

# Cakkavattisihananda Sutta

The Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel

Thus Have I Heard:

Once the Lord was staying among the Magadhans at Matula. Then he said: 'Monks!'

'Lord,' they replied, and the Lord said:

'Monks, be islands unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourselves with no other refuge. And how does a monk dwell on an island unto himself, as a refuge unto himself with no other refuge, with Dhamma as his island, with the Dhamma as his refuge, with no other refuge? Here, a monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world, he abides contemplating feelings as feelings... mind as mind... mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Keep to your own preserves, monks, to your ancestral haunts. If you do so, then Mara will find no lodgement, no foothold. It is just by the building up of wholesome states that this merit increases.

Once, monks, there was a wheel turning monarch named Dalhanemi, a righteous monarch of the law, conqueror of the four quarters, who had established the security of his realm and was possessed of the seven treasures. These are: The Wheel Treasure, the Elephant Treasure, the Horse Treasure, the Jewel Treasure, the Female Treasure, the Householder Treasure, and, as seventh, the Treasure of Advisors. He has more than a thousand sons who are heroes, of heroic stature, conquerors of the hostile army. He dwells having conquered this sea-girt land without stick or sword, by the law.

And, after many hundreds and thousands of years, King Dalhanemi said to a certain man: "My good man, whenever you see that the sacred wheel treasure has slipped from its position, report it to me."

"Yes Sire," the man replied. And after many hundreds and thousands of years the man saw that the sacred wheel treasure had slipped from its position. Seeing this, he reported the fact to the king. Then King Dalhanemi sent for his eldest son, the crown prince, and said: "My son, the sacred wheel treasure has slipped from its position. And I have heard say that when this happens to a wheel turning monarch he has not much longer to live. I have had my fill of human pleasures, now is the time to seek heavenly

pleasures. You, my son, take over control of this Ocean Bounded Land I will shave off my hair and beard, don yellow robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness." And, having installed his eldest son in due form as king, King Dalhanemi shaved off his hair and beard, donned yellow robes, and went forth the household life into homelessness. And, seven days after the Royal Sage had gone forth, the sacred Wheel Treasure vanished.

Then a certain man came to the anointed Khattiya King and said, "Sire, you should know that the sacred Wheel Treasure has disappeared." At this the king was grieved and felt sad. He went to the Royal Sage and told him the news. And the royal sage said to him, "My son, you should not grieve or feel sad at the disappearance of the wheel treasure. The Wheel Treasure is not an heirloom from your fathers. But now, my son, you must turn yourself into an Ariyan wheel turner. And then it may come about that, if you perform the duties of an Ariyan Wheel Turning Monarch, on the fast day of the fifteenth, when you have washed your head and gone up to the Verandah on top of your palace for the fast day, the sacred Wheel Treasure will appear to you, thousand spoked, complete with felloe, hub and all accessories."

"But what, sire, is the duty of an Ariyan wheel turning monarch?"

"It is this, my son: Yourself depending on the Dhamma, honoring it, revering it, cherishing it, doing homage to it and venerating it, having the Dhamma as your badge and banner, acknowledging the Dhamma as your master, you should establish guard, ward and protection according to Dhamma for your own household, your troops, your nobles and vassals, for Brahmins and householders, town and country folk, ascetics and Brahmins, for beasts and birds. Let no crime prevail in your kingdom, and to those who are in need, give property. And whatever ascetics and Brahmins in your kingdom have renounced the life of sensual infatuation and are devoted to forbearance and gentleness, each one tamping himself, each one calming himself and each one striving for the end of craving, if from time to time they should come to you and consult you as to what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what is to be followed and what is not to be followed, and what action will in the long run lead to harm and sorrow., and them to avoid evil and do what is good. That, my son, is the duty of an Ariyan Monarch."

"Yes Sire," Said the king, and he performed the duties of an Ariyan wheel-turning Monarch. And as he did so, on the Fast Day of the fifteenth, when he had washed his head and gone up to the verandah on top of his palace for the fast day, the sacred wheel treasure appeared to him, thousand spoked, complete with felloe, hub, and all accessories. Then the King thought, "I have heard that when a duly anointed Khattiya King sees such a wheel on the fast day of the fifteenth, he will become a wheel turning monarch. May I become such a Monarch!"

Then, rising from his seat, covering one shoulder with his robe, the King took a gold vessel in his left hand, sprinkled the Wheel with his right hand, and said: "May the noble Wheel Treasure turn, may the noble Wheel Treasure conquer!" The Wheel Turned to the east, and the King followed it with his fourfold army. And in whatever country the Wheel stopped, the King took up residence with his fourfold army. And those who opposed him in the eastern region came and said: "Come, Your Majesty, Welcome! We are yours, Your Majesty. Rule us, your Majesty." And the King said: "Do not take life. Do not take what is not given. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not tell lies. Do not drink strong drink. Be moderate in eating." And those who had opposed him in the Eastern Region became his subjects.

Then the Wheel turned south, west, and north, each time resulting in like manner. Then the Wheel Treasure, having conquered the lands from sea to sea, returned to the royal capital and stopped before the King's Palace as he was trying a case, as if to adorn the royal palace.

And a second wheel turning monarch did likewise, and a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh king also ... told a man to see of the wheel had slipped from its position. And seven days after the Royal Sage had gone forth, the wheel disappeared.

Then a man came to the King and said: "Sire, you should know that the sacred wheel treasure has disappeared."

At this the king was grieved and felt sad. But he did not go to the Royal Sage and ask him about the duties of a wheel turning monarch. Instead, he ruled the people according to his own ideas, and, being so rules, the people did not prosper so well as they had done under the previous kings who had performed the duties of a wheel turning monarch. Then the ministers, counselors, treasury officials, guards and doorkeepers, and the chanters of mantras came to the King and said: "Sire, as long as you rule the people according to your own ideas, and differently from the way they were ruled before under previous wheel turning monarchs, the people do not prosper so well. Sire, there are ministers...in your realm, including ourselves, who have persevered the knowledge of how a wheel turning king should rule. Ask us, Your Majesty, and we will tell you!"

Then the King ordered all the ministers and others to come together, and he consulted them. And they explained to him the duties of a wheel turning monarch. And having listen to them, the King established guard and protection, but he did not give property to the needy, and as a result poverty became rife. With the spread of poverty, a man took what was not given, thus committing what was called theft. They arrested him, and brought him before the king, saying: "Your Majesty, this man took what was not

given, which we call theft." The King said to him: "Is it true that you took what was not given – which is called theft?"

"It is, your Majesty."

"Why?"

"Your Majesty, I have nothing to live on."

Then the King gave the man some property, saying, "With this, my good man, you can keep yourself, support your mother and father, keep a wife and children, carry on a business and make gifts to ascetics and Brahmins, which will promote your spiritual welfare and lead to a happy rebirth with pleasant result in a heavenly sphere."

"Very Good, Your Majesty." Replied the man.

And exactly the same thing happened with another man.

Then people heard that the King was giving away property to those who took what was not given and they thought: "Suppose we were to do likewise!" and then another man took what was not given, and they brought him before the king. The King asked him why he had done this, and he replied: "Your Majesty, I have nothing to live on." Then the King thought: "If I give property to everybody who takes what is not given, this theft will increase more and more. I had better make an end of him, finish him off once for all, and cut his head off." So he commanded his men: 'Bind this man's arms tightly behind him with a strong rope, shave his head closely, and lead him to the rough sound of a drum through the streets and squares and out through the southern gate, and there finish by inflicting the capital penalty and cutting off his head!" And they did so.

Hearing about this, people thought: "Now let us get sharp swords made for us, and then we can take from anybody what is not given, which is called theft, we will make an end of them, finish them off once for all and cut off their heads." So, having procured some sharp swords, they launched murderous assaults on villages, towns and cities, and went in for highway-robbery, killing their victims by cutting off their heads.

Thus, from not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife, from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased, from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased, from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased – and from the increase in the taking of life, people's life span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result of this decrease of life-span and beauty, the

children of those whose life span had been eighty thousand years lived only forty thousand.

And a man of the generation that lived for forty thousand years took what was not given. He was brought before the king, who asked him: "Is it true that you took what as not given – what is called theft?"

"No, your majesty." He replied, thus telling a deliberate lie.

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy,... the taking of life increased, and from the taking of life, lying increased, from the increase in lying, peoples life span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result the children of whose life span had been forty thousand years lived only twenty thousand.

And a man of the generation that lived for twenty thousand years took what was not given. Another man denounced him to the King saying, "Sire, such and such a man has taken what was not given."

Thus, from the not giving property to the needy... the speaking evil of others increased, and in consequence, peoples life span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result the children of those whose life span had been twenty thousand years lived only for ten thousand.

And of the generation that lived for ten thousand years, some were beautiful, and some where ugly. And those who were ugly, being envious of those who were beautiful, committed adultery with others wives.

Thus from the not giving of property to the needy... sexual misconduct increased, and in consequence people's life spans decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose life span had been ten thousand years lived only five thousand.

And among the generation whose life span was five thousand years, two things increased: Harsh speech and idle chatter, in consequence of which people's life span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result, the children of those whose life span had been five thousand years live, some for two and a half thousand years, and some for only two thousand.

And among the generation whose life span was two and a half thousand years, covetousness and hatred increased, and in consequence people's life span decreased, their beauty decreased, and as a result the children of those whose life span had been two and a half thousand years lived for only a thousand.

Among the generation of a thousand year life spans, false opinions increased, and as a result, their children lived for only five hundred. Among that generation three things increased: incest, excessive greed, and deviant practices...and as a result their children lived for only two hundred and fifty years, and some for only two hundred. Among those people, there was a lack of respect for parents, teachers, and sovereign and because of this their children's beauty decreased, and their life span decreased to one hundred years.

Monks, there will come a time when the children of these people will have a life span of ten years, and with them girls will be marriageable at five years old. And with them, these flavors will disappear: ghee, butter, salt, sesame oil, molasses and salt. Among them, Kudrusa grain will be their chief food, just as rice and curry are today. And with them, the ten courses of moral conduct will completely disappear, and the ten courses of evil will prevail exceedingly: for those of the ten year life span, there will be no word for "moral," so how can there be anyone who acts in a moral way? Those people who have no respect for their parents, for teachers, for sovereign. Will be ones who enjoy honor and prestige. Just as it is now the people who show respect for their parents, for teachers, for sovereign who are praised and honored, so will it be with people who do the opposite.

Among those of a ten year life span no account will be taken of mother or aunt, or of sister in law, or of teachers wife, or fathers wives and so on – all will be promiscuous in the world like sheep and goats, chickens and hogs, wolves and dogs. Among them, fierce enmity will prevail one for another, fierce hatred, fierce anger and thoughts of killing, mother against child and child against mother, father against child and likewise – brother against brother, brother against sister, just as a hunter feels against the beast he stalks.

And for those of a ten year life span, there will come to be a "sword interval" of seven days, during which they will mistake each other for wild beasts. Sharp swords will appear in their hands and, thinking, "There is an untamed beast!" they will take each others little lives with those swords. But there will be some beings who will think: "Let us not kill or be killed by anyone! Let us make for some grassy thickets or jungle hideaways, or clumps of trees, or for rough rivers, or for difficult mountains, and there live on roots and fruits of the forest." And this they will do for seven days. Then, at the end of the seven days they will emerge from their hiding places and rejoice together of one accord, saying, "Good beings, I see that you are alive!" and then the thought will occur to those beings: "It is only because we became addicted to evil ways that we suffered this loss of our kindred, so now let us do good! What good can we do? Let us abstain from the taking of life, and, having undertaken this good thing, will practice it. And through having undertaken such wholesome things, they will

increase in life span and beauty. And their children will live for twenty years, while they had only lived for ten.

Then it will occur to those beings: "It is through having taken to wholesome practices that we have increased in lifespan and beauty, so let us perform still more wholesome practices. Let us refrain from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, from untruthful speech, from idle chatter, from covetousness, from ill-will, from wrong views, let us abstain from [all of the things that brought about this calamity] and let us persevere in these wholesome actions."

And so they will do these things, and on account of this they will increase in life span and in beauty. The children whose life spans were twenty years will live to be forty, of forty, eighty, of eighty, one hundred and sixty, of one hundred and sixty, three hundred and twenty, etc., and in time their children will attain to eighty thousand years.

Among the people with an eighty thousand year life span, girls will become marriageable at five hundred. And such people will know only three kinds of disease: greed, fasting, and old age. And in the time of those people this continent of Jambudvīpa will be powerful and prosperous, and villages, towns, and cities will be but a raven's flight one from the next. This Jambudvīpa, like Avīci, will be as thick with people as the jungle is thick with reeds and rushes. At that time the Varanasi of today will be a royal city called Ketumati, powerful and prosperous, crowded with people and well supplied. In Jambudvīpa there will be eighty-four thousand cities headed by Ketumati as the Royal Capital.

And in the time of the people with eighty thousand year life span, there will arise in the capital city of Ketumati a king called Sankha, a wheel turning monarch, a righteous ruler of the law, conqueror of the four quarters who had established the security of his realm and was possessed of the seven treasures. These are: The Wheel Treasure, the Elephant Treasure, the Horse Treasure, the Jewel Treasure, the Female Treasure, the Householder Treasure, and, as seventh, the Treasure of Advisors. He has more than a thousand sons who are heroes, of heroic stature, conquerors of the hostile army. He dwells having conquered this sea-girt land without stick or sword, by the law.

And in that time of the people with an eighty thousand year life span, there will arise in the world a blessed lord, an arahant fully enlightened Buddha named Metteyya (Maitreya, Sanskrit), endowed with wisdom and conduct, a well farer, knower of the worlds, incomparable trainer of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed, just as I am now... Then King Sankha will re-erect the long lost palace of King Maha Panada, which was drowned in the Ganges, and, having

lived in it, he will give it up and present it to the ascetics and Brahmins, the beggars, the wayfarers, the destitute. Then, shaving off hair and beard, he will don a yellow robe and go forth from the householders life into homelessness under the supreme Buddha Maitreya. Having gone forth, he will remain alone, in seclusion, ardent, eager and resolute, and before long he will have attained in this very life, by his own super-knowledge and resolution, that unequalled goal of the holy life, for the sake of which young men of good family go forth from the household life into homelessness, and will abide therein.

‘Monks, be islands unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourselves with no other refuge. And how does a monk dwell on an island unto himself, as a refuge unto himself with no other refuge, with Dhamma as his island, with the Dhamma as his refuge, with no other refuge? Here, a monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world, he abides contemplating feelings as feelings... mind as mind... mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

Keep to your own preserves, monks, to your ancestral haunts. If you do so, your life span will increase, your wealth will increase, your beauty will increase, your happiness will increase, and your power will increase.

And what is the length of life for a monk? Here, a monk develops the road to power which is concentration of intention accompanied by effort of will, the road to power which is concentration of energy... the road to power which is concentration of consciousness... the road to power which is concentration of investigation accompanied by effort of will. By frequently practicing these four roads to power he can, if he wishes, live for a full century, or the remaining part of a century. This is what I call Length of Life for a monk.

And what is beauty for a monk? Here, a monk practices right conduct, is restrained according to the discipline, is perfect in behavior and habits, sees danger in the slightest fault, and trains un the rules of training he has undertaken. That is beauty for a monk/

And what is happiness for a monk? Here, a monk, detached from sense-desires... enters the four jhanas, purified by equanimity and mindfulness. That is happiness for a monk.

And what is wealth for a monk? Here, a monk, with his heart filled with loving kindness, dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across –everywhere, always

with a mind filled with loving kindness, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill will. This is wealth for a monk.

And what is power for a monk? Here a monk, by the destruction of the corruptions, enters into and abides in that corruption-less liberation of heart and liberation by wisdom which he has attained, in this very life, by his own super knowledge and realization. That is power for a monk.

Monks, I do not consider any power so hard to conquer as the power of Mara. It is just by this building up of wholesome states that this merit increases.

Thus the Lord spoke, and the monks were delighted and rejoiced at his words.