Cp 10 — The Wise Hare’s Conduct

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Text

The Conduct Leading to Buddhahood

The Chapter With Akitti

The Perfection of Giving (10th)

The Wise Hare’s Conduct

“Then again when I was

a hare who roamed the forest,

eating grass, leaves, vegetables, and fruit,

refraining from harming others,

a monkey, a jackal,

a young otter and I

lived in the same neighborhood

and were seen together morning and evening.

I advised them

regarding good and bad deeds:

‘Shun bad deeds,

and cling to the good.’

Seeing the full moon

on the sabbath day,

I pointed it out to them, saying,

‘Today is the sabbath.

Prepare gifts

for one worthy of offerings.

Having given to one worthy of offerings,

observe the sabbath day.’
Saying ‘good!’ to me,
they prepared gifts
according to their capacity and means,
and sought out one worthy of offerings.
As I was sitting I thought about
what sort of gift would suit one worthy of offerings:
‘If I were to find a worthy recipient,
what gift would i give?
I have no sesame or mung beans,
no beans or rice or ghee.
I feed only on grass,
but that’s not something I can give.
If someone worthy of gifts comes,
seeking alms near me,
I shall give my own self:
they shall not leave empty-handed.’
Knowing my thoughts,
Sakka in the guise of a brahmin
approached my lair
in order to test my giving.
Seeing him I was elated,
and said the following.
‘It is so good that you have come
to me looking for food.
Today I shall give to you
a fine gift never before given.
You are furnished with virtue,
unattached to harming others.

Come, light a fire,
having gathered different sticks.
I shall cook myself,
you shall eat me roasted.’
‘Good!’ he said happily,
and gathered different sticks.
Building a great pyre,
he placed an ember in the recess.
He lit such a fire there
that would quickly grow big.
Shaking my dusty limbs,
I withdrew to one side.
When the great pile of sticks
was burning and blazing,
I leapt up and fell on it,
in the midst of the fiery flames.
Like diving
into cool water,
allaying distress and fever,
bringing satisfaction and joy.
That’s how it was
when I entered the burning flame.
It allayed distress and fever,
just like cool water.
Outer skin and inner, flesh and sinews,
bones, and heart with cords:
my whole entire body
I gave to the brahmin.”