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Once upon a time, when Brahma-datta was reigning in Benares, the future Buddha returned to life as his son and heir. And when the day came for choosing a name, they called him Prince Brahma-datta. He grew up in due course; and when he was sixteen years old, went to Takkasila, and became accomplished in all arts. And after his father died he ascended the throne, and ruled the kingdom with righteousness and equity.

He gave judgments without partiality, hatred, ignorance, or fear. Since he thus reigned with justice, with justice also his ministers administered the law. Lawsuits being thus decided with justice, there were none who brought false cases. And as these ceased, the noise and tumult of litigation ceased in the king's court. Though the judges sat all day in the court, they had to leave without any one coming for justice. It came to this, that the Hall of Justice would have to be closed!

Then the future Buddha thought, "It cannot be from my reigning with righteousness that none come for judgment; the bustle has ceased, and the Hall of Justice will have to be closed. I must, therefore, now examine into my own faults; and if I find that anything is wrong in me, put that away, and practise only virtue."

Thenceforth he sought for some one to tell him his faults, but among those around him he found no one who would tell him of any fault, but heard only his own praise.

Then he thought, "It is from fear of me that these men speak only good things, and not evil things," and he sought among those people who lived outside the palace. And finding no fault-finder there, he sought among those who lived outside the city, in the suburbs, at the four gates. And there too finding no one to find fault, and hearing only his own praise, he determined to search the country places.

So he made over the kingdom to his ministers, and mounted his chariot; and taking only his charioteer, left the city in disguise. And searching the country through, up to the very boundary, he found no fault-finder, and heard only of his own virtue; and so he turned back from the outer-most boundary, and returned by the high road towards the city.

Now at that time the king of Kosala, Mallika by name, was also ruling his kingdom with righteousness; and when seeking for some fault in himself, he also found no fault-finder in the palace, but only heard of his own virtue! So seeking in country places, he too came to that very spot. And these two came face to face in a

low cart-track with precipitous sides, where there was no space for a chariot to get out of the way!

Then the charioteer of Mallika the king said to the charioteer of the king of Benares, "Take thy chariot out of the way!"

But he said, "Take thy chariot out of the way, O charioteer! In this chariot sitteth the lord over the kingdom of Benares, the great king Brahma-datta."

Yet the other replied, "In this chariot, O charioteer, sitteth the lord over the kingdom of Kosala, the great king Mallika. Take thy carriage out of the way, and make room for the chariot of our king!"

Then the charioteer of the king of Benares thought, "They say then that he too is a king! What is now to be done?" After some consideration, he said to himself, "I know a way. I'll find out how old he is, and then I'll let the chariot of the younger be got out of the way, and so make room for the elder."

And when he had arrived at that conclusion, he asked that charioteer what the age of the king of Kosala was. But on inquiry he found that the ages of both were equal. Then he inquired about the extent of his kingdom, and about his army, and his wealth, and his renown, and about the country he lived in, and his caste and tribe and family. And he found that both were lords of a kingdom three hundred leagues in extent; and that in respect of army and wealth and renown, and the countries in which they lived, and their caste and their tribe and their family, they were just on a par!

Then he thought, "I will make way for the most righteous." And he asked, "What kind of righteousness has this king of yours?"

Then the chorister of the king of Kosala, proclaiming his king's wickedness as goodness, uttered the First Stanza:

*"The strong he overthrows by strength,  
The mild by mildness, does Mallika;  
The good he conquers by goodness,  
And the wicked by wickedness too.  
Such is the nature of this king!  
Move out of the way, O charioteer!"*

But the charioteer of the king of Benares asked him, "Well, have you told all the virtues of your king?"

"Yes," said the other.

"If these are his virtues, where are then his faults?" replied he.

The other said, "Well, for the nonce, they shall be faults, if you like! But pray, then, what is the kind of goodness your king has?"

And then the charioteer of the king of Benares called unto him to hearken, and uttered the Second Stanza.

*"Anger he conquers by calmness,  
And by goodness the wicked;  
The stingy he conquers by gifts,  
And by truth the speaker of lies.  
Such is the nature of this king!  
Move out of the way, O charioteer!"*

And when he had thus spoken, both Mallika the king and his charioteer alighted from their chariot. And they took out the horses, and removed their chariot, and made way for the king of Benares!