

NAMO BUDDHAYA!!!

Children's Dhamma Program

Noble Dhamma for Little Hearts

Apannaka Jathaka

Dear children,

Once upon a time in the city of Benares, there was a king named Brahmadata. In those days the Bodhisatta was born into a merchant's family, where he grew up and became a merchant. At the same time, in the same city, there was another merchant, but he was unwise. One day the two merchants each loaded five hundred carts and prepared to leave in the same direction at the same time. The Bodhisatta thought, "If these thousand carts stay together, it will be too much for the road. Finding wood and water for the men will be difficult, and there won't be enough grass for the oxen. Either he or I must go first." He told the unwise merchant: "The two of us can't travel together; would you rather



go first or last?" The unwise merchant thought: "There will be advantages if I go first. My oxen will have enough grass; the water will be clean, and I will get the best prices for my goods." Considering all these advantages, he said, "I will go ahead of you, my friend."

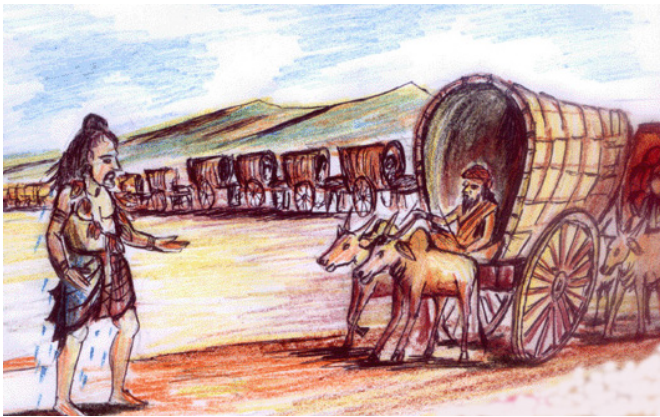
The Bodhisatta was pleased to hear this because he saw many advantages in following after. He thought, "Those carts going first will level the road where it is

rough, and I'll be able to travel along the road they have already smoothed. Their oxen will eat the old grass while mine will eat the young grass. My men will find fresh sweet herbs for curry where the old ones have been picked. Where there is no water, the first carts will have to dig to supply themselves, and we'll be able to drink at the wells they have dug. I will sell my things at the prices that they have already set." The Bodhisatta said: "Very well, my friend, please go first."

Then the unwise merchant left with his carts. The unwise merchant took great big water-jars on his carts, and filling them with water, set out to cross the desert. The demon who haunted that desert had been watching the carts. When merchant reached the middle of the desert, the demon said to himself, "I will make these men throw away their water, and eat them all when they are weak." So he turned himself into a man and

magically created a carriage. He rode along to meet them with blue lotuses and white water lilies around his head, with wet hair and wet clothes, and with muddy carriage-wheels. When the Demon saw the unwise merchant, he greeted him kindly, asking him where he was coming from.

The unwise merchant said: "We are coming from Benares, I see that you have lotuses and water lilies in your hands, you are all muddy and dripping wet. Did it rain while you were on the road? The Demon replied: "There is a forest ahead and it is always raining there. The lakes are covered with lotuses and water-lilies." The Demon, seeing their water jars said: "There is no need for water now, because there is water in the forest. So break the jars and throw the water away, then you will travel easier." Then the



Demon left.

Not knowing that he was a demon, the unwise merchant believed him and broke his jars and threw the water away. They traveled ahead, but never found a forest. Because they never found any water, they became weak and were eaten by the Demon.

After six weeks the Bodhisatta left with his five hundred carts. When he had reached the middle of the desert, the Demon appeared like before in front of the Bodhisatta and told him the same thing he said to the unwise merchant, and he left. But because of the Bodhisatta's wisdom, he thought: "There's no water here, in this 'Water-less Desert.'" Then he said: "We do not throw away our water until we see more. Then the Bodhisatta asked his men: "did anyone of you ever hear that there was a forest in this desert?" "No, sir," they replied. "We have just been told by someone that it is raining ahead in a forest; but have you seen any rain clouds?" "No, sir" they replied. "Have you seen any flashes of lightning" "No, sir," they replied "And have you heard any thunder" "No, sir," they replied. "That was not a man but a Demon. He will return in the hope of eating us when we are weak after throwing away our water. The merchant who went ahead of us was not wise, most likely he was fooled into throwing his water away and was eaten. We may expect to find his five hundred carts today.

After traveling, they found the young merchant's carts and the skeletons of the men who were eaten by the Demon. He traded his bad items for the good items on the young merchant's carts. Then he sold all of his goods and returned to his city without losing a single man.

So, dear meritorious children, study this story, always be with wise friends and people, this way you will never fall into danger.

Lone Star Buddhist Meditation Center