

[Note: The story of sons of Pandu is on pages 10 to 12.]

Jataka No. 536

KUṆĀLA-JĀTAKA

"This is the report and the fame thereof," etc. -- This was a story told by the Master, while dwelling beside lake Kuṇāla, concerning five hundred Brethren who were overwhelmed with discontent. Here follows the story in due order.

The Sākiya and Koliya tribes had the river Rohinī which flows between the cities of Kapilavatthu and Koliya confined by a single dam and by means of it cultivated their crops. In the month Jetṭhamūla when the crops began to flag and droop, the labourers from amongst the dwellers of both cities assembled together. Then the people of Koliya said, "Should this water be drawn off on both sides, it will not prove sufficient for both us and you. But our crops will thrive with a single watering; give us then the water." The people of Kapilavatthu said, "When you have filled your garners with corn, we shall hardly have the courage to come with ruddy gold, emeralds and copper coins, and with baskets and sacks in our hands, to hang about your doors. Our crops too will thrive with a single watering; give us the water." "We will not give it," they said. "Neither will we," said the others. As words thus ran high, one of them rose up and struck another a blow, and he in turn struck a third and thus it was that what with interchanging blows and spitefully touching on the origin of their princely families they increased the tumult. The Koliya labourers said, "Be off with your people of Kapilavatthu, men who like dogs, jackals, and such like beasts, cohabited with their own sisters. What will their elephants and horses, their shields and spears avail against us?" The Sākiya labourers replied, "Nay, do you, wretched lepers, be off with your children, destitute and ill-conditioned fellows, who like brute beasts had their dwelling in a hollow jujube tree (koli). What shall their elephants and horses, their spears and shields avail against us?" So they went and told the councillors

—I mean these harlots, wenches, and street-walkers. They are like unto robbers with braided locks, like a poisoned drink, like merchants that sing their own praises, crooked like a deer's horn, evil-tongued like snakes, like a pit that is covered over, insatiate as hell, as hard to satisfy as a she-ogre, like the all-rapacious Yama, all-devouring like a flame, sweeping all before it as a river, like the wind going where it lists, indiscriminating like mount Neru, fruiting perennially like a poison tree." Here too occurs a further verse:

Like poisoned draught or robber fell, crooked as horn of stag,
Like serpent evil-tongued are they, as merchant apt to brag,

Murderous as covered pit, like Hell's insatiate maw are they,
As goblin greedy or like Death that carries all away.

Devouring like a flame are they, mighty as wind or flood,
Like Neru's golden peak that aye confuses bad and good,
Pernicious as a poison-tree they fivefold ruin bring
On household gear, wasters of wealth and every precious thing.

Once upon a time, they say, Brahmadata, king of Kāsi, owing to his having an army, seized on the kingdom of Kosala, slew its king and carried off his chief queen, who was then pregnant, to Benares and there made her his consort. By and by she gave birth to a daughter, and as the king had neither son nor daughter of his own begetting, he was greatly pleased and said, "Fair lady, choose some boon at my hands." She accepted the boon but reserved her choice. Now they named the young princess Kaṇhā. So when she was grown up, her mother said, "Dear child, your father offered me a boon, which I accepted but put off my choice: do you now choose whatever you like." From the excess of her passion breaking through maidenly shame she said to her mother, "Nothing else is lacking to me; get him to hold an assembly to choose me a husband." The mother repeated this to the king. The king said, "Let her have whatever she wishes," and he had an assembly for choosing a husband proclaimed. In the palace yard a host of men assembled, arrayed in all their splendour. Kaṇhā, who with a basket of flowers in her hand stood looking out of an upper lattice window, approved of no single one of them. Then Ajjuna, Nakula, Bhīmasena, Yudhiṭṭhila, Sahadeva, of the family of king Pāṇḍu, these five sons of king Pāṇḍu, I say, after receiving instruction in arts at Takkasilā from a world-

famed teacher, travelling about with the idea of mastering local customs, arrived at Benares, and hearing a commotion in the city and learning in answer to their inquiry what it was all about, they came and stood all five of them in a row, in appearance like so many golden statues. Kāṇhā on seeing them fell in love with all five, as they stood before her, and threw a wreathed coil of flowers on the head of all the five and said, "Dear mother, I choose these five men." The queen told this to the king. The king, because he had given her the choice, did not say, "You cannot do this," but was greatly vexed. On asking however what was their origin and whose sons they were, when he learned that they were sons of king Pāṇḍu, he paid them great honour and gave them his daughter to wife, and by the force of her passion she won the affection of these five princes in her seven-storied palace. Now she had as an attendant a humpbacked cripple, and when by the force of passion she had won the hearts of the five princes, as soon as they had gone forth from the palace, finding her opportunity and fired by lust she sinned with the hump-backed slave, and conversing with him she said, "There is no one dear to me like you; I will slay these princes and have your feet smeared in the blood from their throats." And when she was in the company of the eldest of the royal brothers, she would say, "You are dearer to me than those other four. For your sake I would even sacrifice my life. At my father's death I will bestow the kingdom on you alone." But when she was in the company of the others, she acted in just the same way. They were greatly pleased with her, thinking, "She is fond of us and owing to this the sovereignty will be ours." One day she was sick, and gathering about her, one sat chafing her head, and the rest each of them a hand or foot, while the hump-back sat at her feet. To the eldest brother, prince Ajjuna, who was chafing her head, she made a sign with her head, implying, "No one is dearer to me than you are: so long as I live I shall live for you and at my father's death I will bestow the kingdom on you," and so she won his heart. To the others too she made signs with hand or foot to the same effect. But to the hump-back she made a sign with her tongue which said, "You only are dear to me: for your sake shall I live." All of them, owing to what had been said by her before, knew what was meant by this sign. But while the rest of them each recognised the sign given to himself, prince Ajjuna when he saw the motions of hand, foot or tongue, thought, "As in my case, so also with the others, by this sign some token must be given, and there must be some

intimacy with this hump-backed fellow"; so going outside with his brothers he asked, "Did you see the lady with five husbands making a sign with her head to me?" "Yes, we did." "Do you know the meaning of it?" "We do not." "The meaning of it was so and so: do you know what was meant by the sign given you with hand or foot?" "Yes, we know." "In the same way she gave me too a sign. Do you know the meaning of the sign given to the humpback by a motion of her tongue?" "We do not know." Then he told them, "With him too she has sinned." And when they did not believe him, he sent for the hump-back and asked him, and he told him all about it. When they heard what he had to say, they all lost their passionate love for her. "Ah! surely," they said, "womankind is evil and vicious. Leaving men like us, nobly born and blest by fortune, she goes wrong with a disgusting, loathsome, hump-backed fellow like this. Who that is wise will find any pleasure in consorting with women so shameless and wicked as this?" Thus censuring womenfolk in many a turn the five princes thought, "We have had enough of married life," and retired into the Himalayas, and after going through the Kasiṇa rite, at the end of their life they fared according to their deeds. Kuṇāla the bird-king was prince Ajjuna, and it was for this reason that in setting forth anything that he himself had seen, he began his story with the words "I saw." In relating other things that he had seen of old he used the same words, and here follows an explanation of an incident given in the first introductory story.

Once upon a time, they say, a white nun named Saccatapāvī had a hut of leaves built in a cemetery near Benares, and living there she abstained from four out of five meals, and throughout the city her fame was blazed abroad like as it were that of the Moon or Sun, and natives of Benares, if they sneezed or stumbled, said, "Praise be to Saccatapāvī." Now on the first day of a festival some goldsmiths had a tent erected in a certain spot where a crowd was gathered, and bringing fish, meat, strong drink, perfumes, wreaths and the like, they started a drinking bout. Then a certain goldsmith, who was addicted to drink, in vomiting said, "Praise be to Saccatapāvī." On a certain wise man amongst them saying, "Alas! blind fool, you are paying honour to a fickle-minded woman—Oh! you are a fool," he replied, "Friend, speak not thus, nor be guilty of a deed that leads to hell." Then the wise man said, "You fool, hold your tongue. Lay a wager with me for a thousand crowns and on the seventh day from this, seated in this very spot, I will deliver into your hands Saccatapāvī in splendid