

THE JIVAKA SUTTA

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN JIVAKA KOMARBHACCA, THE FATHER OF TRADITIONAL THAI MEDICINE, AND GOTAMA, THE BUDDHA.

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A brief overview of the Jivaka Sutta - Jivaka Komarabhacca visits the Buddha who is staying in his mango grove, and asks if it is true that animals have been slain expressly for the Buddha's use. The Buddha replies that he forbids the eating of meat only when there is evidence of suspicion that the animal has been slain for one's express use. Anyone who slays an animal for the use of a monk and gives it to him commits a great evil. Jivaka is pleased with the reply and declares himself a follower of the Buddha.

'Thus I have heard. At one time the Bhagava was staying at Rajagaha in the Mango Grove of Jivaka Komarabhacca, the adopted son of Abhaya, the king's son. Then Jivaka Komarabhacca approached the Blessed One. Having approached and made obeisance to Him, he sat down at one side and having sat down, Jivaka Komarabhacca asked the Blessed One:

'Lord, I have heard that animals are slaughtered on purpose for the recluse Gotama, and that the recluse Gotama knowingly eats the meat killed on purpose for him. Lord, do those who say animals are slaughtered on purpose for the recluse Gotama, and the recluse Gotama knowingly eats the meat killed for him speak the Word of the Buddha, or do they falsely accuse the Buddha? Do they speak the truth according to the truth? Are your declarations and supplementary declarations not thus subject to be ridiculed by others in any manner?'

The Buddha replied:

'Jivaka, those who say "Animals are slaughtered on purpose for the recluse Gotama, and the recluse Gotama knowingly eats the meat killed on purpose for him" do not say according to what I have declared, and they falsely accuse me. Jivaka, I have declared that one should not make use of meat if it is seen, heard or suspected to have been killed on purpose for a monk. I allow the monks meat that is quite pure in three respects: if it is not seen, heard or suspected to have been killed on purpose for a monk.'

'Jivaka, in this Sasana a monk resides in a certain place with a mind full of Loving-kindness pervading first one direction, then a second one, then a third one, then the fourth one, just so above, below and all around; and everywhere he identifies himself with all, he pervades the whole world with a mind full of Loving-kindness, with a mind wide, developed, unbounded, free from hate and ill-will.'

'A certain householder or his son approaches that monk and invites him to the morning meal in his house the next day. Jivaka, the monk willingly accepts the invitation. Having passed that night, early the next morning that monk puts on his inner robe, dresses himself and having taken a bowl goes to the householder or his son's house. Having reached the house of the householder he sits down at a place specially meant for him. Then the householder or his son offers him a delicious meal. To that monk no such thought arises : "How good it would be if this householder or his son were to offer me a delicious meal", or "How good it would be were this householder to offer me such a delicious meal in future." That monk has no craving for that meal, does not brood over the matter, and has no attachment for it; on the contrary, he contemplates the miseries in connection with material food, and having possessed himself of Wisdom pertaining to the finding of a way to Freedom, he eats the meal.'

'Jivaka, what do you think about him in the matter? Has he caused any ill-will towards himself or another or both ?

'No ; Venerable Sir.'

'Jivaka, didn't that monk eat a meal that was free from blemishes at that time ?'

'Yes ; Venerable Sir.'

'Lord, I have heard that the Brahma lives with Loving-kindness. Lord, I have now seen with my own eyes that the Bhagava is that very Brahma because He lives with Loving-kindness.'

'Jivaka, ill-will is caused by raga (greed), dosa (hatred) and moha (delusion); but the Bhagava has already eradicated raga, dosa and moha, and as they have been cut at the roots, they will never arise in future. Jivaka, if you really speak in that light, I shall accept your words.'

'Lord, I really spoke in that light.'

'Indeed, Jivaka, if the householder slaughters an animal on purpose for the Tathagata or His disciples, he performs the following five kinds of unwholesome volitional actions :

When the householder orders: "Go and bring such and such an animal here," then he has firstly committed an unwholesome volitional action.

Secondly, the householder has committed an unwholesome volitional action by causing the animal to be dragged by the neck, thus making the animal suffer disagreeable mental sensations.

Thirdly, he has committed an unwholesome volitional action by ordering his men to kill the animal.

Fourthly, he has committed an unwholesome volitional action by having the animal killed, thus causing it disagreeable mental sensations.

Fifthly, he has committed unwholesome volitional action offering the Tathagata and disciples meat slaughtered purpose for a monk."

This being said, Jivaka Komarabhacca, the adopted son of Abhaya, the king's son, said to the Bhagava :

'It is wonderful; O Gotama, it is wonderful; Just as one should set upright that which is upside down or lay bare that which is concealed, or tell the way to a man who has lost his way, or hold a lamp in the dark so that those who have eyes might see things; even so, the Dhamma has been revealed to me in many ways by the Venerable Gotama. I take refuge in the Venerable Gotama, in the Dhamma and the Order of monks ; may the Venerable Gotama accept me as a lay disciple who has taken refuge from today onward as long as my life lasts.