

NAMO BUDDHAYA!!!

Children's Dhamma Program

Noble Dhamma for Little Hearts

The Story of Ananda, the Rich Man.

Dear Children,

There was once a very wealthy man named Ananda in the city of Savatthi. Although he had a wealth of four million in gold coins, he was very stingy and didn't give anything to charity. He would advise his son, Mulasiri and relatives like this "None of you must think that four million is a huge fortune. So you must never give anything to anyone. The only thing you must do is earn something new. You must always remember that, If you spend one coin, it's an expense not an earning". Ananda was very proud of his wealth, Because of his stinginess, he was able to collect enough gold coins to have five separate pots buried in his house. He died of old age without revealing the locations of the buried gold pots to his son or relatives.

After Ananda's death, he was reborn in a village of beggars, not far from Savatthi. From the time his mother was pregnant, nobody in that village could earn a living. The villagers thought there must be an unlucky person amongst them. So they came up with a plan to find the unlucky person.

Villagers plan was to divide the families into two separate groups, and they would look in to see which half would be starving. Then they would divide the starving group into another half and on and on until they found the unluckiest person. Finally, they decided the pregnant woman must be the unfortunate one. So they chased the pregnant woman away from the village, saying you are the reason we are not getting any food and your child is the unlucky one.

So this poor woman barely survived with lots of hardship and finally gave birth to a baby boy. The baby boy was very unpleasant to look at, and everybody was afraid because of his looks. In spite of this, his mother loved her baby very much and did not

abandon him. If she went out begging by herself, she would get food as before, but if she went with her son, she would get nothing because of the child's unluckiness. So, when the boy was old enough to find his food, his mother left him. Before leaving she told him this "My son because of you, I suffered a lot, but I loved you a lot and raised you somehow. But now I can't look after you any longer. In this city, meals are provided for the poor, so go find a place where beggars are given food."

This poor child was left alone. He slept on the roads among the dust piles, got wet in the rain, shivered in the cold, but nobody even bothered to look at this child who lived alone. One day he wandered off searching for something to eat. As he wandered around the city of Sàvatthi, he remembered his old house in his previous life.

He thought to himself "This area is so familiar to me. I have been here before. Oh here is a big palace and now I remember, I was upstairs on a golden bed in that palace. Wonder who sleeps in that now?". Without even realizing he slowly approached the palace and went inside. Nobody noticed him going through the gates. He slowly entered the palace. When Mulasiri's children saw this disfigured unpleasant child, The children screamed in fear and began to cry, After hearing the children's screams, The servants found him and beat him and threw him out of the palace.

At this very moment, Supreme Buddha was passing by the palace. Seeing this site, he called upon Ananda Thero and said, "Ananda, please call Mulasiri." When Mulasiri came out, Supreme Buddha told him that the young beggar was his dead father, But Mulasiri refused to believe that was his father. Supreme Buddha asked the boy to show the five hidden gold coin pots since he remembered his past. Then the child began to dig the ground and revealed the five hidden gold pots. Then only, Mulasiri accepted the truth, and from that day on he became a devoted lay-disciple of the Buddha.

"Dear children, The moral of the story is to become an all around good person by developing good qualities like generosity, practicing the five precepts and respecting others. As you heard in this story, Ananda did not possess any generosity towards others and suffered the consequences because of that.

Lone Star Buddhist Meditation Center