Cp 22 — Somanassa’s Conduct

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/cp22/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

The Conduct Leading to Buddhahood

The Chapter With Yudhañjaya

The Perfection of Renunciation (2nd)

Somanassa’s Conduct

“Then again when I was

in Indapatta, the capital city,

I was a loved and cherished child

renowned as Somanassa.

I was ethical, full of good qualities,

of fine and eloquent speech,

honoring elders, conscientious,

and expert in the methods of inclusiveness.

Now there was this charlatan renunciant

who was favored by the king.

He made a living by cultivating

an orchard and flowering shrubs.

Seeing he was a charlatan,

like a pile of chaff without grain,

like a hollow tree,

like a plantain tree with no core, I thought:

‘There is no good in him,

he has strayed from asceticism.

He has left the bright qualities of conscience

for the sake of making a living.’
Then the borders were in turmoil
by wild frontier savages.
Before going to put an end to it,
my father instructed me:
‘My dear, do not neglect
the matted-hair ascetic of severe penance.
He is the granter of our wishes,
give him all he desires.’
I went then to serve him,
and said the following.
‘I hope you are well, householder.
Is there anything I can bring for you?’
At that he was upset with me,
that prideful charlatan.
‘I’ll have you killed right now!
Or banished from the realm!’
After putting an end to the border conflict,
the king said to the charlatan,
‘I hope you’re keeping well, sir,
and honors were served you?’
That wicked one told him
how the prince deserved execution.
When he heard these words,
the Lord of the Earth commanded:
‘Cut off his head right there!
Saw his corpse into four pieces!
And then show them from street to street:
this is the fate of one who shames the ascetic.’

Right away left the punishers—

fierce, violent and pitiless.

They dragged me from my mother’s lap

and led me away.

I said to them

as they bound me with tight bonds:

‘Present me to the king right now,

I have an issue for the king!’

They presented me to the king,

follower of the wicked one and his wicked ways.

On seeing me, I persuaded him

and brought him under my influence.

He asked for my forgiveness then,

and offered me the kingdom.

But having burst the darkness asunder,

I went forth to homelessness.

I did not dislike great kingship,

nor did I dislike sensual enjoyment.

But because omniscience is precious to me,

that is why I forsook kingship.”