



Selected Stories - Part 2

These stories are taken from the *Sutra of the Wise and Foolish*, a popular Buddhist Sutra talking about Karmic causes and effects.

It contains 51 stories in the Tibetan version. It is widely translated in Chinese and Mongolian.

Prince Swasti

Once, the Buddha and his assembly saw a poor boy who begged for food, and took it to his old parents and fed them. The best food he gave to his parents and the scraps he ate himself.

The Buddha said, “Whenever anyone, whether a monk or a married person, honors his parents and make sacrifices for them, it is difficult to calculate the merits that he gains.”

Then, the Buddha recalled how, in a previous life as Prince Swasti, he also sacrificed for his parents.

“In times long past, times beyond recall, there was a King called Virtuous. His father was killed by an evil minister. Hearing that he was next to be killed, he escaped with his queen and son.

Not knowing where to go, they got lost in the forest. Carrying only a week’s worth of food, their food eventually ran out. The king thought of killing his wife for food. So, he sent the queen in front, planning to stab her from the back.

When Prince Swasti saw this, he pleaded with his father, ‘Father, please do not kill mother. Cut off my flesh bit by bit for our food instead.’

The King did this and through his son's flesh, they were nourished. The prince then aspired, 'By the merit of offering my flesh to my parents, may I attain Enlightenment and deliver all beings from sufferings to peace.'"

The Buddha then said to his attendant Ananda, "I was Prince Swasti in a previous life. Due to the merit of that sacrifice, wherever I was born, among the gods or among men, I was born in the supreme, excellent family and became endowed with countless virtues.

"Due to such virtues, I was able to attain Enlightenment now."

The Boy Without Organs

When the Buddha was staying in Jetavana Monastery, there was a pregnant woman whose husband died before she gave birth to their child.

According to tradition, a family without a man must give their properties to the king, and the king will take care of that family. The mother and her daughters pleaded King Prasenajit to wait for the child's birth before taking their properties. The king agreed.

When the child was born, it had a male organ, but without eyes, ears, nose, tongue, hands or feet. The woman was overjoyed that a male member has come, but was sad for the boy's state. She asked the Buddha why this happened.

The Buddha explained, “In times long past, there were two just and intelligent brothers. Because of their fairness, the king made the older brother his magistrate.

One day, the younger brother said, ‘Brother, I gave some money to this merchant. If I die from my sea voyage, and this merchant’s business prospers, give the profit of my money to my son.’

The elder brother, the magistrate, agreed as a witness to his brother and the merchant’s agreement.

The younger brother died at sea. When his son had heard of his father’s money with the merchant, the son approached the merchant and asked for his father’s share.

The merchant denied this. Thinking that the boy would go to his uncle, the magistrate, the merchant tried to bribe him. Being just, the magistrate refused the bribe.

The merchant decided to bribe the magistrate's wife instead. That night, the wife pleaded and threatened her magistrate-husband, 'I have never asked a favor from you ever since. Please accept this one favor I ask. If you do not listen to this merchant, I will kill myself and our child.'

Fearing for his wife's life, the magistrate decided to lie. The next day, the merchant and the boy went before the magistrate to settle their argument.

The magistrate said, ‘I have no knowledge of any agreement between my brother and this merchant.’”

The Buddha then asked, “Who do you think is this magistrate? Due to his lie, he was reborn in the great hell and underwent numerous tortures for five-hundred lives. After this Karma ripened, he was born in a human body without organs for five-hundred lives.

“Due to his generosity before, he was born as a man of wealth although without organs. The fruit of non-virtue and virtue never become exhausted until they ripen.”

Prince Victorious and the 500 Beggars

The Buddha accepted 500 beggars as monks and taught them the Dharma. Through practice, they became Arhats.

Some businessmen and princes in the country felt insulted after hearing this. They did not want to invite beggar-monks to their homes. One of these princes was Prince Victorious.

When he invited the Buddha and the assembly to his home, he did not invite the 500 Arhat-beggars.

The Buddha then instructed the 500 Arhat-beggars, “Go to the Northern Continent and get

wild rice. Since the patron would not feed you in his home, you will eat the wild rice with the rest of the monks there.”

The 500 Arhats obeyed, flew to the mountains, and filled their alms-bowls with wild rice. Then, they flew, like a graceful flock of geese, to the palace of Prince Victorious.

Upon seeing this, the Prince felt ashamed and repented his arrogance to the Buddha. He then asked the Buddha how these beggars were able to learn from the Buddha, and became Arhats.

The Buddha then said, “In a previous life beyond recall, there were 2,000 yogis who practiced on a mountain. A wealthy householder named Pacifier promised to feed these yogis.

“Pacifier had 500 workers who plowed the fields for the food of the yogis. Every meal time, a man would call the yogis to eat.

“One day, these 500 workers complained. They insulted the yogis behind their backs for being lazy. Later, they confessed their negative speech to the yogis, and aspired to meet the Dharma.

“Because they insulted the yogis, the 500 workers were reborn as miserable beggars. Because they confessed the misdeed and aspired for the Dharma, they were able to meet the Buddha.”

The Householder Pacifier was the Buddha. The man who called the yogis during mealtime was Prince Victorious, while the 500 workers were the 500 beggars-turned-Arhats.