Cp 8 — King Sivi’s Conduct

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Text

The Conduct Leading to Buddhahood

The Chapter With Akitti

The Perfection of Giving (8th)

King Sivi’s Conduct

“In the city called Ariṭṭha

I was the aristocrat named Sivi.

Seated in my finest longhouse,

I then had the following thought:

‘Whatever human gifts there are,

none may be found that I have not given.

Even if someone were to ask for my eye,

I would give it without wavering.’

Knowing my thoughts,

Sakka the lord of gods,

sitting in the assembly of gods

said the following.

‘Seated in his finest longhouse,

the mighty King Sivi

is thinking of manifold gifts

and cannot see any he would not give.

Is this true or not?

Come, let us test him.

Wait a while

until I know his mind.’
Appearing as a frail old man,
with grey hair and wrinkled skin,
feeble and blind,
he approached the king.
Then, stretching out
his left and right arms,
he raised his cupped palms to his head
and said the following.
‘Great king, I have a request for you.
Under your just rule the kingdom has flourished,
and the renown of your love of giving
has risen among gods and humans.
Both my eyes, by which I find my way,
are ruined and become blind.
Give me just one eye,
while you too get by with one.’
After hearing his words
I was thrilled, my mind elated,
so with cupped palms, inspired,
I said the following.
‘Just now I was reflecting on this
when I came here from the longhouse.
Understanding my mind,
you have come to ask for an eye.
Oh! My wish has come true!
My intention is fulfilled!
Today I shall give to a supplicant
a fine gift never before given.’

‘Come Sivaka, stand up,

do not hesitate or waver.

Pluck out even both eyes

and give them to the supplicant.’

And then, urged on by me,

Sivaka did as I said.

Extracting both eyes,

he presented them to the trembling supplicant.

‘While planning to give, while giving,

and after I had given,

my mind did not falter,

because it was solely for awakening.

It was not because I disliked my eyes,

or that I disliked myself,

but because omniscience is precious to me,

that is why I gave away my eyes.’”