

The Kūṭadanta Sutta: On True Sacrifice

A Discourse from the Dīgha Nikāya

Translated by

Prof. T.W. Rhys Davids

Buddhist Publication Society
Kandy • Sri Lanka

The Wheel Publication No. 120

First BPS Edition: 1968

Second Printing: 1984

BPS Online Edition © (2008)

Digital Transcription Source: BPS Transcription Project

For free distribution. This work may be republished, reformatted, reprinted and redistributed in any medium. However, any such republication and redistribution is to be made available to the public on a free and unrestricted basis, and translations and other derivative works are to be clearly marked as such.

Reprinted from the *Dialogues of the Buddha*, in the series *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Pāli Text Society, London. Translated from the Pāli of the Dīgha Nikāya Sutta number 5 by T.W. Rhys Davids.

Contents

From the Introduction.....	3
Kūṭadanta Sutta (The Wrong Sacrifice and the Right Sacrifice).....	6

Abbreviations

1. **Com.:** Ācariya Buddhaghosa's Commentary to the Dīgha Nikāya called *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*.
2. **Ed.:** BPS Editor.
3. **NewSubCom:** New Sub-commentary (*abhinava-ṭīkā*), by Ñāṇābhivaṃsa Mahāthera, written in Burma in the 19th century.

From the Introduction

By Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids

Whoever put this Sutta together must have been deeply imbued with a spirit of subtle irony that plays no less a part in the Suttas than it does in so many of the Jātakas. I have already called attention to the great importance of the right understanding of early Buddhist teaching, of a constant appreciation of this sort of subtle humour. Hitherto, it has been (so far as I am aware) entirely overlooked in the Suttas. Every one recognizes it in the Jātaka tales, though. The humour is not at all intended to raise a laugh, scarcely even a smile. The aroma of it pervades the whole of the exposition. It is none the less delightful because of the very serious earnestness of the narrator. The ethical point at issue, however, is apt to be lost sight of precisely because of that earnestness. And just as a joke may be explained but the point of it spoilt in the process, so in the attempt to write about this irony (much more delicate than any joke), one runs great danger of smothering it under the explanatory words. The attempt, nevertheless, must be made.

What is the special point in this fun, a kind of fun quite unknown in the West? It is the piquancy of the contrast between the mock seriousness of the extravagant, even impossible, details, and the real serious earnestness of the ethical tone. The fun of the extravagance can be matched, easily enough, in European and (especially) in American humor. The piquancy of this contrast is Indian, and especially Buddhist.

The whole legend is obviously invented *ad hoc*. Its details are not meant to be taken seriously as historical fact. The forced twist given to the meaning of the words *vidhā* and *parikkhāro* is not serious. The words could not be used in the new sense assigned. What we have is a sort of pun, a play upon the words, a piece of dialectic smartness, delightful to the hearers then, and unfortunately quite impossible to be rendered adequately in English prose for readers now.

And it is quite open to question whether this does not apply as much to the whole Sutta as to the legend of King Wide-Realm. The Brahman Kūṭadanta (pointed-tooth) is mentioned nowhere else, and is very likely meant to be rather the hero of a tale than an historical character. In that case we would have before us a novelette, an historical romance, in which the Very Reverend Sir Goldstick Sharp-tooth, lord of the manor of Khānumata (cruel enough, no doubt, and very keen on being sure that his "soul" should be as comfortable in the next world as he was, now, in this) makes up his mind to secure that most desirable end by the murder of a number of his fellow creatures in honour of a god, or as he would put it, by celebrating a sacrifice.

In order to make certain that not one of the technical details (for to the accurate performance of all these the god was supposed to attach great weight) should be done wrongly, the intending sacrificer is ironically represented as doing the very last thing any Brahman of position, under similar circumstances, would think of doing. He goes to the *samaṇa* Gotama for advice about the modes of the ritual to be performed at the sacrifice, the requisite utensils, and the altar-furniture.

The Buddha's answer is to tell him a wonderful legend of a King Wide-Realm, and of the sacrifice he offered, truly the most extraordinary sacrifice imaginable. All its marvellous details (each one settled, be it noted, on the advice of a Brahman), are described with a deliberate extravagance, none the less delicious because of the evident earnestness of the moral to be inferred.

The Brahman of our Sutta wants to know the three modes in which the ritual is to be performed. The three "modes" are declared in the legend (§15) to be simply three conditions of

mind, or rather one condition of mind at three different times: the harbouring of no regret before, during, or after the sacrifice, at the expenditure involved. And the material accessories required (the altar-furniture, the priest's outfit), what is that? It is the hearty co-operation with the king of four divisions of his people: the nobles, officials, Brahmans, and householders. That makes four articles of furniture, and eight personal qualifications of the king himself. That makes another eight. And four personal qualifications of his advising Brahman make up the total of the sixteen articles required. No living thing, either animal or vegetable, is injured. All the labour is voluntary; and all the world co-operates in adding its share to the largesse of food, on strict vegetarian principles, in which alone the sacrifice consists. It is offered on behalf of not only the king himself but all the gods. The king desires to propitiate, not any god, but living men. And the muttering of mystic verses over each article used, and over mangled and bleeding bodies of unhappy victims, verses on which all the magic efficacy of a sacrifice had been supposed to depend, is quietly ignored.

It is all ironical, of course, and is the very contrary (in every respect) of a typical Vedic sacrifice. And the evident unreality of the legend may be one explanation of the curious fact that the authors of the Jātaka book (notwithstanding that King Wide-Realm's Chaplain is actually identified in the Sutta with the Buddha himself in a previous birth) have not included this professedly Jātaka story in their collection. This is the only case, so far discovered, in which a similar omission has been made.

Having thus laughed the Brahman ideal of sacrifice out of court with the gentle irony of a sarcastic travesty, the author or authors of the Sutta go on to say what they think a sacrifice ought to be. Far from exalting King Wide-Realm's procedure, they put his sacrifice at the very bottom of a long list of sacrifices, each better than the other and leading up to the sweetest and highest of all: the attainment of Arahantship.

Here again, except in the last paragraph, there is nothing exclusively Buddhist. That a sacrifice of the heart is better than a sacrifice of bullocks, the ethical more worthy than any physical sacrifice, is simply the sensible, rational, human view of the matter. The whole long history of the development of Indian thought, as carried on chiefly by Brahmans (however much it may have owed in the earliest period to the nobles and others), shows that they, the more enlightened and cultured of the Brahmans, were not only as fully alive to this truth as any Buddhist, but that they took it for granted all along.

Even in the Vedas themselves there is already the germ of this view in the mental attitude as regards Aditi and Varuṇa. In the pre-Buddhistic *Chāndogya*, in the mystic identification of the sacrifice with man¹, we find certain moral states placed on an equality with certain parts of the sacrificial procedure. Among these moral states, *ahiṃsā*, the habit of causing no injury to any living thing, is especially mentioned. This comes very near to the Hebrew prophet's "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."²

The more characteristically Indian point of view is, no doubt (in the words of the old saying long afterwards taken up by the *Mahābhārata*), that it is truth and not mercy that outweighs a thousand sacrifices³. But there is a very great probability that the *ahiṃsā* doctrine, foreshadowed in the Upanishad, and afterwards so extravagantly taken up by the Niganthas, the Jains of the Buddha's time, was also a part of the earlier Jain doctrine, and therefore not only in germ, but as a developed teaching, pre-Buddhist. Though the Buddhists did not accept this extreme position, there would seem to be no valid reason for doubting the accuracy of the

¹ *Chāndogya Upanishad* 111, 16 and 17.

² Hosea 6:6, quoted in Matt. 9:13 and 12:7. See also Micah 6:6-8. Pro. 15:8 and 21:13 are, of course, later.

³ *Mahābhārata* I, 3095 nearly = XIII, 1544. Compare XIII. 6073.

Buddhist tradition that their view of sacrifice was based on a very ancient belief which was, in fact, common ground to the wise, whether inside or outside the ranks of the Brahmans.

Our Sutta is, then, merely the oldest extant expression, in so thorough and uncompromising a way, of an ancient and widely held trend of opinion. On this question, as on the question of caste or social privileges, the early Buddhists took up, and pushed to its logical conclusions, a rational view held also by others. And on this question of sacrifice their party won. The Vedic sacrifices of animals had practically been given up when the long struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism reached its close. Isolated instances of such sacrifices are known even down to the Mohammedan invasion. But the battle was really won by the Buddhists and their allies. And the combined ridicule and earnestness of our Sutta will have had its share in bringing about the victory.

That they did win is a suggestive fact. How could they have done so if the Indians of that time had been, as is so often asserted of them by European writers, more deeply addicted to all manner of ritual than any other nation under heaven, more superstitious, more averse to change in religious ceremonial? There seems to me no reason to believe that they were very different in these respects from the Greeks or Romans of the same period. On the contrary, there was a well-marked lay feeling, a wide-spread antagonism to the priests, a real sense of humour, a strong fund of common sense. Above all there was the most complete and unquestioned freedom of thought and expression in religious matters that the world had yet witnessed. To regard the Indian peoples through Brahman spectacles, to judge them from the tone prevalent in the Srauta and Grihya Sūtras, it would seem impossible that this victory could have been won. But it was won. And our views of Indian history must be modified accordingly.

Kūṭadanta Sutta

(Dīgha Nikāya 5)

The Wrong Sacrifice and the Right Sacrifice

1. Thus have I heard. The Blessed One, when going on a tour through Magadha, with a great multitude of the brethren, came to a Brahman village in Magadha called Khāṇumata. And there at Khāṇumata he lodged in the Ambalaṭṭhika park.⁴

Now at that time the Brahman Kūṭadanta was dwelling at Khāṇumata, a place teeming with life, with much grassland and woodland and water and corn, on a royal domain presented to him by Seniya Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha, as a royal gift, a full gift, with power over it as if he were the king.

And just then a great sacrifice was being made ready on behalf of Kūṭadanta, the Brahman. And seven hundred bulls, seven hundred steers, seven hundred heifers, seven hundred goats and seven hundred rams had been brought to the post for the sacrifice.

2. Now the Brahmans and householders of Khāṇumata heard the news of the arrival of the Samaṇa Gotama. And they began to leave Khāṇumata in companies and in bands to go to the Ambalaṭṭhikā park.

3. And just then Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, had gone apart to the upper terrace of his house for his siesta; and seeing the people go by, he asked his doorkeeper the reason. And the doorkeeper told him.

4. Then Kūṭadanta thought, "I have heard that the Samaṇa Gotama understands the successful performance of a sacrifice with its threefold method and its sixteen accessory instruments. Now I don't know all this, and yet I want to carry out a sacrifice. It would be well for me to go to the Samaṇa Gotama, and ask him about it."

So he sent his doorkeeper to the Brahmans and house-holders of Khāṇumata to ask them to wait till he could go with them to call upon the Blessed One.

5. But there were at that time a number of Brahmans staying at Khāṇumata to take part in the great sacrifice.

[And⁵ when they heard that Kūṭadanta was intending to visit the Samaṇa Gotama, they went to Kūṭadanta and asked whether that was so.

"That is my intention, Sirs. I propose to call on the Samaṇa Gotama."

⁴ Ambalaṭṭhikā, "the mango sapling." According to Com. to DN 1, it was a shady park, surrounded by a rampart and provided with a rest house. At the entrance stood a young mango tree, after which the park was named. The Com. says that this park was not the same as the one half way between Rājagaha and Nālandā, mentioned in DN 1, but was very similar to it. (Ed.)

⁵ The passage in square brackets, extending up to paragraph 8 inclusive, has been supplemented here from the preceding text, the Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta, as this stock passage is not repeated in the Pāli editions nor Rhys Davids' English translation of the Kūṭadanta Sutta. Apart from changing the name of the Brahman, only a very few alterations have been made in the translation. (Ed.)

“Let not the Venerable Kūṭadanta do so. It is not fitting for him to do so. If it were the Venerable Kūṭadanta who went to call upon him, then the Venerable Kūṭadanta’s reputation would decrease and the Samaṇa Gotama’s would increase. This is the first reason why you, Sir, should not call upon him, but he upon you.”

6. And they laid before Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, in like manner other considerations:

That he was well born on both sides, of pure descent through the mother and through the father back through seven generations, with no slur put upon him, and no reproach, in respect of birth,

That he was prosperous, well to do, and rich,

That he was a Vedic scholar⁶, knowing the mystic verses by heart, one who has mastered the Three Vedas, with the indices, the ritual, the word-analysis [the *Atharva Veda* as a fourth, and the legends as a fifth]⁷, learned in the words and in the grammar, versed in Lokāyata [nature lore/sophistry]⁸ and in the theory of the signs on the body of a great man.⁹

That he was handsome, pleasant to look upon, inspiring trust, gifted with great beauty of complexion, fair in colour, fine in presence, stately to behold,

That he was virtuous, rich in virtue, gifted with rich virtue,

That he had a pleasant voice and pleasing delivery, and was gifted with polite address, distinct, not husky, suitable for making clear the matter in hand,

That he was the teacher of the teachers of many, instructing three hundred Brahmans in the repetition of the mystic verses, and that many young Brahmans, from various directions and various countries, all craving for the verses, came to learn them by heart under him,

That he was aged, old, well advanced in years, long lived and full of days,

That he was honoured, considered to be important, esteemed worthy, venerated and revered by Pokkharasādi the Brahman,

That he dwelt at Khāṇumata, a place teeming with life, with much grassland and woodland and corn, on a royal fief granted him by Seniya Bimbisāra, King of Magadha, as a royal gift with power over it as if he were the king.

For each of these reasons it was not fitting that Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, should call upon the Samaṇa Gotama, but rather that the Samaṇa Gotama should call upon him.¹⁰

⁶ A Vedic scholar (*ajjhāyako*). Com. to DN 3: “Because the learned Brahmins no longer meditate [*na jhāyanti*], they are now called ‘scholars,’ [or] ‘just scholars’ [*ajjhāyakā toeva*]. Thus, at an earlier age, this expression ‘*ajjhāyaka*’ arose as a word of blame for those Brahmans who were without attainment of the absorptions [*jhāna*]. But now it is used as a word of praise, in the sense of its derivation from the verb *ajjhāyati*, ‘to recite,’ i. e. for those who recite the [Vedic] mantras.” (Ed.)

⁷ In view of the fact, that only three terms precede it, the Com. says that the *Athāarva Veda* has to be added here as the fourth. (Ed.)

⁸ *Lokāyata*: materialist philosophers speculating on the world (*loka*) or nature, and often using sophistry (*vitandaśattha*) in their arguments. (Ed.)

⁹ The thirty-two Signs (or Marks) of a Great Man (*mahāpurisa-lakkhaṇa*) are of pre-Buddhist origin and partly of a symbolic nature. They are enumerated and explained in the Lakkhaṇa Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya. (Ed.)

¹⁰ Com. to DN 4: “[The Brahmans when speaking in that way, did so because they thought] ‘There is none who does not like it when one’s praise is spoken. Hence by praising him we might stop him from going to see the Buddha.’ [But Kūṭadanta thought] ‘These Brahmans praise me on account of my descent, etc. But it will not be right for me to be taken in by such praise. Should I not counter their speech by proclaiming to them the greatness of the Buddha which may induce them to call on him likewise?’” (Ed.)

7. And when they had thus spoken, Kūṭadanta said to them:

“Then, Sirs, listen, and hear why it is fitting that I should call upon the Venerable Gotama, and not he that should call upon me.

“Truly, Sirs, the Venerable Gotama is well born on both sides, of pure descent through the mother and through the father back through seven generations, with no slur put upon him, and no reproach, in respect of birth.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama has gone forth [into the religious life], giving up the great clan of his relations.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama has gone forth [into the religious life], giving up much money and gold, treasure both buried and above the ground.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama, while he was still a young man, without a grey hair on his head, in the beauty of his early manhood, has gone forth from the household life into the homeless state.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama, though his father and mother were unwilling, and wept, their cheeks being wet with tears, nevertheless cut off his hair and beard, and donned the yellow robes, and went out from the household life into the homeless state.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama is handsome, pleasant to look upon, inspiring trust, gifted with great beauty of complexion, fair in colour, fine in presence, stately to behold.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama is virtuous with the virtue of the Arahats, good and virtuous, gifted with goodness and virtue.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama has a pleasant voice, and a pleasing delivery, he is gifted with polite address, distinct, not husky, suitable for making clear the matter in hand.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama is the teacher of the teachers of many.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama has no passion of lust left in him, and has put away all fickleness of mind.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama believes in karma, and in action; he is one who puts righteousness in the forefront [of his exhortations] to the Brahman race.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama went forth from a distinguished family, earliest among the Khatṭiya clans.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama went forth from a family prosperous, well to do, and rich.

“Truly, Sirs, people come right across the country from distant lands to ask questions of the Samaṇa Gotama.

“Truly, Sirs, multitudes of heavenly beings put their trust in the Samaṇa Gotama.

“Truly, Sirs, such is the high reputation voiced abroad concerning the Samaṇa Gotama, that he is said to be an Arahāt, exalted, fully awakened, abounding in wisdom and righteousness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, a Blessed One, a Buddha.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama has all the thirty-two bodily marks of a Great Being.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama bids all men welcome, is congenial, conciliatory, not supercilious, accessible to all, not hesitant in conversation.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama is honoured, held of weight, esteemed and venerated and revered by the four classes [of his followers, viz. the brothers and sisters of the Order, laymen and laywomen].

“Truly, Sirs, many gods and men believe in the Samaṇa Gotama.

“Truly, Sirs, in whatsoever village or town the Samaṇa Gotama stays, there the non-humans do the humans no harm.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama, as the head of an Order, of a school, as the teacher of a school, is to be acknowledged superior to all the founders of sects. Whereas some Samaṇas and Brahmans have gained a reputation by all sorts of insignificant matters, not so the Samaṇa Gotama. His reputation comes from perfection in knowledge and conduct.

“Truly, Sir, the King of Magadha, Seniya Bimbisāra, with his children and his wives, with his people and his courtiers, has put his trust in the Samaṇa Gotama.

“Truly, Sirs, King Pasenadi of Kosala, with his children and his wives, with his people and his courtiers, has put his trust in the Samaṇa Gotama.

“Truly, Sirs, Pokkharasādi, the Brahman, with his children and his wives, with his people and his intimates, has put his trust in the Samaṇa Gotama.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama is honoured, held of weight, esteemed and venerated and revered alike by Seniya Bimbisāra, the King of Magadha, by Pasenadi the King of Kosala, and by Pokkharasādi, the Brahman.

“Truly, Sirs, the Samaṇa Gotama has now arrived at Khānumata, and is staying at Ambalaṭṭhikā. But all Samaṇas and Brahmans who come into our village are our guests. And guests we ought to esteem and honour, to venerate and revere. And as he is now come as a guest, he ought to be so treated, as a guest.

“For each and all of these considerations it is not fitting that the Samaṇa Gotama should call upon us, but rather we should call upon him. Only this much do I know of the excellences of the Samaṇa Gotama; but these are not all of them, for his excellence is beyond measure.”

8. And when he had thus spoken, those Brahmans said to him, “The Venerable Kūṭadanta declares the praises of the Samaṇa Gotama that, were he to be dwelling even a hundred leagues from here, it would be enough to make a believing man go to call upon him, even had he to carry a bag [with provisions for the journey] on his back. Let us then all go to call on the Samaṇa Gotama together!”

So Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, with a great company of Brahmans, went out to Ambalaṭṭhikā where the Blessed One dwelt. Having arrived there he exchanged with the Blessed One the greetings and compliments of politeness and courtesy, and took his seat on one side. And as to the Brahman householders of Khānumata, some of them bowed to the Blessed One and took their seats on one side; some of them exchanged with him the greetings and compliments of politeness and courtesy and then took their seats on one side; some of them called out their name and family, and then took their seats on one side; and some of them took their seats on one side in silence.

9. And when Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, was seated there he told the Blessed One what he had heard, and requested him to tell him about success in performing a sacrifice in its three modes and with its accessories of sixteen kinds.

“Well then, O Brahman, listen attentively and I will speak.”

“Very well, Sir,” said Kūṭadanta in reply and the Blessed One spoke as follows:

10. “Long ago, O Brahman, there was a king by name Wide-Realm [*Mahā Vijita*], mighty with great wealth and large property; with stores of silver and gold; of aids to enjoyment; of goods and corn; with his treasure-houses and his granaries full. Now, when King Wide-Realm was once sitting alone, the following thought occurred to him: ‘I have in abundance all the good things a mortal can enjoy. The whole wide circle of the earth is mine by conquest to possess. It would be well if I were to offer a great sacrifice that should ensure me well-being and welfare for many days.’

“And he had the Brahman, his chaplain, called; and telling him all that he had thought, he said:

‘So I would wish, O Brahman, to offer a great sacrifice—let the Venerable One instruct me how—for my happiness and my welfare for many days.’

11. “Thereupon the Brahman who was chaplain said to the King, ‘The king’s country, Sire, is harassed and harried. There are robbers abroad who pillage the villages and townships, and who make the roads unsafe. Were the king, so long as that is so, to levy a fresh tax, truly His Majesty would be acting wrongly. But if His Majesty might think, “I’ll soon put a stop to these scoundrels’ game by degradation and banishment, and fines and bonds and death!” their crimes would not be satisfactorily stopped. The remnant left unpunished would still go on harassing the realm. Now there is one method to adopt to put a thorough end to this disorder. Whoever in the King’s realm devote themselves to farming and keeping cattle, to them let His Majesty, the King, give food and seed-corn.¹¹ Whoever in the King’s realm devote themselves to trade, to them let His Majesty, the King, give capital.¹² Whoever there be in the King’s realm who devote themselves to government service, to them let His Majesty, the King, give wages and food.¹³ Then those men, following each his own business, will no longer harass the realm; the king’s revenue will go up; the country will be quiet and at peace; and the populace, pleased one with another and happy, dancing their children in their arms, will dwell with open doors.¹⁴

“Then King Wide-Realm, O Brahman, accepted the word of his chaplain, and did as he had said. And those men, following each his business, harassed the realm no more. And the king’s revenue went up. And the country became quiet and at peace. And the populace, pleased one with another and happy, dancing their children in their arms, dwelt with open doors.

12. “So King Wide-Realm had his chaplain called, and said: ‘The disorder is at an end. Thanks to the provisions advised by the Venerable One, the revenue has increased. The country is at peace. I want to offer that great sacrifice—let the Venerable One instruct me how—for my well-being and welfare for many days.’

“Then let His Majesty, the King, send invitations to whomsoever there may be in his realm who are Khattiyas, vassals of his, either in the country or the towns; or who are ministers and officials of his, either in the country or the towns; or, who are householders of substance, either

¹¹ “Let the king give food and seed-corn.” **Com.:** “If what is given is insufficient, you should give them another supply of seed-grain, food, and agricultural implements.” (Ed.)

¹² “Let ... the king give capital.” **Com.:** “You may give the money without witness or receipt [i.e. as a trade subsidy], waiving the repayment of the capital sum [*mūlacchejjavasena*].” (Ed.)

¹³ “[To those in government service] let ... the King give wages and food.” **Com.:** “You may give to them their daily food requirements and a monthly or weekly [*anuposathika*] salary, together with official positions, grants of villages or hamlets, in accordance with each man’s skill, type of work, and valour.” (Ed.)

¹⁴ The chaplain’s prescriptions for making the country prosperous and content sound quite modern: agricultural and trade-subsidies, ensuring a contented civil service, and in §12 making sure of favourable public opinion before undertaking large expenditure. (Ed.)

in the country or the towns, saying, "I intend to offer a great sacrifice. Let the Venerable Ones give their sanction to what will be for me happiness and welfare for many days."¹⁵

"Then King Wide-Realm, O Brahman, accepted the word of his chaplain, and did as he had said. And they each—Khattiyas, ministers, Brahmans and householders—made the same reply,

"Let His Majesty, the King, celebrate the sacrifice. The time is suitable, O king!"

"Thus did these four, as colleagues by consent, become accessories to furnish forth that sacrifice.

13. "King Wide-Realm was gifted in the following eight ways:

"He was well born on both sides, on the mother's side and on the father's, of pure descent back through seven generations, and no slur was cast upon him, and no reproach, in respect of birth.

"He was handsome, pleasant in appearance, inspiring trust, gifted with great beauty of complexion, fair in colour, fine in presence, stately to behold.

"He was mighty, with great wealth, and large property, with stores of silver and gold, of aids to enjoyment, of goods and corn, with his treasure-houses and his granaries full.

"He was powerful, in command of an army, loyal and disciplined, in four divisions [of elephants, cavalry, chariots, and bowmen], burning up, I think, his enemies by his very glory.

"He was a believer,¹⁶ and a generous giver, a lord of gifts,¹⁷ keeping open house, a flowing spring from where Samaṇas and Brahmans, the poor and wayfarers, beggars, and petitioners might draw, a doer of good deeds.

"He was learned in all kinds of knowledge.

"He knew the meaning of what had been said, and could explain, 'This saying has such and such a meaning, and that such and such.'

"He was intelligent, expert and wise, and able to think out things, present or past or future."¹⁸

¹⁵ **Com.:** "Those [invited to give their consent to the great sacrifice] will be pleased about it and will say, 'This king does not enforce the sacrifice in the thought that he is the master, but he informs us about it. How well does he act!' Without such information they might not even have shown themselves at the place of the sacrifice." (Ed.)

¹⁶ "A believer" (*saddho*). **Com.:** "He believes that charity bears fruit." (Ed.)

¹⁷ "A generous giver" (*dāyako*). **Com.:** "He is a hero [or determined] in giving [*dāna-sūra*]. He does not stop at the mere belief [that giving is good], but can actually renounce [the gift-object]."

NewSubCom.: "He is one whose knowledge of karma-ownership [*kammassakatā nāṇa*] is keen and clear, and who keeps it, as it were, before his mind's eye."

"A lord of gifts" (*dāna-pati*), or one who is a master of giving charity. **Com.:** "He is one who is the master of the gifts he gives; he does not give like a slave nor like a companion. He who enjoys for himself the best and gives to others what is inferior, he becomes the slave [*dāsa*] of the thing to be given. He who gives the same as he uses for himself, gives as a companion [*sahāya*]. But he who gives the best part of whatever he uses for his own livelihood, he gives in a sovereign way, as a lord or master."

NewSubCom.: "He is one who can easily conquer attachment to the specific object. Not being carried away by his greed for the object, he is neither its slave nor its friend." (Ed.)

¹⁸ "Able to think out things present or past or future" (*paṭibalo atīta-anāgata-paccuppanne atthe cintetum*).

Com.: "Thinking, 'It is just because of meritorious actions done in the past, that I am now prosperous,' he was able to think out a thing [fact or advantage; *attha*] of the past. 'Doing a meritorious act now, I shall be able to obtain prosperity in the future.' Thus he thought about future advantage. 'Such a meritorious act is customary with good people; furthermore, I have wealth enough to do it, and I have also the intention of giving [*dāyaka-citta*].' Thus he was able to think about the present facts." (Ed.)

“And these eight gifts of his too became accessories to furnish forth that sacrifice.

“The Brahman, his chaplain, was gifted in the following four ways:

“He was well born on both sides, on the mother’s and on the father’s, of pure descent back through seven generations, with no slur cast upon him, and no reproach in respect of birth.

“He was a Vedic scholar who knew the mystic verses by heart, master of the Three Vedas, with the indices, the ritual, the word-analysis [the *Atharva Veda* as a fourth, and the legends as a fifth], learned in the idiom and the grammar, versed in *Lokāyata* [nature-lore] and in the marks on the body of a great man.

“He was virtuous, established in virtue, gifted with virtue that had grown great.

“He was intelligent, expert, and wise; foremost, or at least the second, among those who hold out the ladle.

“Thus these four gifts of his, too, became accessories to furnish forth that sacrifice.

15. “And further, O Brahman, the chaplain, before the sacrifice had begun, explained to King Wide-Realm the three modes:

‘Should His Majesty, the King, before starting on the great sacrifice, feel any such regret as: “Great, alas, will be the portion of my wealth used up herein”, let not the king harbour such regret. Should His Majesty, the King, when the great sacrifice has been offered, feel any such regret as, “Great, alas, has been the portion of my wealth used up herein,” let not the king harbour such regret.’

“Thus did the chaplain, O Brahman, before the sacrifice had begun, explain to King Wide-Realm the three modes.

16. “And further, O Brahman, the chaplain, before the sacrifice had begun, in order to prevent any compunction that might afterwards, in ten ways, arise as regards those who had taken part therein, said: ‘Now there will come to your sacrifice, Sire, men who destroy the life of living things, and men who do not; men who take what has not been given, and men who do not; men who act evilly in respect of lusts, and men who do not; men who speak lies, and men who do not; men who slander, and men who do not; men who speak rudely, and men who do not; men who speak about vain things, and men who do not; men who covet, and men who do not; men who have ill-will, and men who do not; men whose views are wrong, and men whose views are right.¹⁹ Of each of these let them, who do evil, alone with their evil. For them who do well, let Your Majesty offer; for them, Sire, arrange the rites; let the king gratify them; in them shall your heart within find peace.’

17. “And further, O Brahman, the chaplain, while the King was carrying out the sacrifice, instructed and aroused and incited and gladdened his heart in sixteen ways:

‘Should there be people who should say of the king, as he is offering the sacrifice, “King Wide-Realm is celebrating sacrifice without having invited the four classes of his subjects, without himself having the eight personal gifts, without the assistance of a Brahman who has the four personal gifts,” then would they speak not according to the fact. For, the consent of the four classes has been obtained, the king has the eight, and his Brahman has the four personal gifts. With regard to each and every one of these sixteen conditions the king may rest assured that it has been fulfilled. He can sacrifice, and be glad, and possess his heart in peace.’

18. “And further, O Brahman, at the sacrifice no oxen were slain, nor goats, nor fowls, nor fattened pigs, nor were any kinds of living creatures put to death; no trees were cut down to be

¹⁹ These are the Ten Courses of Action (*kammāpatha*), unwholesome and wholesome. (Ed.)

used as posts, no Dabbha grasses mown to strew around the sacrificial spot. The slaves, messengers, and workmen employed there were not coerced by rods nor fear, nor carried on their work weeping with tears upon their faces. Whoever chose to help he worked; whoever chose not to help, worked not. What each chose to do he did; what they chose not to do, that was left undone. With ghee, and oil, and butter, and milk, and honey, and sugar only was that sacrifice accomplished.²⁰

19. "And further, O Brahman, the Khattiya vassals, and the ministers and officials, and the Brahmans of position, and the householders of substance, whether of the country or of the towns, went to King Wide-Realm, taking with them much wealth, and said: 'This abundant wealth, Sire, we have brought here for the King's use. Let His Majesty accept it from our hands!'

"Sufficient wealth have I, my friends, laid up, the produce of taxation that is just. Do you keep yours, and take away more with you!"

"When they had thus been refused by the king, they went aside, and considered thus, one with the other: 'It would not be good for us now, were we to take this wealth away again to our own homes. King Wide-Realm is offering a great sacrifice. Let us too make an after-sacrifice!'

20. "So the Khattiyas established a continual largesse to the east of the king's sacrificial pit, and the officials to the south thereof, and the householders to the north thereof. And the things given, and the manner of their gift, were in all respects like the great sacrifice of King Wide-Realm himself.

"Thus, O Brahman, there was a fourfold co-operation, and King Wide-realm was gifted with eight personal gifts, and his officiating Brahman with four. And there were three modes of the giving of that sacrifice. This, O Brahman, is what is called the due celebration of a sacrifice in its threefold mode and with its accessories of sixteen kinds."

21. And when he had thus spoken, those Brahmans lifted up their voices in tumult, and said,

"How glorious the sacrifice, how pure its accomplishment!" But Kūṭadaṇṭa, the Brahman sat there in silence.

Then those Brahmans said to Kūṭadanta, "Why do you not approve the good words of the Samaṇa Gotama as well-said?"

"I do not fail to approve, for he who does not approve as well-said that which has been well-spoken by the Samaṇa Gotama, his head would split in two. But I was considering that the Samaṇa Gotama does not say, 'Thus have I heard,' nor 'Thus behoves it to be,' but says only 'Thus it was then,' or 'It was like that then.' So I thought, 'For a certainty the Samaṇa Gotama himself must at that time have been King Wide-Realm, or the Brahman who officiated for him at that sacrifice.' Does the Venerable Gotama admit that he who celebrates such a sacrifice, or causes it to be celebrated, is reborn at the dissolution of the body, after death, into some state of happiness in heaven?"

²⁰ While the Discourse does not relate in which way the sacrifice was finally performed, the Com. says that it took the form of a large food distribution in the royal city. Outside each of the four city gates, and in the centre of the city, large alms-halls were erected, and from sunrise until nightfall food and drink of a kind suited to the time of the day were distributed to all comers. For the preparation of the food the best ingredients, like ghee, oil, etc., were used. Those who wanted to take the food along with them were allowed to fill their vessels. In the evening, cloth, incense and flowers were distributed. At several hundred locations in the city, large vessels with ghee, etc., were placed for everyone's use. In accordance with this explanation, the Com. takes the textual words "sacrificial pit" [*yaññāvāṭa*] as signifying alms halls. (Ed.)

“Yes, O Brahman, that I admit. And at that time I was the Brahman, who, as chaplain, had that sacrifice performed.”

22. “Is there, O Gotama, any other sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, with more fruit and more advantage still than this?”

“Yes, O Brahman, there is.”

“And what, O Gotama, may that be?”

“The perpetual gifts kept up in a family where they are given specially to virtuous recluses.”

23. “But what is the reason, O Gotama, and what the cause, why such perpetual giving specifically to virtuous recluses, and kept up in a family, are less difficult and troublesome, of greater fruit and greater advantage than that other sacrifice with its three modes and its accessories of sixteen kinds?”

“To the latter sort of sacrifice, O Brahman, neither will the Arahats go, nor such as have entered on the Arahats way. And why not? Because at such sacrifices, beating with sticks and seizing by the throat ²¹ take place. But they will go to the former, where such things are not. And therefore are such perpetual gifts above the other sort of sacrifice.”

24. “And is there, O Gotama, any other sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and of greater advantage than either of these?”

“Yes, O Brahman, there is.”

“And what, O Gotama, may that be?”

“The putting up of a dwelling place [*vihāra*] on behalf of the Order of all the four directions.”

25. “And is there, O Gotama, any other sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and of greater advantage than each and all of these three?”

“Yes, O Brahman, there is.”

“And what, O Gotama, may that be?”

“He who with trusting heart takes his refuge in the Buddha, in the Teaching, and the Order. That is a sacrifice better than open largesse, better than perpetual alms, better than the gift of a dwelling place.”²²

²¹ The attendants, at such a general largesse, says Buddhaghosa, push the recipients about, make them stand in a queue, and use violence in doing so. (RD)

²² **Com.:** “Though a monastery [*vihāra*] is donated just once, there is later on work still to do in connection with it, e. g. thatching and repairing it. But if one has taken the Refuge in the presence of one single bhikkhu, or the Sangha, or the full assembly of bhikkhus, it is taken once for all [*gahitaṃ eva hoti*]. There is no necessity of taking it repeatedly.”

“But if one ... single bhikkhu” **NewSubCom:** “This is said because that is the customary way for lay devotees (*upāsaka*) to take the Refuge, and because the act has a greater weight if done in that manner [i. e., if the Refuge is taken from a bhikkhu]. But it is said that if the lay devotees take the Refuge by themselves, it is just as valid.”

“Though a monastery ... taking it repeatedly.” **NewSubCom.:** “This is said for people of intelligence. For them, if they are proficient in understanding the significance of the Refuges etc., the Refuge will be firm and unshakable.”

Com.: “Because the merit of Taking Refuge consisting in the readiness to sacrifice even one’s life for the Triple Gem bestows heavenly happiness, therefore it is said to be of ‘greater fruit and advantage.’” (Ed.)

“the readiness ... for the Triple Gem” **NewSubCom.:** “Even if someone threatens to take the life of the lay devotee with a sharp sword, saying: ‘If you do not give up the Refuge taken by you, I shall kill you!’ the lay devotee should reply, ‘Never shall I say that the Buddha is not the [truly] Enlightened One; that

26. “And is there, O Gotama, any other sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and of greater advantage than all these four?”²³

“When a man with trusting heart takes upon himself the precepts—abstention from destroying life; abstention from taking what has not been given; abstention from evil conduct in respect of lusts; abstention from lying words; abstention from strong, intoxicating, maddening drinks, the root of carelessness—that is a sacrifice better than open largesse, better than perpetual alms, better than the gift of dwelling places, better than the taking of refuge.”²⁴

27. “And is there, O Gotama, any other sacrifice as difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and of greater advantage than all these five?”

“Yes, O Brahman, there is.”

the Dhamma is not the [true] Teaching; that the Sangha is not the [true] Community of Saints.”

“bestows heavenly happiness” **NewSubCom.**: “This is only an example of the possible good results of Taking the Refuge.”

²³ **Com.**: “Having heard that, the Brahman thought, ‘To give one’s life for someone else is hard indeed. Is there not a sacrifice that is less difficult?’”

²⁴ **NewSubCom.**: “The Precepts are said to be less difficult than Taking Refuge, because one only has to accept them and abstain from the respective item when occasion arises.”

Com.: “Abstention [*virati*] is threefold: 1. factual abstention [*sampatta-virati*], 2. abstention by formal acceptance of the Precepts [*samādāna-virati*], 3. abstention by eliminating [the evil tendencies, *setughātavirati*, lit. killing through the ‘bridge’, i. e. the Holy Paths].

1. There is one who, without having formally accepted the Precepts, remembers his birth, clan, family, country, etc., and thinking that it is not befitting for him [to commit transgressions], he does not kill, etc. He avoids [transgressing] when occasion arises and refrains from it entirely. His abstention is called ‘factual’ [or ‘taking place on a given occasion’, *sampatta-virati*].

2. If one takes upon oneself the Precepts, saying, ‘From today, even for the sake of my life, I shall not kill a living being,’ or ‘I take upon me the abstention [from ...],’ this is called abstention by formal acceptance of the Precepts [*samādāna-virati*].

3. The abstention of Holy Disciples [*ariya-sāvaka*], those connected with the Noble Path [i.e. Right View, etc.] is called abstention by elimination [*setughātavirati*].”

NewSubCom.: “Elsewhere it is called ‘abstention by destruction’ [*samuccheda-virati*], [e. g. in Com. to MN 9 and the *Atthasālinī*]. *Seta* [bridge] is the Holy Path. The abstention included in it which destroys the evil states of mind, is called *setu-ghāta-virati*.”

Com.: “The first two kinds of abstention have as objects the life-faculty (*jīvitindriya*), etc. i.e. that against which the transgression takes place when there is killing etc. The third [supra-mundane] abstention has only Nibbāna as its object.

If one who has taken the Five Precepts as a unit [i.e. using one single term in the formula], breaks one of the Precepts, in that case all of them are broken.”

NewSubCom.: “taken the Five Precepts as a unit,” “That is, together [*ekato ekajjhami*], if one says, ‘I take upon myself the rule of conduct with its five parts’ [or the fivefold moral rule, ‘*pañcaṅga samannāgataṃ sīlaṃ samādiyāmi*’]. But even in that case one has to know that the Precepts are of five [different] types in regard to their functions [*kicca-vasena*]. All five are broken [in the sense that the vow is broken], because they have been taken together [in a single formula of vow]. But this does not mean that the *sīla* has an [inseparably] fivefold nature. Rather, by what one transgresses, just by that Kamma alone one is bound [*kamma-baddho*].”

Com.: “If one takes the Precepts [by stating them] singly, he breaks only that Precept against which he has transgressed. In the Abstention by Eliminating, there is no breaking of the precepts. In a future existence too, a Holy Disciple [*ariya-sāvaka*] will never kill nor [break another Precept such as) drink alcohol. He will not do so even for life’s sake.”

NewSubCom.: “takes the Precepts singly”—“That is, separately, is done by saying, ‘I take upon myself the rule of abstention from killing’ [*pāṇātipātā veramaṇi-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*]. In the Com. to the *Khuddakapāṭha* it is said that *veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ* forms a compound; but in the text editions [*pāṇātipotthakesu*] a *niggahita* is at the end of [the first word] *veramaṇi* and the two words are separate.

“And what, O Gotama, may that be?”

[(Ed.) The answer is a long passage from the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, the “Discourse on the Fruits of Recluseship” (DN 2), which contains the following sections:

1. The appearance of a Buddha, his preaching, the conversion of a hearer, and the latter’s renunciation of the world and ordination as a monk (as in the *Tevijjā Sutta*, translated in the *Wheel* No. 57/58, page 19).

2. The monk’s observance of the Precepts (*ditto* p. 19 § 42 up top. 21).

3. His fearlessness and confidence due to his virtue (*ditto* p. 22, first para).

4. Sense-control (*ditto* p, 22).

5. Mindfulness and full awareness (*ditto*, p, 23).

6. Contentedness (*ditto*, p. 23).

7. Conquest of the five hindrances (*ditto* p. 23 to 24, end of § 75).

After each of the above sections, the Kūṭadanta Sutta adds:]

“This, O Brahman, is a sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and greater advantage than the previous sacrifices.

“[Now, having abandoned these five hindrances, and] quite detached from sense-objects, detached from unwholesome states of mind, he enters upon and dwells in the first Absorption [*jhāna*], which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, filled with bliss and happiness, born of seclusion.

“This, O Brahman, is a sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and greater advantage than the previous sacrifices.”

[Here follows the text of the second, third and fourth Absorption, with the same concluding paragraph as above. (Ed.)]

[Insight-knowledge] “With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of all evil, supple, ready to act, firm, and imperturbable, he applies and bends down his mind to that insight that comes from knowledge. He grasps the fact: ‘This body of mine is material, it is build up of the four great elements, it springs from father and mother, it is continually renewed by so much boiled rice and juicy food, its very nature is impermanence, it is subject to erosion,

“The above statements refer to laymen. In the case of novices [*sāmaṇera*], in whatever way they may have taken the Precepts, if they have violated one, all will be broken, because they have come to ‘defeat’ [*pārājika*].

“These Five Precepts are called a ‘sacrifice’ [*yaññā*], because they are accepted [with the resolve], ‘I shall observe them even if I have to sacrifice love of the self and love of life [*attasinehañca jīvitasinehañca pariccojīvā rakkhissāmi*]!’

“Though compared with the Five Precepts, the Taking of the Refuge has the higher rank (through its great results), yet, provided the Five Precepts are based on the Refuges [*saraṇāgamane yevo paṭṭhāya*] their observation is said to have great results.

Com.: “Because, in Taking Refuge, the obtaining of a correct idea about it [lit. the act of straightening one’s views (*diṭṭhujuka-kamma*)] is difficult, while, on the other hand, in the acceptance of the Precepts, a mere abstention is required; therefore the latter ‘sacrifice’ is said to be less difficult and troublesome, whether one takes them in a desultory manner [*yathā tathā*; **NewSubCom.:** “without much attention and respect”] or carefully and respectfully [*sakkaccaṃ*; **NewSubCom.:** “no double effort need be made in the latter case”]. As there is no gift [to living beings] comparable to the observance of the Five Precepts, they are of great fruit and advantage.” (Ed.)

abrasion,²⁵ dissolution and disintegration; and there is this consciousness²⁶ of mine, too, bound up and dependent on it.²⁷

“Just, O Brahman, as if there were a Veḷuriya gem, bright, of purest water, with eight facets, excellently cut, clear; translucent, without a flaw, excellent in every way. And through it a string, blue, or orange coloured, or red, or white, or yellow should be threaded. If a man, who had eyes to see, were to take it into his hand, he would clearly perceive how the one is bound up with the other.

“Similarly, with his heart thus serene ☸ [the monk] grasps the fact, ‘There is this body of mine, which is material ... and there is this consciousness of mine, too, bound up therewith, and dependent on it.’

“This, O Brahman, is a sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and greater advantage than the previous sacrifices.”

[Here follow, according to DN 2, sections on the “Power of producing a mind-made body” (*manomaya-iddhi*) and on the first five Supernormal Knowledges (*abhiññā*).²⁸ The text of the sixth Supernormal Knowledge, likewise inserted here from DN 2, is as follows: (Ed.)]

“With his heart thus serene ... he applies and bends down his mind to the Knowledge of the Destruction of the Cankers [*āsavakkhaya*]. He knows as it really is: ‘This is Suffering ...’; ‘This is the origin of Suffering ...’; ‘This is the cessation of Suffering ...’; ‘This is the Path that leads to the cessation of Suffering ...’ He knows as they really are ‘These are the Cankers ...’; ‘This is the origin of the Cankers ...’; ‘This is the cessation of the Cankers ...’; ‘This is the Path that leads to the cessation of the Cankers ...’ Of him, thus knowing, thus seeing, the heart is set free from the Canker of Sense-desire; is set free from the Canker of [craving for renewed] Existence; is set free from the Canker of Ignorance. In him, thus set free, arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows, ‘Rebirth has been destroyed. The Holy Life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no beyond.’

“Just, O Brahman, as if in a mountain stronghold there were a pool of water, clear, translucent, and serene, and a man standing on the bank, and with eyes to see, should perceive

²⁵ This is a favourite description of the body. The words for erosion and abrasion (*ucchādana parimaddana*) are cunningly chosen. They are also familiar technical terms of the Indian shampooer (and masseur), and are so used in DN 2. The double meaning must have been clearly present to the Indian hearer, and the words are, therefore, really untranslatable. (RD) What is meant is probably that the body is so malodorous and fragile that it needs constant attention by shampooing or anointing (*ucchādana*), massaging (*parimaddana*), etc. (Ed.)

²⁶ Consciousness (*viññāna*) stands here also for all other mental functions and faculties. (Ed.)

²⁷ Rhys Davids comments:

“In spite of this and similar passages, the adherents of the soul theory (having nothing else to fasten on to) were apt to fasten on to the Buddhist *viññāna* as a possible point of reconciliation with their own theory. Even an admirer of the Buddha (one Sāti, a member of the Order) went so far as to tell the Buddha himself that he must, as he admitted transmigration, have meant that the *viññāna* did not really depend upon, was not really bound up with, the body, but that it formed the link in transmigration. In perhaps the most earnest and emphatic of all the dialogues (MN 38), the Buddha meets and refutes at length this erroneous representation of his view. But it still survives. I know two living writers on Buddhism who (in blissful ignorance of the Dialogue in question) still fasten upon the Buddha the opinion he so expressly refused to accept. Sāti’s belief, however, was that *viññāna* is reborn, implying that it is a transmigrating entity.” (RD)

Rhys Davids’ formulation of Sāti’s view does not express the error correctly. See *Dependent Origination* by Piyadassi Thera (*The Wheel* No. 15), p. 16 ff. (Ed.)

²⁸ To these sections no explicit reference is made in the abridgements given in the Pāli texts of the Kūṭadanta Sutta. But the commentary mentions these six sections. (Ed.)

the oysters and the shells, the gravel and the pebble and the shoals of fish, as they move about or lie within it, he would know: 'This pool is clear, transparent, and serene, and here within are the oysters and the shells, and the sand and gravel, and the shoals of fish are moving about or lying still.'

"Similarly, with his heart thus serene ... [the monk] knows as it really is, 'This is Suffering ...'; 'These are the Cankers ...' Of him, thus knowing, the heart is set free from the Cankers²⁹ and he knows, 'Rebirth has been destroyed ... After this present life there will be no beyond.'

"This, O Brahman, is a sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome, of greater fruit and greater advantage than the previous sacrifices. And there is no performance of a sacrifice, O Brahman, higher and loftier than this."

28. And when he had thus spoken, Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, said to the Blessed One,

"Most excellent, O Gotama, are the words of your mouth, most excellent! Just as if a man were to set up what has been thrown down, or were to reveal that which has been hidden away, or were to point out the right road to him who has gone astray, or were to bring a light into the darkness so that those who had eyes could see external forms, just so has the truth been made known to me in many a figure by the Venerable Gotama. I, even I, betake myself to the Venerable Gotama as my guide, to the Doctrine and the Order. May the Venerable One accept me as a disciple, as one who, from this day forth, as long as life endures, has taken him as his guide. And I myself, O Gotama, will have the seven hundred bulls, and the seven hundred steers, and the seven hundred heifers, and the seven hundred goats, and the seven hundred rams set free. To them I grant their life. Let them eat green grass and drink fresh water, and may cool breezes waft around them."²⁹

29. Then the Blessed One discoursed to Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, in due order;³⁰ that is to say, he spoke to him of generosity; of right conduct; of heaven; of the danger, the vanity, and the defilement of lusts; and of the advantages of renunciation. And when the Blessed One became aware that Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, had become prepared, softened, unprejudiced, upraised, and believing in heart, then did he proclaim the doctrine the Buddhas alone have won: the doctrine of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and of the Path. And just as a clean cloth, with all stains in it washed away, will readily take the dye, even so did Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, even while seated there, obtain the pure and spotless Eye for the Truth, and he knew: "Whatsoever has a beginning, in that is inherent also the necessity of dissolution."³¹

30. And then the Brahman Kūṭadanta, as one who had seen the Truth, had mastered it, understood it, dived deep down into it, who had passed beyond doubt, and put away perplexity and gained full confidence, who had become dependent on no other for his knowledge of the teaching of the Master,³² addressed the Blessed One and said,

²⁹ **Com.:** "Having thus spoken, the Brahman sent a man to the place of sacrifice, saying, 'Go, my man, climb down into the sacrificial pit and release all those animals from their bonds.' The man did so and reported back to the Brahman that the animals had been released. Until the Brahman had received this message, the Blessed One did not preach Dhamma to him. And why not? Because the Brahman's mind was still perturbed. But when he had received the message, his mind brightened at the thought 'To many animals I have given freedom.' When the Blessed One knew that the Brahman's mind had brightened and was serene, he began his Dhamma instruction." (Ed.)

³⁰ "In due order" This is the Gradual Instruction (*anupubbikathā*), on which see *The Wheel* No. 98/99, p. 50 and Note 26. (Ed.)

³¹ This passage indicates the attainment of the first stage of Sainthood, Stream-entry (*sotāpatti*). See *The Wheel* No. 98/99, p. 51 and Notes 33-37. (Ed.)

³² *Ibid.*

“May the Venerable Gotama grant me the favour of taking his meal tomorrow with me, and also the members of the Order with him.”

And the Blessed One signified, by silence, his consent. Then the Brahman, Kūṭadanta, seeing that the Blessed One had accepted, rose from his seat, and keeping his right towards him as he passed, he departed thence. And at daybreak he had sweet food, both hard and soft, made ready at the pit prepared for his sacrifice, and had the time announced to the Blessed One: “It is time, O Gotama, and the meal is ready.” And the Blessed One, who had dressed early in the morning, put on his outer robe, and taking his bowl with him, went with the brethren to Kūṭadanta’s sacrificial pit, and sat down there on the seat prepared for him. And Kūṭadanta the Brahman satisfied the brethren with the Buddha at their head, with his own hand, with sweet food, both hard and soft, till they refused any more. And when the Blessed One had finished his meal, and cleansed the bowl and his hands, Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, took a low seat and seated himself beside him. And when he was thus seated the Blessed One instructed and aroused and incited and gladdened Kūṭadanta, the Brahman, with religious discourse, and then arose from his seat and departed thence.

The Kūṭadanta Sutta is ended.

The Buddhist Publication Society

The BPS is an approved charity dedicated to making known the Teaching of the Buddha, which has a vital message for all people.

Founded in 1958, the BPS has published a wide variety of books and booklets covering a great range of topics. Its publications include accurate annotated translations of the Buddha's discourses, standard reference works, as well as original contemporary expositions of Buddhist thought and practice. These works present Buddhism as it truly is—a dynamic force which has influenced receptive minds for the past 2500 years and is still as relevant today as it was when it first arose.

For more information about the BPS and our publications, please visit our website, or contact:

The Administrative Secretary
Buddhist Publication Society
P.O. Box 61
54 Sangharaja Mawatha
Kandy, Sri Lanka
E-mail: bps@bps.lk
Web site: <http://www.bps.lk>
Tel: 0094 81 223 7283
Fax: 0094 81 222 3679