

TREASURE THE ADVICE OF THE WISE

6 (1) THE STORY OF VENERABLE RĀDHA (VERSE 76)

While residing at the Jētavana Monastery, the Buddha spoke this verse, with reference to Monk Rādha, who was at one time a poor old brāhmin.

Rādha was a poor brāhmin who stayed in the monastery doing small services for the monks. For his services he was provided with food and clothing and other needs, but was not encouraged to join the Sangha, although he had a strong desire to become a monk.

One day, early in the morning, when the Buddha surveyed the world with his supernormal power, he saw the poor brāhmin in his vision and knew that he was due for arahatship. So the Buddha went to the old man, and learned from him that the monks of the monastery did not want him to join the Sangha. The Buddha therefore called all the monks to him and asked them, “Is there any monk here who recollects any good turn done to him by this old man?” To this question, Venerable Sāriputta replied, “Venerable, I do recollect an instance when this old man offered me a spoonful of rice.” “If that be so,” the Buddha said, “shouldn’t you help your benefactor to get liberated from the ills of life?” Then Venerable Sāriputta agreed to make the old man a monk and he was duly admitted to the Sangha. Venerable Sāriputta guided the old monk and he strictly followed his guidance. Within a few days, the old monk attained arahatship.

When the Buddha next came to see the monks, they reported to him how strictly the old monk followed the guidance of Vener-

able Sāriputta. To them, the Buddha replied that a monk should be amenable to guidance like Rādha and should not resent when rebuked for any fault or failing.

Said the Buddha, “Venerable Sāriputta was, in a previous life, the solitary elephant which presented the pure white elephant his son to the carpenters, in recognition of the service they did him in healing his foot.” Having said thus about Venerable Sāriputta, he said, with reference to Venerable Rādha, “Monks, when a fault is pointed out to a monk, he ought to be amenable to discipline like Rādha and when he is admonished, he should not take offence.”

Explanatory Translation (Verse 76)

*vajjadassinam niggayhavādiṃ mēdhāviṃ yaṃ
nidhīnam pavattāram iva passē tādisaṃ paṇḍitaṃ
bhajē tādisaṃ bhajamānassa seyyō hōti pāpiyō na*

vajjadassinam: who indicates errors; *niggayhavādiṃ*: who admonishes but constructively; *mēdhāviṃ*: wise; *yaṃ*: who; *nidhīnam pavattāram iva*: like a treasure-revealer; *passē*: discovers; *tādisaṃ*: such; *paṇḍitaṃ*: a wise person; *bhajē*: one should associate; *tādisaṃ*: such a person; *bhajamānassa*: to an individual who associates; *seyyō*: good; *hōti*: will happen; *pāpiyō*: evil; *na*: will not happen

If one discovers a wise person who points one’s errors and sternly corrects one, he should be looked upon as a benign revealer of a treasure. His company should be sought. Such association would make better persons of men.

Commentary

vajjadassinam niggayhavādim: one who picks out faults; one who re-proves. These two qualities are offered as the characteristics of a person who criticizes constructively. There are those who point out faults and reprove, with the intention of insulting a person. But in this stanza the constructive critics are meant. They of course highlight faults and reprove, but their intention is different. They go about these activities like 'revealers of treasures.' Who could describe a 'treasure-revealer' as a person who insults? That kind of guide will enable the learner to realize for himself the inner personality treasures he possesses, and will make him an adept in proper conduct, so that he can progress satisfactorily along the path to realization.