Cp 19 — Alīnasattu’s Conduct

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

The Conduct Leading to Buddhahood

The Chapter on an Elephant

The Perfection of Ethics (9th)

Alīnasattu’s Conduct

“In the kingdom of Pañcāla, in the eminent city,

the capital named Kapilā,

the king named Jayaddisa

was furnished with virtuous qualities.

I was that king’s son,

well educated and virtuous;

Alīnasattu of fine qualities,

I always cared for the attendants.

My father had gone deer hunting

when he came across a cannibal,

who seized my father, saying,

‘You are my prey, don’t move!’

When he heard these words,

he was scared and trembled with fear,

his thighs became stiff

when he saw the cannibal.

‘Let me go, take the deer meat!’ he said,

‘I promise to return.’

Having paid the brahmin,

my father said to me:
‘Son, rule the realm.
Do not neglect this city.
I promised the cannibal
that I will return.’
I bowed to my mother and father,
and substituted myself.
Tossing my bow and sword,
I approached the cannibal.
Perhaps if I have weapons in hand
that might make him afraid.
And that would violate my ethics,
were I to frighten him.
For fear of violating my ethics,
I said nothing hateful to him.
Lovingly and beneficially,
I said the following.
‘Kindle a great fire.
I will drop into it from a tree.
When you know I am cooked,
eat me, Grandfather.’
And so for the sake of my ethical vows
I did not protect my life.
And I drove out forever
his attacks on living creatures.”