sotukāmo hutvā māsamattaṃ rajjaṃ katvā devanagarasadiśe
Bārāṇasīnagare cakkavattirajjasadiśaṃ rajjaṃ karonto evañ cintesi:

mayham evarūpaṃ rajjavilāsaṃ rajjānubhāvañ ca saddhammaviyogena
divākaravirahitaṃ ākāsaṃ viya sasivirahitā ratti viya dantavirahito gajarājā
viya velantavirahito mahāsamuddo viya cakkhuvirahitaṃ susajjitavadanaṃ
viya sugandhavirahitaṃ pāricchattakapupphaṃ viya catu-akkharaniyamatta-
dhammadesanāvīyogena mayham imaṃ rajjaṃ na sobhatī ti vatvā

1. The story of Dhammaṣoḍḍaka

Now, first of all, the matter-arising,⁶ as regards the story of Dhammaṣoḍḍaka, is to be understood as follows: a short time after the disappearance of the dispensation⁷ of our Dhamma-king, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One named Kassapa, the son of the king of Benares, Crown Prince Dhammaṣoḍḍaka, having been established on the throne following the passing of his father, became desirous, after having reigned for a mere month, of hearing the Dhamma taught by Kassapa, the Ten-Powered One. Whilst conducting a reign that was similar to the reign of a Wheel-turner, in the city of Benares that was itself similar to the city of the *devas*, he thought as follows:

“The splendour of this reign, and the majesty of this reign, of mine, through its dissociation from the True Dhamma, is like a firmament lacking a sun, like a night lacking a moon,⁸ like a king of elephants lacking tusks, like a great ocean lacking a final boundary,⁹ like a beautifully made-up face lacking eyes, or like a *pāricchattaka*-flower¹⁰ lacking fragrance; through its dissociation from a Dhamma-teaching consisting of four systematically-ordered syllables,¹¹ this reign of mine lacks any lustre.”

⁶ *athuppatti*; the matter that gave rise to the need for the teaching. Cp It-a I 35ff, where the four reasons giving rise to a teaching are explained in detail.

⁷ *sāsana*; literally instruction, message and, by extension, the continued existence of the Dhamma-teaching associated with a particular Buddha.

⁸ *sasi*; literally, the one with the hare. See the *Sasajātaka* (308), in which the Bodhisatta, having taken birth as a hare, in the absence of anything else sacrifices his own body as alms to Sakka, in the guise of a brahmin, who subsequently daubs the sign of a hare on the moon in remembrance of the offering.

⁹ *velanta*; cp SED sv *velā*; *velā*, which sometimes denotes the sea-shore is, however, more literally a boundary, and, in Buddhist cosmology, the great ocean is seventh, and last, of the concentric oceans that surround Meru, being finally enclosed by the *cakkavāḷapabbata*, a wall of mountains equal in height to that of Meru itself, which thus prevents the light of the sun and moon from escaping outside the *cakkavāḷa*. See, for instance, D II 10, where in the Lokantarika hell, that is found in the space formed by three adjacent *cakkavāḷas*, neither the sun nor moon are able to shine, as a result of which the inmates of that hell are unable to see one another.

¹⁰ The coral tree *Erythrina Indica*, a tree in Indra’s heaven; cp Vv-a 174.

¹¹ *catuakkharaniyamattadhammaḍḍesānāvīyogena*; the meaning seems to be that there was no-one who knew any Dhamma-teaching consisting of even four syllables in a meaningful order, that is to say, not four syllables chosen simply at random. According to Ver Eecke-Filliozat and Filliozat (p.2 n.21), the *Sahasavatthupakaraṇa* manuscript from Wat Pho lacks *niya*.

suvaṇṇacaṅgoṭakena saḥassathavikabhaṇḍikaṃ
susajjitamaṅgalahatthikumbhe tḥapetvā Bārāṇasīnagare
mahāvīthiyaṃ bheriṅ carāpesi: ekapadikaṃ vā dvipadikaṃ vā
tipadikaṃ vā catupadikaṃ vā dhammapadaṃ jānantassa dammī ti.

evaṃ bheriṅ carāpetvā dhammajānanakaṃ alabhitvā punappunaṃ
dvisahassaṃ tisahassaṃ yāva sataśahassaṃ koṭidvikoṭisahassakoṭi-
sataśahassakoṭiṃ gāmanigamajanapadasenāpatiṭṭhānaṃ
uparājatṭhānaṃ pariyośāne dhammadesanakaṃ alabhitvā attano
suvaṇṇapiṇḍikasetacchattaṃ cajitvā pi dhammadesanakaṃ
alabhitvā rajjasiriṃ pahāya attānaṃ cajitvā dhammadesakassa dāso
hutvā pi dhammaṃ sośśāmī ti vatvā evaṃ pi dhammadesakam
alabhitvā vippaṭisārī hutvā kim me saddhammaviyogena rajjena
ti amaccānaṃ rajjaṃ niyyādetvā saddhammagavesako hutvā
Dhammaśoṇḍakamahārājā mahāvanaṃ pāvīsi. [3]

Dhammaśoṇḍakamahārājassa saddhammasavaṇatthāya vanaṃ
paviṭṭhakkhaṇe Sakkadevaraṅṅo Vejayantapāsāde ratanakaṇṅikāya
kampo ahośi paṇḍukambalasilāśanaṃ uṅhākāraṃ dassesi.
Sakko devarājā kena kāraṇena paṇḍukambalasilāśanaṃ
uṅhākāraṃ ahośi ti cintevā attano saḥśanettaṃ devamanussesu
vitthāretvā olokento dhammagavesako hutvā vanaṃ paviṭṭhaṃ
Dhammaśoṇḍakamahārājānaṃ diśvā cintesi:

And, having said as much, he placed a bundle containing a purse of a thousand pieces in a golden casket on the back of the beautifully caparisoned auspicious elephant, and had the drum paraded on the grand highway in the city of Benares, announcing: “I will give this to anyone knowing a verse of the Dhamma, be it one stanza, two stanzas, three stanzas or four stanzas.”

And having had the drum be paraded in that way, without finding anyone knowing the Dhamma, he successively (offered) two thousand, three thousand and then as much as a hundred thousand, one *koṭi*, two *koṭis*, a thousand *koṭis*, a hundred thousand *koṭis*, a village, a market town, the country, the position of commander of the army, the position of viceroy; eventually, still not finding anyone teaching the Dhamma, he surrendered his golden orb and his white sunshade; still not finding anyone knowing the Dhamma, he surrendered himself by way of abandoning the splendour of his reign and then said: “I will hear the Dhamma, even if I have to become a slave to one teaching the Dhamma,” and then, as one remorseful at still not finding anyone teaching the Dhamma, he entrusted the kingdom to his privy councilors, saying: “What is the point for me in a reign that is dissociated from the True Dhamma?”, whereupon the Great King Dhammasoṇḍaka entered the Great Grove as one seeking the True Dhamma.

The moment the Great King Dhammasoṇḍaka entered the Grove with the aim of hearing the True Dhamma, the jewelled roof-plate on the terrace of Vejayanta,¹² (palace of) Sakka, King of Devas, shook, indicating heat in the Paṇḍukambala Rock.¹³ Sakka, King of Devas, wondering for what reason heat had appeared in the Paṇḍukambala Rock, extended his thousand eyes surveying *devas* and humans, saw the Great King Dhammasoṇḍaka entered upon the Grove as one seeking the True Dhamma and then thought:

¹² Sakka’s famous palace in the Nandana Grove in the Thirty-three, for a description of which see the *Cūlatanḥāsāṅkhasutta* (M 37) in which Sakka shows Moggallāna around it (M I 252-254).

¹³ Throne of Sakka, said to be made of stone the colour of the *jayasumana* flower (Sv 482), and from time to time to glow with heat as an indication to Sakka that a righteous person needs protection (J V 92), that the Buddha requires his assistance (J I 330, IV 315ff), or that virtuous deeds have been performed (J V 410ff, V 278ff).

ajja me attānaṃ vijahāya rakkhasavesaṃ māpetvā etam aniccādiṭṭhapaṇaṃ jātijaṅgāvyādhimaraṇaṃ sakalasaṅgāraṇaṃ dassetvā dhammaṃ desetvā etaṃ sakarajje yeva paṭiṭṭhapetabban ti vatvā Sakko devarājā rakkhasarūpaṃ māpetvā mahāsattas’ ābhimukho avidūre attānaṃ dassesi.

taṃ disvā Dhammasoṇḍakamahārājā evaṃ cintesi: evarūpā nāma rakkhasā dhammaṃ jānissanti ti vatvā avidūre tathā puṇṇaṃ ti rakkhasena saddhiṃ sallapanto āha: sāmi mahāpuṇṇa devarāja imasmim pana vanaghaṭṭe vasanadevarāja kin nu kho dhammaṃ jānāsī ti?

devatā mahārāja dhammaṃ jānāmī ti āha. yadi dhammaṃ jānātha mayhaṃ dhammakathaṃ kathethā ti āha. mahārāja ahaṃ tuyhaṃ dhammaṃ kathessāmi. tvaṃ mayhaṃ kīdisaṃ dhammakathikassa sakkāraṃ karissasī ti āha. evaṃ sante mayhaṃ dhammaṃ kathetvā pacchā mayhaṃ sarīramaṃsaṃ khādissasī ti āha. ahaṃ mahārāja chāto hutvā dhammaṃ kathetuṃ na sakkomi ti āha. yadi tumhe paṭṭhamaṃ maṃsaṃ khādatha dhammaṃ ko suṇissatī ti āha?

puna rakkhaso nāhaṃ dhammaṃ desetūṃ sakkomi ti āha. puna rājā mayhaṃ dhammapaṭiṭṭhapaṇaṃ ca tumhākaṃ maṃsapaṭiṭṭhapaṇaṃ ca tumhe ’va jānitvā mayhaṃ dhammaṃ desetthā ti āha. atha kho Sakko devarājā sādhu mahārājā ti vatvā avidūre tathā ubbedhena [4] tigāvutamattaṃ mahantam añjanapabbataṃ māpetvā evaṃ āha: sace mahārāja imaṃ pabbatamuddhāniṃ āruyha ākāse uppatitvā tvaṃ mama mukhe patissasi ahaṃ tava ākāśagatakāle dhammaṃ desissāmi ti. evaṃ sante tuyhaṃ ca dhammapaṭiṭṭhapaṇaṃ mayhaṃ ca maṃsapaṭiṭṭhapaṇaṃ bhavissatī ti āha.

“Having discarded this (normal) person of mine, I will conjure the guise of a *rakkhasa* and then teach Dhamma, elucidating impermanence and so on, indicating the imperfection of the entire body (by way of) birth, old age, sickness and dying, and then state: ‘This should be established during your very own reign’.” And then Sakka, King of Devas, conjured the form of a *rakkhasa* and then revealed himself nearby facing the Great Being.

Upon seeing him, the Great King Dhammasonḍaka thought as follows: “*Rakkhasas* such as this must know the Dhamma” and, thinking he should station himself nearby and ask him, started conversing with the *rakkhasa*, saying: “Master, O one of great merit, O *deva*-king, O *deva*-king resident in this jungle-thicket, do you know the Dhamma?”

The *devatā* said: “I, great king, know the Dhamma.” He said: “If you know the Dhamma, then please talk to me of the Dhamma.” (Sakka) said “Great king, I will talk to you of the Dhamma. What kind of honour will you pay to me as Dhamma-talker?” (The king) said: “Such being the case, I will, after you have talked to me of Dhamma, allow you to devour the flesh of this body of mine.” (Sakka) said: “I cannot, great king, talk of Dhamma when I am hungry.” (The king) said: “If you first devour my flesh, who will there be to hear it?”

The *rakkhasa* again stated that he could not teach Dhamma. The king again stated: “You should teach me Dhamma, realising that this will allow me to gain Dhamma and you to gain flesh.” Then Sakka, king of *devas*, saying “So be it, great king,” fashioned a great mountain of collyrium, three *gāvutas*¹⁴ in height at a nearby spot and then said: “If you, great king, rise up into the sky after mounting the summit of this mountain, you will fall¹⁵ into my mouth; when you reach the sky, I will teach you Dhamma. This being the case, you will gain Dhamma and I will gain flesh.”

¹⁴ One quarter of a *yojana*; a *yojana* is said to be the distance that one team of horses, hauling a cart, can cover before becoming exhausted, a *gāvuta* the distance that can be covered by a similar team of oxen.

¹⁵ *patissati*

tassa katham sutvā Dhammasoṇḍakamahārājā anamatagge saṃsāre dhammena suñño hutvā adhammasamaṅgī hutvā adhammass' eva atthāya pāṇātipātikā adinnādāyino kāmesu micchācārā sūkarikā orabbhikā māhisakā sākuṇikā corā pāradārikā ti gahetvā sīsacchinnānaṃ lohitaṃ catusu mahāsamuddesu udakato bahutaraṃ, mātāpituādīnaṃ piyamanāpānaṃ atthāya rodantānaṃ assu catusu mahāsamuddesu udakato pi bahutaraṃ, imaṃ pana sarīraṃ saddhammass' atthāya vikkiṇantaṃ mahapphalañ ca manāpañ cā ti cintetvā sādhu mārisa evaṃ karomī ti pabbatam aruyha pabbatagge t̥hito mama rajjena saddhiṃ mayhaṃ sajīvaṃ sarīraṃ saddhammass' atthāya dassāmī ti somanasso hutvā dhammaṃ kathethā ti saddhammass' atthāya jīvitaṃ pariccajivā ākāsato uppativā dhammaṃ kathethā ti āha.

atha Sakko devarājā sakabhāvena sabbālaṅkārehi patimaṇḍito ativiya somanassappatto tam ākāsato patantaṃ dibbaphusena parāmasanto urena patigaṇhitvā devalokaṃ netvā paṇḍukambalasilāsane nisīdāpetvā mālāgandhādīhi pūjetvā Dhammasoṇḍakamahārājassa dhammaṃ desento imaṃ gātham āha:

Upon hearing this talk, the Great King Dharmasāṅḍaka, being devoid of Dhamma and lacking possession of Dhamma, in *saṃsāra* that is without beginning or end, considered that with reference to¹⁶ (all those who act) against the Dhamma - (such as) destroyers of living beings, those taking what has not been given, those practising misconduct amidst sense-desires, pork-slayers, sheep-slayers, buffalo-slayers, bird-slayers, robbers and adulterers - the blood of their severed heads is more abundant than the water in the four great oceans; that the tears of (their) mothers and fathers and so on, weeping for the sake of their dear and beloved, are more abundant even than the water in the four great oceans; but that selling this body for the sake of the True Dhamma would, however, be both of great fruit and pleasing, said:

“So be it, good sir: I will do as you say” and, standing on the mountain-top after ascending the mountain, said: “For the sake of the True Dhamma, I will give you my own life, my body, together with my kingdom. Please be joyous, talk Dhamma.” Surrendering his life for the sake of the True Dhamma, he rose into the sky,¹⁷ saying: “Please talk Dhamma.”

Then Sakka, King of Devas, adorned with his own person, with all his ornaments, became extremely joyous and, receiving him, as he fell from the sky, on the breast, suffusing him with a divine sprinkling,¹⁸ conducted him to the *devaloka*, where he had him seated on the Paṇḍukambala Rock, worshipped him with garlands and perfumes and so on, and then uttered this verse, teaching the Dhamma to the great king Dharmasāṅḍaka:

¹⁶ *gahetvā*

¹⁷ *ākāsato uppatitvā*; cp above, where *ākāse uppatitvā* is instead found. I suspect that this apparently incorrect reading, seemingly common to all manuscripts consulted, has entered the text at some point in its history, due to the presence, immediately below, of *ākāsato patantaṃ*.

¹⁸ *dibbaphusena parāmasanto*.

aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppādavayadhammino
uppajjitvā nirujjhanti tesam vūpasamo sukho ti.

evaṃ Sakko Dhammasoṇḍakamahārājassa dhammaṃ desetvā
devalokasampattiṃ dassetvā devalokato ānetvā sakarajje patitṭhāpetvā
appamatto hohi ti ovaditvā devalokam eva agamāsī ti.

Dhammasoṇḍakavatthu paṭhamam

II. Migapotakavatthu

Uddaloḷakavihāre dhammasavaṇḍagositasaddam sutvā nimittam gaṇhitamigassa
vatthumhi atthuppatti. Uddaloḷakavihāravane nesādamanusso migānam
koṭṭhakam bandhitvā migānam vijjhanatthāya aṭṭhāsi.

eko migo gocaram gaṇhitvā pānīyatthāya tittham gacchanto
dhammasavaṇḍagositasaddam sutvā dhammasavaṇḍasaddesu nimittam gaṇhitvā
ukkhittapādam anikkhipanto aṭṭhāsi.

tasmim kāle nesādamanusso migakoṭṭhake thito tam migam vijjhi. so
kālakiriya katvā Uddaloḷakavāsīmahābhayatherassa kaṇiṭṭhabhaginiyā
kucchimhi paṭisandhim gaṇhi.

so mātukucchito nikkhamitvā sattavassikakāle mātulatherassa santike
pabbajitvā khuragge yeva arahattam pāpuṇitvā mātulatherassa santikam gantvā
mātulatheram canda hatthena parimajjantam addasa. therō sāmaṇeram disvā
etam rakkhitum vaṭṭati sāmaṇerā ti āha.

sāmaṇero therena kathitam sutvā candasahassam āharitvā therassa dassetvā
bhante candasahassam āharitum samattho kasmā ekaṃ candam [7] āharantassa
pākaṭam karissatī ti āha.

“Impermanent, truly, are conditioned things; their nature is to arise and fall. Having arisen, they cease—their pacification is bliss” (D II 157).¹⁹

Having thus taught Dhamma to the great king Dhammasoṇḍaka, Sakka revealed the excellence of the *devaloka*, brought him back from there and then, having established him in his own kingdom, exhorted him to be diligent and then went straight back to the *devaloka*.

2. The story of Migapotaka²⁰

This is the matter-arising as regards the story concerning the deer that had grasped the sign upon hearing the sound broadcast during a Dhamma-hearing in the Uddaloḷakavihāra: a huntsman constructed a hunting pit²¹ in the grove of the Uddaloḷakavihāra, and then waited with the aim of shooting deer (with an arrow). Some deer, as it was going to a fording-place in order to drink after securing its fodder, heard the sound broadcast during a Dhamma-hearing, grasped the sign associated with such sounds when hearing Dhamma, and then remained standing, unable to set down its raised hoof.

At that very moment, the huntsman, stationed in the hunting pit, shot the deer. As it finished its time, it took re-linking in the womb of a younger sister of the elder Mahābhaya, resident of the Uddaloḷaka. After emerging from his mother’s womb, he went forth, when he was seven years old, in the presence of his uncle-elder, reaching arahantship whilst still in the tonsure-hall,²² and then went into the presence of his uncle-elder, where he saw his uncle-elder stroking the moon with his hand. The elder, upon seeing the novice, said: “This should protect you, novice.”

When the novice heard what the elder said, he fetched a thousand moons, showed them to the elder and then said: “Bhante, I am able to fetch a thousand moons—why fetch only one moon²³ and make it manifest?”

¹⁹ The text here continues with a short commentary on this verse, after which it draws the story to a close with this final paragraph.

²⁰ A deer-calf; this story is seemingly distinct from the *Migapotakajāṭaka* (No. 372).

²¹ *koṭṭhaka*, cf. DOP sv (iv), ‘a hide (perhaps a pit, for hunting)’.

²² Cp Pv-a 53, where same is said of the venerable Saṃkicca.

²³ The meaning of *ekam candam āharantassa* is unclear.

thero puna divase attano bhaginiyā geḥaṃ gacchanto tiṃsasahassamattaṃ bhikkhusaṅghaṃ gahetvā agamāsi. bhaginiyā pi dvinnaṃ mātulabhāgineyyānaṃ atthāya dve āsanāni paññattāni dvinnam atthāya yāgubhattaṃ ca sampāditaṃ tass’ ānubhāvena antarakhajjakaṃ ca bhattaṃ ca āsanaṃ ca sabbesaṃ tiṃsasahassānaṃ pahonakam ahoṣi.

sāmaṇero bhuttānumodanaṃ maṅgalaṃ vaḍḍhento dhammaṃ desesi. mātapitūnaṃ ādiṃ katvā pañcakulasatāni sotapannāni ahesuṃ. bahūnaṃ dhammadesanā sātthikā ahoṣi ti.

Migapotakavatthu dutiyaṃ

III. Dhammasutaupāsikāya vatthu

Mahāgāme Rājavihārasmiṃ dhammasavaṇasutaupāsikāya vatthumhi atthupatti. ekā Mahāgāmavāsī upāsikā Rājamahāvihāre Maṇi-cetiyaḥadvāre dhammaṃ suṇamānā attanā patthetvā laddham ekaputtakaṃ āsivisena ḍasantaṃ disvā dhammasavaṇassa antarāyaṃ mā hotū ti vatvā sayaṃ ca na nivāresi aññesaṃ ca na dassesi.

pacchā dhammasavaṇaniṭṭhitakāle visavegena visaññībhūtassa dārakassa santikaṃ gantvā yena ākārena dhammasavaṇassa antarāyam akatvā ekapadam pi avināsetvā assosiṃ etena saccena nibbiso jīvatu mama putto ti saccakiriyaṃ katvā puttassa jīvitam arogaṃ katvā ten’ eva somanassena pacchā cavitvā sagge nibbattā ti vadanti.

Dhammasutaupāsikāya vatthu tatiyaṃ

As the elder was going to his sister's house on the following day, he collected a company of as many as thirty thousand monks and then continued on his way. Two seats had been appointed by his sister for the pair, the uncle and his nephew, and a meal of rice-gruel prepared for them, but through his majesty, those refreshments,²⁴ meals and seats became sufficient for all thirty thousand.

The novice taught Dhamma, rendering appreciation for the what had been eaten²⁵ more auspicious. Five hundred families, starting with his mother and father, became *sotāpannas*. That Dhamma-teaching was of benefit to many.

3. The story of the female layfollower who heard dhamma

This is the matter-arising as regards a female layfollower who heard a Dhamma-hearing at the Rājavihāra in Mahāgāma: a certain female layfollower who was a resident of Mahāgāma, whilst hearing Dhamma at the gate to the Mañicetiya compound²⁶ in Rājavihāra, upon seeing that her only son, who she had obtained through her own religious aspirations, had been bitten by a poisonous snake, said: "Let there be no obstacle to the Dhamma-hearing." She did not restrain her own (observances) or display (a sign of discomfort) to anyone else.

Later, when the Dhamma-hearing concluded, she went into the presence of her young child, who was unconscious as a result of the power of the poison, and then performed an act of truth, saying: "The manner in which I heard (of my son's malady) without creating any obstacle to hearing Dhamma, without ruining even a single word, as a result of this truth may my son live and be free from poison." They say that, having caused her son to live, to be healthy, she, on account of that same joy, later fell (from that existence) and came into being in heaven.

²⁴ *antarakhajjaka*; taken between the morning gruel and noon (cf. CPD sv).

²⁵ *bhutta*; vl *bhatta*.

²⁶ *geha*; cp Ras II 3: *mañicetiyaṃ nāma mahācetiyaṃ ahosi tattha mahādvārakoṭṭhakasamīpe..*

[8] IV. Migaluddakassa vatthu

Saddhammasavaṇamigaluddakassa vatthumhi atthuppatti. ito ekatiṃsakappamatthake Sikhī nāma sammāsambuddho loke uppajjitvā araṇṇāyatane devatānaṃ catusaccapaṭisaṃyuttaṃ katvā dhammaṃ desesi.

taṃ eko migaluddako āsannaṭṭhāne ṭhatvā dhammaṃ sutvā cittaṃ pasādetvā cavitvā devaloke nibbattitvā ekatiṃsakappe duggatiyaṃ anibbattitvā sugatiyaṃ yeva devamanussasampattiṃ anubhavanto imasmiṃ Buddhuppade pabbajitvā catusaccapaṭisaṃyuttavacanaṃ sutvā catupaṭisambhīdāhi arahattaṃ pāpunitvā udānaṃ udānento imā gathā abhāsi:

migaluddako pure āsiṃ araṇṇe vivittāyatane
addasaṃ virajaṃ Buddhaṃ devasaṅghapurakkhataṃ

catusaccaṃ pakāsentāṃ nibbutāṃ amataṃ padaṃ
assosiṃ madhuraṃ dhammaṃ Sikhino lokasāmino.

ghose cittaṃ pasādesiṃ asamam appaṭipuggalaṃ
tatha cittaṃ pasādetvā atariṃ duttaraṃ bhavan ti.

Migaluddakassa vatthu catutthaṃ

4. The story of the deer-hunter

This is the matter-arising as regards the story of the deer-hunter hearing the True Dhamma: at a period of thirty-one *kalpas* from now, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One named Sikhin arose in the world, and then taught Dhamma associated with the four truths to the *devatās* in a forest-tract.

A certain deer-hunter, stationed at a nearby spot, heard that Dhamma, made his heart devoted thereto, fell (from this existence) and then came into being in the *devaloka*, and did not come into being in a miserable destiny for thirty-one *kalpas*, experiencing excellence as a *deva* or a human solely in a happy destiny; he went forth in this Buddha-interval, heard a statement associated with the four truths, reached arahantship by way of the four discriminations and then, whilst giving rise to an Udāna, pronounced these verses:²⁷

“In the past, I was a deer-hunter in a secluded tract²⁸ in the forest;
I saw the dustless Buddha, set to the fore of the company of *devas*.

I heard him, the quenched one,²⁹ manifesting the four truths,
the death-free place, the sweet Dhamma of Sikhin, master of
the world.³⁰

I made my heart devoted at that broadcast, so that it is without
equal, without peer;³¹ having made my heart devoted thereto, I
crossed³² becoming so hard to cross.”

²⁷ Cp Ap II 451; Thag-a I 96.

²⁸ *vivittāyatane*; Ap, Thag-a *vipine ahaṃ*.

²⁹ *nibbutaṃ*; Ap, Thag-a *desentaṃ*.

³⁰ *lokasāmino*; Ap, Thag-a *lokabandhuno*.

³¹ *asamaṃ appaṭipuggalaṃ* Ap, Thag-a *asamappaṭipuggale*.

³² *atarim*; Ap, Thag-a *uttarim*.

V. Bhujagavināsitavatthu

Mahāvāsavihāre ariyavaṃsadhammadesanaṃ savaṇatthāya gatamagge mahātherassa bhujagena daṭṭhavatthumhi atthuppatti. Mahāvāsavihāre ariyavaṃsadhammadesanākathanakāle Kaṇḍarajjavāsī eko mahāthero dhammaṃ sossāmī ti vatvā gantvā attano nisādana-okāsaṃ alabhitvā parisapariyante ekasmiṃ tiṇagumbe atṭhāsi.

tattha ṭhatvā dhammaṃ [9] suṇamānassa eko bhujago tiṇagumbato nikkhamitvā pādantarena āruyhitvā cattāro dāṭhā pāpetvā nisīdanapasse ḍasi. thero dhammasavaṇantarāyo mā hotū ti cintetvā hatthaṃ otaretvā bhujagassa sīsaṃ dalhaṃ gahetvā upāhanathavikāyaṃ pakkhipitvā mukhabandhanaṃ bandhitvā ekapasse ṭhapetvā dhammaṃ assosi.

dhammasavaṇānubhāvena daṭṭhaṭṭhānato visaṃ na uggataṃ dhammasavaṇante aruṇe uggacchante manussānaṃ ca gatakāle mahābhujago mayā gahito ti bhujagaṃ dassesi.

bhikkhū kataravelāya ayaṃ bhujago tayā gahito ti āhaṃsu. nidānakathanakāle yeva ayaṃ bhujago mayā gahito ti āha. bhikkhū acchariyaṃ āvuso evarūpaṃ āsīvisaṃ gahetvā dhammadesanāya antarāyassa akaraṇaṃ ti āhaṃsu.

sace āvuso na saddahatha ahaṃ bhujagena daṭṭhakālato paṭṭhāya avikkhittacitto hutvā ekapadaṃ pi avināsetvā dhammam assosim etena saccena visaṃ vinassatū ti saccakiriyaṃ akāsi. taṃ khaṇaṇṇeva visaṃ paṭhaviṃ pāvīsi.

dhammasavaṇaṃ evaṃ mahānisamsaṃ mahapphalaṃ sabbasattānaṃ visaghātakamahā-agadaṃ hotī ti osadhānaṃ samasaṅkhātaṃ visaghātaṃ mahā-agadaṃ.

Bhujagavisānāsīvatthu pañcamam

5. The story concerning the expelled snake

This is the matter-arising as regards the story of a great elder who had been bitten by a snake whilst underway with the aim of hearing a Dhamma-teaching on the ariyan lineage at the Mahāvāsavihāra: at the time that a Dhamma-teaching on the ariyan lineage was being delivered in the Mahāvāsavihāra, some great elder, who was a resident of Kaṇḍarajja,³³ went, saying that he was going to hear Dhamma but, not finding any room to sit down, stood in a grass-thicket on the fringe of the assembly.

Whilst standing there hearing Dhamma, a snake emerged from the grass-thicket, rose up between his legs, brought out his four fangs and bit him on the buttocks. Thinking: “Let there be no obstacle to hearing Dhamma!”, the elder lowered his hand, firmly grasped the snake’s head, cast it into his sandal-bag, tied the mouth of the bag, set this to one side, and then continued to hear Dhamma.

Through the majesty of hearing Dhamma, the poison failed to rise from the place at which he had been bitten; at the time that the people were departing, upon the arising of the dawn at the end of that Dhamma-hearing, he revealed the snake, saying: “I have caught this great snake!”

The monks said: “For how long have you been grasping this snake?” He said: “Ever since the very beginning of the talk.” The monks said: “It is a marvel, friend, in that, after grasping a poisonous snake of such a kind, no obstacle to the Dhamma-teaching was created.”

He then performed an act of truth, saying: “If you, sirs, do not believe that, onwards from the time that I was bitten by that snake, I have remained undisturbed in heart, that I have heard Dhamma without causing even a single word to be ruined, then as a result of this truth may the poison be destroyed.” At that very moment, the poison entered the earth.

In that hearing Dhamma is of such great advantage, of such great fruition, that it acts as the great antidote that destroys poison for all beings, that same great antidote that destroys poison is reckoned to be equivalent to medicinal herbs.³⁴

³³ Perhaps a reference to Kandarājika, a village in Rājarattha in Ceylon.

³⁴ *osadhānaṃ*; according to PED, sv *osadhī*, “Childers calls it Venus but gives no evidence; other translators render it as ‘morning star.’ According to Hindu mythology, the lord of medicine is the moon (*oṣadhīśa*), not any particular star.” Cp Sn 687, where the moon is said to be the “bull of stars” (*tārāsabha*). It is thought that the moon infuses medicinal herbs with their curative property.

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