Chapter - II

Animals Associated with the life of Buddha
CHAPTER II

ANIMALS ASSOCIATED IN THE LIFE OF BUDDHA

Animals played a role in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the Mūcilinda nāga protected from storm & rain, and the steed Khantaka carrying Prince Siddhattha away into the night, being examples of this. In a few other incidents they play a more important role – Prince Siddhāttha rescuing the goose from Devadattha, the Buddha being looked after by an elephant and a monkey according to the commentary during his stay in the Parileyya Forest, and his calming of the infuriated elephant Nālagiri.

1. Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the

Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – He was Nāga king who sheltered the New Buddha, from unseasonal storm and heavy rain when he was meditating under the tree after the enlightenment. The Blessed One at the end of those seven days, arose from that state of meditation, and went from the foot of the Ajapāla banyan-tree to the Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the -tree. And when he had reached it, he sat cross-legged at the foot of the Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the -tree uninterruptedly during seven days, enjoying the bliss of emancipation.¹

At that time a great cloud appeared out of season, rain shower cold weather, storms and darkness lasted seven days, And the Nāga (or Serpent) king Ole was part of several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – they came out from the abode, and seven times encircled the body of the Blessed One, with his windings, and kept extending his large hood over the Blessed One’s head,

¹ Brewster E.H. The Life of Gautama the Buddha p. 51.
thinking to himself: “May no cold (come to) the Blessed One; May no heat (come to) the Blessed One; May no touch of gadflies and gnats, storms and sun heat and reptiles (come to) the Blessed One.”

And at the end of those seven days, when the Nāga king Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental — the saw the open, cloudless sky, he loosened his windings from the body of the Blessed One, made his own appearance disappear, created the appearance of a youth, and stationed himself in front of the Blessed One, raising his clasped hands, and paying reverence to the Blessed One. ²

And the Blessed One perceiving that, on this occasion, pronounced this solemn utterance: “Happy the solitude of him who is content, who has heard the Truth, who sees. Happy is non-malice in this world, (self) restraint toward all beings that have life. Happy is passionlessness in this world, the getting beyond all sense desires. The suppression of that ‘I am conceit, this truly is the highest happiness.” ³

². ibid p. 52
Ole as in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the sheltering Gautama Buddha; Wall-Painting from monastery in Laos.

Udāna : vaggo 2: Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental

The Chapter (including the Discourse) about Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental 2-1: the sutta (11)

Thus I heard: at one time the Gracious One was dwelling near Uruvela, on the bank of the river Nerāñjara, at the root of the Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the (tree), in the first (period) after attaining Awakening.

Then at that time the Gracious One was sitting in one cross-legged posture for seven days experiencing the happiness of freedom. Then at that time a great cloud arose out of season, (bringing) seven days of rainy weather, cold winds, and overcast days.⁴

⁴ Udāna
Then the Nāga King Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, after leaving his domicile, and surrounding the Gracious One's body seven times with his coils, stood with his great hood stretched out above his head, (thinking): “May the Gracious One not be cold, may the Gracious One not be hot, may the Gracious One not be affected by gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the heat (of the sun), and serpents.”

Then with the passing of those seven days, the Gracious One arose from that concentration. Then the Nāga King Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, having understood that the sky was now clear without a cloud, having unravelled his coils from the Gracious One's body, and after withdrawing his own form, and creating the appearance of a young brāhmaṇa, stood in front of the Gracious One, revering the Gracious One with raised hands.

Then the Gracious One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:

“There is happiness and detachment for the one who is satisfied,

Who has heard the Dhamma, and who sees,

There is happiness for he who is free from ill-will in the world,

Who is restrained towards breathing beings.

The state of dispassion in the world is happiness, the complete transcending of sense desires, (But) for he who has removed the conceit ‘I am’ - this is indeed the highest happiness.”

5. Udāna 2 : Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the vagga, www.ancient.buddhist-text.net/English-Texts p. 1
Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the and its Representations.

Nāgas have been depicted in Buddhist art, in their individual capacity; as deities; as adorning the Buddha, and also as an integral part of various Jātakas. According to C. Sivaramamurti, “The numerous figures of Nāgas in Buddhist sculptures are due to the important role they play in Buddha’s fold and their great reverence for the Master.” 6

Nāgas are depicted in the form of snakes and also in the form of human beings, (male and female) with snake hoods. Nāgas are shown with several hoods, usually five or seven, while Nagins are shown with a solitary hood. Sometimes Nāgas are also seen with eight or nine hoods.

The Nidānakathā, mentions Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the , as protecting the Buddha. After attaining enlightenment, in the sixth week, Buddha sat under the Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the tree. A storm arose, Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, shielded the Buddha with the seven folds of his hood. 7

The Mahāvagga, elaborating the same event, states, “... king Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the came out from his abode, and seven times encircled the body of the Blessed One with his windings, and kept extending his large hood over the Blessed One’s head, ... “ It further explains, that as the storm abated, Ole in several events in the life of Buddha.

6. Sivaramamurti C, Amravati Sculptures in the Chennai Museum, p.: 70
7. Fausboll, v,Ed,” The Jātaka together with its commentary vol. I p.80
Usually their appearance is incidental – the, “made his own appearance disappear, created the appearance of a youth, and stationed himself in front of the Blessed One, raising his clasped hands and paying reverence to the Blessed One.” \(^8\)

We examine the following Buddhist sites and art works, keeping both these descriptions in mind.

**Bharhut**

At Bharhut, we do not see the depiction of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, in the surviving artifacts. However, B. Barua, on basis of an inscription found at Bharhut, states, “In the preceding two scenes” (Mara and Jewel Walk) “We have seen how he spend the first and third weeks. The surviving fragment of the inscription indicates that there was another bas – relief representing the scenes of the five places where he spent the remaining five weeks.” The inscription states, “Bhagavato pamhasananam”. \(^9\)

This indicates that the incident with Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the was most probably depicted at Bharhut, but is destroyed now.

We see three sculptural reliefs, of Nāgas, at Bharhut. Two are identified by the inscriptions accompanying them i.e. Nāga King Erapata or Elapatra worshipping the Buddha and Nāga king Chakavaka shown standing, with arms folded. \(^{10}\)

A pillar medallion shows a five hooded Nāga in human form, accompanied by two female Nāga Chowri bearers on either side. There is no other depiction of the incident of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – protecting the Buddha, at Bharhut.

---

10. Sharma R.C.,” *Bharhut Sculptures* p. 44
Sanchi

At Sanchi, Nāgas are represented in human form, male as well as female. We see two representations of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, at Sanchi.

Western Gateway, North Pillar, South Face

This panel has been identified by scholars; J. Marshall A. Fourcher and M. K. Dhavalikar, as that representing Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental.

The relief shows a Bodhi tree in the centre, surmounted by an umbrella, with a seat below the tree, representing the Buddha.\footnote{Dhavlikar M.K. \textit{Sanchi} p., 71}

Sanchi – Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the Western Gateway
The Bodhi tree is flanked on either side by Kinnaras, bearing garlands. We also see two devotees on two winged creatures, identified by Marshall and Foucher, as, “a winged lion and a winged griffin”.  

Sanchi – Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the Western Gateway

Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the is shown seated below the Bodhi tree and seat. He is depicted with a large hood, with five Nāga heads. He is surrounded by female Nagins, indicated by one snake hood. They are occupied in different ways - holding a fly whisk, holding bowls and playing musical instruments, like the flute, drums and harp.
This panel is identified as one portraying the story of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha.

Usually their appearance is incidental – the Marshall and Foucher clarify it further, by saying that two incidents after the Enlightenment of Buddha are combined and represented here. i.e. the fifth week spent under the Nigrodha tree and the sixth week when Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the protected the Buddha from a storm.

Here too the tree is depicted in the centre. This tree, is identified as the ‘Goathered’s Fig-tree’ by Marshall and Foucher. 13

The tree is surmounted by an Umbrella, with an empty seat below. Kinnaras are seen on either side of the tree, bringing garlands. Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the sits below the seat. He is shown seated on his coils, and has a hood with five heads. He is surrounded by two standing and four seated Nagins, carrying various objects, like, chauri, bowls, etc. in their hands.

Marshall and Foucher feel that Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the is not shown actually encircling the Buddha, as – “only the lack of means at the disposal of the Sanchi workshop is to blame. 14

The depiction of both these reliefs indicates that the relief on the Southern Gateway was probably executed before that of the Western Gateway. The composition, intricate details of costume and jewellery mature handling of postures and anatomy, grace of figures, of the latter, demonstrates the advanced, superior skill of the sculptor.

14. ibid
There are a few similarities in both reliefs. The placement of figures and symbols is alike. The tree with the umbrella above and seat below, is placed in the centre, with Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the seated beneath. There are four figures of flying devotees paying respect to the Buddha. Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the is shown with five hoods surrounded by Nāgins.

However, the Western Gateway relief has a far more complex composition of the same components. The postures and gestures too show more rhythm and grace and individual features are further developed.

Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the is not shown actually encircling the seat representing the Buddha. Reverence towards the Buddha is indicated by showing devotees around the tree with garlands.

Seeing the progress the artist had made in the later representation, the artist must have certainly acquired the skill to show the Buddha being encircled by Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the. So the lack of skill on part of the sculptor does not seem to be the reason for the sculptor to have represented the incidents in the way he did, as indicated by Marshall and Foucher.

The artist’s main aim was not only narration of the incidents from Buddha’s life, but also to show the subtle thoughts and feelings of the devotee as well as represent Buddha’s philosophy. Here the artist seems to have included figures which must have been familiar to the devotee, to make the representation attractive to the common man.
Amravati

Nāgas at Amravati are shown

i. As part of the narrative, illustrating Jātaka Tales E.g. Campeyya Jātaka. British Museum No.78

ii. As adoring the Buddha, is non-narrative sculptures and reliefs. Buddha is shown in the form of symbols, as well as the human form. E.g. British Museum No. 79. British Museum No. 70.

iii. At times Nāgas are shown worshipping the relic casket. E.G. British Museum No. 8. British Museum No. 69.

iv Nāgas are also shown as being held by garudas, in their claws, usually as part of a decorative relief band, often with an elaborate, thick, undulating garland. E.G. British Museum No.81, British Museum No. 19/20 (outer face)

v Nāgas are also shown, entwining the done of a stupa. These reliefs are identified by scholars as representing the Ramagrama stupa. E.G. British Museum No.108 British Museum No. 4.

vi Nāgas are shown in scenes related to the life of Buddha. E.g. that of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the protecting the Buddha.

vii As individual representations, very likely to be representations of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the.

The later two categories have been examined in the present context.

15. Barrett, D. ‘Sculptures from Amravati in the British Museum’ p. 73
16. Ibid p. 72
17. Ibid p. 52
Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the – British Museum No. 120

This relief is a drum frieze, dated to 3rd Century C.E. It is worn out and broken, however, the incident of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the protecting the Buddha is visible on the ayaka – slab. 18

It shows, a pair of footprints, surrounded by three coils. The coils suggest the presence of the Nāga and the footprints, a symbolic representation of the Buddha, in the Dhammakaya form.

Details are not clear, it is difficult to make a stylistic analysis, However, the upper portion is more intricately carved than the lower.

These are surrounded by worshippers. Since the features are not very clear, it is not possible to identify them with certainty. Three female figures are shown kneeling in front of this representation. Above it is a seated Nāga figure, with seven hoods, with hands in the praying gesture. Two figures on his left also seem to be Nāgas, with hoods.

What is surprising about the relief, is that, though the Buddha is symbolically represented here; the band above, (ayaka- frieze) shows the human representation of the Buddha, along with the halo. It is possible that the lower portion was carved earlier and the upper later. As the

There is no mention of worshippers while the incident took place, in the Nidānakathā. Their presence here, is likely to indicate the growing importance of Nāgas for the lay devotee.

A reproduction of this relief is found in the book ‘Tree and Serpent Worship’, by James Fergusson. He states, “the lithographs in this Plate represent two other portions of the frieze of the inner Rail from Colonel Mackenzie’s drawings”.

19. Fergusson, S. Tree and Serpent Worship p.. 225
The frieze is described as follows, “The sacred feet on a lotus are shielded by a five-headed Nāga, and worshipped by three men one of whom has a seven-headed Nāga behind his head, the two others appearing with three heads, while the women apparently have not any.”

The Nāga shielding the footprints, represents the Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the incident. Here again, worshippers surround, the Buddha, represented symbolically. The worshippers include a seven headed Nāga.

Again, in the panel to the right of this incident is, “Buddha in the conventional robes and attitude in which he is represented at the present day, is expounding to a congregation of women.” 20

In this relief, Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the’s coils are not visible, but only the hood, while in the previous relief only coils were visible and no hood. In both, Buddha is represented by footprints

Here too, Buddha is represented in human form, near this relief. Since this is a continuous relief and both panels are as intricately carved, there does not seem to be a time lapse between the two.

Here the artist seems to have developed a symbolic representation of the Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the incident, as his ability to represent Buddha in the human form, cannot be doubled.

In the next representation of the Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, the Buddha is shown in human form.

20 Ibid.
This relief too is worn out and this details are not clearly visible. Buddha is shown seated on the seven coils of the Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, who has an inner hood of seven and outer hood of fourteen heads.  

Buddha is shown with his right hand raised in abhaya mudra and left on his lap, facing upwards. On either side are female chauri bearers, while the other two are not clearly visible.

This is a clear depiction of the Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the incident. The seven coils of the Nāga, as mentioned in the Mahavastu are also visible. This relief is dated to 3rd A.D.

---

A number of reliefs, at Amravati, show individual representations of a Nāga. Usually, a five hooded Nāga is shown guarding the entrance of a stupa, without the presence of any worshippers. This is distinctly different from the Nāgas protecting the Ramagrama stupa, as no other Nāgas are shown in the former representations e.g. British Museum No.81.

Here, a five hooded Nāga is depicted. The rest of the stupa is less profusely carved than usual.

The Nāga may represent Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the, a symbolic representation of the incident, where he protects the Buddha, in this case represented by the stupa. An individual representation of the five hooded snake is also done here, in a different context. E. g. British Museum No.47. 22

The upper area of the fluting shows a five headed Nāga in the centre, with a coiling body. On either side are lotuses. The panels flanking the Nāga show two women on makaras, carrying a bowl and pot each. Such reliefs show the growing importance of the Nāgas and could be a representation of Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental.

This seems to indicate that the Amravati sculptures show a further development of the Nāga Ole in several events in the life of Buddha. Usually their appearance is incidental – the incident from that narrated in the Nidānakathā. While at Bharhut, the incident received little importance, most probably not being represented at all, at Sanchi the artist tries to show the incident as written in literature.

22. Barrett D. ‘Sculptures from Amravati in the British Museum
2. Kanthaka

Kanthaka was the name of the royal horse of young Buddha having pure white in colour and born on the day as the Buddha, who was present in most of the important events in his life. Kanthaka was a favourite white horse of length eighteen cubits that was a royal servant of Prince Siddhartha, who later became Gautama Buddha. Siddhartha used Kanthaka in all major events described in Buddhist texts prior to his renunciation of the world.

In the court of King Sudhodana, Kanthaka was the most skillful and able horse, and the favourite of Crown Prince Siddhartha, whenever Siddhartha needed to go outside the palace. Siddhartha had been lavished and pampered in a series of purpose-built palaces by Sudhodana in order to shield him from thoughts of pain and suffering. This was done due to a prophecy by the ascetic Asita, who predicted that Siddhartha would renounce the throne to become a spiritual leader were he to contemplate human suffering. Kanthaka is first described in relation to the events leading up to the marriage of Siddhartha to Yasodhara, another Sakyan princess. By the customs of the kshatriya Sakyan clan, a prince must prove his worthiness in warrior related skills such as horse-riding, mounted archery and swordplay by defeating other royals in such contexts. Aboard Kanthaka, Siddhartha defeated his cousin Devadatta in archery, another cousin Anuruddha in a horse-riding competition and then half-brother Nanda in swordplay. The prince competed in all these sports while mounted on Kanthaka. Later when the prince fled the palace to become an ascetic he rode on this horse. Channa, the head royal servant, saddled Kanthaka and guided him one of the town by the bank of Anoma River. 23

---

23. C:/Documents-1/Admini-1/locals-1/Temp/MNE54YU/htm
After Siddhartha’s marriage, Kanthaka was the horse pulling the chariot when Channa, the head royal servant accompanied Siddhartha around Kapilavastu to see the Four sights whilst meeting his subjects, which prompted his decision to renounce the world. During these expeditions aboard Kanthaka, Channa explained to Siddhartha the sights of an elderly man, a sick person, a dead person whose funeral was being conducted and finally, an ascetic who had renounced worldly life for a spiritual one, as Siddhartha who had been secluded from such sights within the palace was taken aback.

Later, Kanthaka was the horse used by Siddhartha to escape from the palace to become an ascetic.

A brief narration of this episode in the Nidāakathā is as follows. After seeing the Four Omens, the Bodhisatta returned to his mansion and lay down on a couch. He was entertained by singing, dancing, beautiful women. But the Bodhisatta having disengaged himself from these pleasures fell asleep. The dancing girls too fell asleep, as there was no one to entertain any more. When Bodhisatta woke up and saw the change in their appearance, the disorderly and unattractive way in which the dancing girls lay asleep, he became even more detached from sensual pleasures. The terrace of his mansion appeared to him like a ground full of corpses and his mind was drawn towards renunciation.

The Bodhisatta resolved to go forth in Renunciation that very day. He asked Channa to get a horse ready. Channa saddled the horse Kanthaka.24

The Bodhisatta went to see Rahula, in his mother’s bedchamber. The mother’s hand rested on the head of her son, as they slept. The Bodhisatta realized; if disturbed, Rahula’s mother would wake up and prevent the Bodhisatta from going away. Thus he decided to come back after Enlightenment and see Rahula then.25

---

24. Bhagwat N.K. Nidāakathā p. 79
25. ibid. pp. 79, 80
When Kanthaka thought that today my master wishes to issue forth on the Great Retirement”. And in his delight he neighed a loud neigh. And that neigh would have spread through the whole town had not the gods stopped the sound, and suffered no one to hear it.

The future Buddha came near to the Kanthaka and said: “My dear Kanthaka save me now this one night; and then when thanks to you I have become a Buddha. I will save the world of gods and men “And thereupon he vaulted upon Kanthaka’s back.26

Now Kanthaka was eighteen cubits long from his neck to his tail, and at corresponding height; he was strong and swift and white all over like a polished conch-shell. If he neighed or stamped, the sound was so loud as to spread through the whole city; therefore the gods exerted their power and muffled the sound of his neighing, so that no one heard it; and at every step he took they placed the palms of their hands under his feet.

The future Buddha rode on the mighty back of the mighty steed, made Channa hold on by the tail, and so arrived at midnight of the great gate of the city Kapilavastu.

Now the king, in order that his future Buddha should not at any time go out of the city without his knowledge had caused each of the two leaves of the gate to be made so heavy as to need a thousand men to move it. But the future Buddha had a vigor and a strength that was equal, when reckoned in elephant-power, to the strength of ten thousand million elephants and reckoned in man-power, to the strength of a hundred thousand million men.27

26. Warren Henry Clarke, Buddhism Pali text with English translation p. 95
27. Warren Henry Clarke Buddhism Pali text with English translation p. 95
Realising that their master’s resolution was as unshakable as Mount Meru, both groom and horse Kanthaka decided to help him. But now? All the doors and gates were well guarded with at least 500 men each and the gates themselves to heavily reinforced that each needed 500 or 1000 men to push them open; furthermore, the grating of their hinges could be heard for miles around. Fortunately, gods and jinn were there to assist. The Four Guardians of the world had already established their positions with their armies at the four cardinal points; meanwhile, the ‘thirty-three’, with sacra, Indra of the gods, leading them, were hovering over the Zenith. Their first task was to put all of Kapilavastu’s inhabitants, without exceptions into such a profound sleep that no sound whatsoever would awaken them. And to be even sater, the Jinn (some say the four guardians themselves) held Kanthakas hoofs in their hands to soften their pounding on the ground. There still remained the problem of the heavy gate of the city.

“That is of no moment”, thought the good steed.” With my Master as my back and Chandaka hanging on my tail, I shall jump over the city wall with one leap.”

Even that was unnecessary, for the door opened as by enchantment. In short, due to this Supernatural assistance, all went well and the nocturnal flight was accomplished. 28a

“If thought future Buddha “the gate does not open. I will straightway grip tight hold of Kanthka with my thighs and seated as I am on Kanthaka’s back, and with Channa holding on by the tail. I will leap up and carry them both me over the wall although its height be eighteen cubits.”

---

28a  Foucher  The life of the Buddha, According to the Ancient texts and monuments of India  p.77
Thus the future Buddha, casting away with indifference a universal sovereignty already in his grasp – spewing it out as if it were but phlegm departed from the city in great splendor on the full-moon day of the month Asalhi, when the moon was in Libra. And when he had gone out from the city, he became desirous of looking back at it; but no sooner had the thought arisen in his mind, than the broad earth, seeming to fear lest the Great being might neglect to perform the act of looking back, split and turned round like a potter’s wheel. When the future Buddha had stood a while facing the city and gazing upon it, and had indicated in that place the spot for the “shrine of the Turning Back of Kanthaka”, he turned Kanthaka in the direction in which he meant to go, and proceeded on his way in great honor and exceeding glory.  

Advancing in this glory, the Future Buddha in one night passed through three Kingdoms and at the end of thirty leagues he came to the river named Anoma.

But was this as far as the horse could go? Certainly not. For he was able to travel round the world from end to end, as it were round the rim of a wheel lying on its hub and yet get back before breakfast and eat the food prepared for him. But on this occasion the fragrant garland; and other offerings which the gods and the serpents and the birds threw down upon him from the sky buried him up to his haunches; and as he was obliged to drag his body and cut his way through the tangled mass, he was greatly delayed. Hence it was that he went only thirty leagues.

“And my retirement from the world shall also be called Anoma”. replied the Future Buddha. Saying this he gave the signal to his horse Kanthaka with his heel, and the Kanthaka sprang over the river, which had a breadth of eight usabhas, and landed on the opposite bank.

---

28. Warren Henry Clarke op.cit.p.: 97
And the future Buddha, dismounting and standing on the sandy beach that stretched away like a sheet of silver said to Channa.  

“My good Channa, take these ornaments and Kanthaka and go home. I am about the retire from the world.” The scene below shows Siddhartha—who would become the Buddha—about to leave the comforts of his palace behind. While his wife and their maids sleep, he asks his chariot driver to saddle his horse.

Siddhartha saying farewell to his horse Kanthaka Sikri, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. 3rd century CE. Schist. H. 6 5/16 x W. 11 7/16 x D. 1 3/4 in. (16 x 29 x 4.5 cm) Lahore Museum, G-1032

In this scene, Siddhartha takes leave of his horse, Kanthaka, and distributes his royal accoutrements—including jewels, a parasol, and a fly whisk—to attendants. A tree spirit (yakshi) serves as a scene divider.

But Kanthaka, who had stood listening to the Future Buddha while he was conferring with Channa was unable to bear his grief at the thought “I shall never see my master any more”.

29. Warren Henry Clarke op.cit.p.. 98
And as he passed out of sight, his heart burst and he died and was reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three as the god Kanthaka.  

At first the grief of Channa had been but single; but now he was oppressed with a second sorrow in the death of Kanthaka, and came weeping and wailing to the city.

Kanthaka with prince Siddhirtha and channa holding on by the tail

Wall Painting, Thailand

Birth of Kanthaka

Kanthaka was born on the day as the Buddha born. On this day seven other beings also came into existence:

1- the tree of Enlightenment,  
2- the mother of Rahula (is future wife),  
3- the four vases of treasure,  
4- his elephant,  
5- his horse Kanthaka,  
6- his charioteer Channa,  
7- and Kaludayin the minister’s son.  

30. Warren Henry Clarke, op.cit... 99
30a Thomas Edwards - The life of Buddha as legend and history p.. 33
Lot Description A Gray schist relief of Siddharta's groom Chandaka and his horse Kanthaka
Gandhara, 2nd/3rd century
Chandaka depicted as a child with his mother on left, Kanthaka as the baby horse suckling his mother in center, with Chandaka's parents and additional figures and horses
9¾ x 13¾ in. (24.7 x 35 cm.) high

Provenance Private American Collection, acquired in the 1990s

Lot Notes Chandaka is seated on his mother's feet while his father feeds the mare that mothers Kanthaka. Horses peer over a wall at the top, and three other figures stand behind Chandaka's parents. To the far right stands a yakshi, an ancient nature spirit, on a lotus pedestal. For a similar example, see H. Ingholt, *Gandharan Art in Pakistan*, 1957, fig. 19.
Relief sculpture fragment with birth of Buddha's Horse Kanthaka and his Groom Candaka

**Subject of Photo:** Relief sculpture fragment with birth of Buddha's Horse Kanthaka and his Groom Candaka

**Dynasty/Period:** Kusana

**Date:** ca. 1st c. CE, 100 BCE - 300 CE
In the above figure, the story of the simultaneous birth of the Bodhisattva’s groom Chandaka and of his horse Kanthaka. The scene is set in the royal stables. There, side by side, we see the mother of Chandaka bathing her new-born child, and the dam of Kanthaka giving milk to her foal, while she herself receives a bran-mash from the hand of a royal groom; and in the background are the heads of other horses watching the double event from their stalls. The seated figure of the mother, with her well-developed limbs and refined, delicately chiselled face, is in keeping with other sculptures of this group. 30b

It was on the full-moon day of the month Uttarasaṅha (June-July) that the Bodhisatta departed. A desire to look again at the city arose, and the great earth turned round so that he should not have to look back. At that place he indicated the site which was to become to Kanthaka-nivattana shrine (the turning round of Kanthaka). Accompanied by gods he went beyond three kingdoms, a distance of thirty leagues, reached the river Anima, and his horse crossed it at one leap.

When he sent back his charioteer, his horse had listened to their talk, and thinking that he would never see his master again, died of a broken heart, and was reborn as a god.

Another incident of this legend occurs in the canonical Vimudnavatthu (VII 7), and Mahāvastu (ii 190), where the elder Moggallana visits the heaven of the Thirty-three, and sees the god Kanthaka, who explains that he was formerly the Bodhisatta’s horse, and tells the story of the flight.31

**Leaving the city gate of Kapilavatthu**

The scenes from Buddhist sculpture, depicting the Bodhisatta’s departure from Kapilavatthu, show the horse Kanthaka leaving the city gates. The Bodhisatta is shown in the Dhammakāya or Rupakāya form in different works.

**Bharhut**

A damaged piece of the gateway pillar, depicts the scenes from Renunciation, at Bharhut. The relief is divided into three scenes, carved vertically. In the first scene, Siddhatha is stepping out of the main doorway of King Sudhodhana’s palace. In the second, he is represented on horseback, passing through the gates of Kapilavatthu. The third scene shows him riding ahead. Siddhattha is shown by symbols, in the Dhammakāya representation, as seen in the other reliefs at Bharhut.

The first section shows the palace with a portion of the roof and pillars. Two female deities stand between the pillars. The Bodhisatta is represented by two outgoing footprints with wheel-marks.32

In the next scene, we see three deities standing on the ground, within the city. Flowers are incised on the ground, within and outside the city. “The Prince’s seat on the horseback is canopied by an umbrella with a hanging garland, while two chauries rest upon it…” Both the umbrella and fly whisk being symbols of royalty, indicate the presence of Siddhattha.

---

31 Thomas op.cit.p. 56  
32. Barua B.M. op.cit.p. 17
The third scene is placed outside the city. B.M. Barua states, “we see the Angel Arhadgupta standing, with joined hands and dignified appearance, in the left, having on his left side two other deities” The relief is labeled “Arhaguta devaputo. “Angel Arhadgupta-the protector of the Arhats.”33 Below the horse are three figures, one with joined hands and the other two playing drums. These seem to indicate a procession. The crossing of River Anoma is not represented. This relief does not seem to fully represent the incident as explained in the Nidānakathā.

Sanchi

We are Renunciation depicted at two places, at Sañchi. One panel is found on the Northern Gateway, west pillar, front face, represented by a horse without a rider. The larger and more elaborate depiction is seen on the Eastern Gateway, Middle Architrave, front face. This rendering has a number of points similar to the description in the Nidānakathā.34

This beautifully carved architrave, on the left shows the city of Kapilavatthu. We see a number of buildings, with roofs and balconies, occupied by male and female figures. A rider less horse representing the departure of the Bodhisatta, is depicted coming out of the city gate, with a retinue consisting of turbaned male figures. The Parasol, a royal insignia is not placed above the seat of the horse, as at Bharhut, but is carried by one of the male figures of the retinue, near the head of the horse, Kanthaka. A short male figure is seen carrying a pot, with a spout, in the foreground.

33. Barua B.M. Barhut p. 17
34. Dhavlikar M.K., Sānchi Pg. 59
We see four male figures, holding the hooves of the horse and Channa, holding the horse's tail. This scene corresponds with the following description in the Nidānakathā. The Bodhisatta, in the Dhammakaya form, is represented by the horse Kanthaka and the royal insignia in the form of a parasol.

In this manner, Bodhisatta came down from the palace, went near the horse and said, "Kanthaka, this night, take me across; with your support, I will become a Buddha and take across deities along with the inhabitants of this world." After this, he leapt up and climbed on Kanthaka's back. Kanthaka from his neck, was eighteen hands long and proportionately high, endowed with strength and speed, was all white, like a couch shell. If he neighed or made a sound with his feet, the noise would spread throughout the city. Therefore, deities, with their powers, so that 'nobody could hear him', restrained the sound of neighing and placed their palms against the hooves, wherever he tread. Bodhisatta, mounted on this magnificent horse, with Channa catching his tail, at midnight, reached the city gates.
On the other half of the frieze, in the centre, is depicted a Bodhi tree, “enclosed in a vedica”. 36  The horse, along with the retinue is shown proceeding onwards, towards the right. On the extreme right of the panel, the horse is shown reaching Buddha-padas, which are marked with a wheel, the symbol of the universal sovereign. Just below the horse, facing the right, is another horse, facing the opposite direction, indicating the return of Kanthaka, along with the retinue. The male figure carrying a parasol, is no longer shown near the head of this horse, indicating the absence of Siddhattha. The four male figures no longer hold the hooves of the horse Kanthaka, as it does not matter whether his neighing, or the sound of his hooves is heard any longer. Kanthaka is led by a very sorrowful Channa, carrying a cloth bundle on his left shoulder. In between the figures of these horses, is seen a male figure, bowing down to the Buddhapadas, probably Channa, taking leave of Siddhattha. The Nidánakathá states “Channo Bodhisattam vanditva padakkhinam katva pakkami.” 37

36. Dhavlikar, M.K. op.cit.p.. 46
37. Fausboll V. The Jataka together with its commentary Vol – I p.. 65
The Nidánakathá also gives a very elaborate description, of thousands of deities with torches, going along with the Bodhisatta. Though the Sanchi relief shows a procession, the figures canno be definitely identified as deities, nor do they carry torches. The Nidánakathá also describes the showering of Paricchattaka and Mandarava flowers from the sky. Only the Bharhut relief depicts flowers on the ground.

Gándhára

The scene of Renunciation is depicted in Gandhara sculpture, very differently from that at Bharhut and Sanchi. We see the portrayal of Siddhattha as a human being and the emphasis is on the characters taking part in this dramatic event, rather than an unfolding of several incidents.

The relief, preserved in the Indian Museum at Kolkata is made of schist stone and is dated to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{Gandhara.png}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{38} Sharma R.C. "Gandhara Sculpture Album" p. 6
The relief shows the figure of Siddhattha seated on the horse Kanthaka. The Bodhisatta is attired in a robe covering his left shoulder and is shown wearing a turban, necklaces and bangles. A circular halo is also carved around his head. The feet of the horse are being supported by two yaksha figures, to avoid noise, as stated in the Nidānakathā, as the Prince leaves the palace. Channa stands behind Kanthaka, holding an umbrella over the Prince. Vajrapani is visible in the background, with his thunderbolt, while in the front of the horse is carved the figure of Mara, with a sword in his hand. Behind him stands Indra, with halo around his head.

According to R.C. Sharma, the three figures in the left corner, may be, “the retinue of Mara of whom one holds a sword and other a lady probably Rati who may also be identified as the nagaradevi (presiding deity) of the capital of Kapilavastu.” The Nidānakathā describes the encounter with Mara, wherein he offers the Bodhisatta vast kingdoms, if he desists from proceeding further. On the Bodhisattva’s refusal, Mara warns him that whenever there is a reflection of lust, hatred or malice in the Bodhisatta’s mind, Mara would know of it and follow him like a shadow, waiting for an opportunity.

Amarāvati

The scene showing the Departure of Buddha, is carved on the central roundel of the inner face of a pillar, preserved in the British Museum.39

39. Barrett D, Sculptures from Amravati in the British Museum p. 70
It is dated to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Century A.D. Prince Siddhattha is shown in the center of the roundel, with a circular halo around the head, astride the horse Kanthaka.

The hooves of the horse are held up by a group of ganas, so that their sound will not be heard in the palace, as mentioned in the Nidānakathā. Depicted under the horse’s head is the groom Channa, in a pleated tunic. Surrounding them are male figures, holding a parasol, fly whisks and playing musical instruments. In the foreground, we see two ladies with folded palms, along with a male figure, with a halo.

One of the earlier reliefs at Amravati, preserved in the Channai Government Museum, also depicts the Departure of Siddhattha. However, as in the reliefs reliefs at Bharhut and Sanchi, the Bodhisattva is depicted in the Dhamakaya form. Thus a riderless horse is shown leaving the city. The horse’s hooves are not held and far fewer figures accompany the Prince.
Nágárjunakoīa

The relief at Nágárjunakoīa shows Prince Siddháttha mounted on the horse Kanthaka. As a Amravati, four yakshas support the hooves of the horse. Siddhatta is shown with a circular halo and a turban. In front of the horse, stands a male figure, wearing a tunic, probably Channa. In front of him is a male figure identified as Sakara, by K.Rama.⁴⁰

Kanthaka is being followed by a male attendant, holding a royal parasol and another with a fly whist. On the left, dancing female figures are visible. Here, the number of figures carved are less than the Amravati relief. The figures too lack the fluidity and grace of Amravati.

Current Location: National Museum, Karachi, Pakistan

⁴⁰ Rama K, Buddhist Art of Nagarajunakonda Pg. 59.
3. Nālagiri,

Rājagriha’s most notorious Buddhist disciple was Devadatta. A Childhood acquaintance of the Buddha’s, Devadatta was born in Kapilavastu. He remained close to the Buddha, drawn to him through feelings of jealousy and rivalry. It was a relationship that lasted for lifetimes. Devadatta seemed fated, by his own bad character, to be the perennial thorn in Buddha’s side. At Rājagriha, Devadatta made two attempts on the Buddha’s life. One, excerpted below, became a popular Buddhist story and is cited as the official reason for Rājagriha’s fame.41

According to this often repeated story Devadatta tried to incite a fierce elephant to kill the Buddha.

At that time there was a fierce elephant in Rajagaha, a man-slayer, named Nālagiri,. Then Devadatta, having entered Rājagriha, having gone to the elephant stable, spoke thus the mahouts: “We, my good fellows, are relations of the king. We are competent to put in a high position one occupying a lowly position and to bring about an increase in food and wages. Well now, good fellows, when the recluse Gotama is coming along this carriage road, then, having let loose this elephant, Nālagiri, bring him down this carriage road.42 Very well, honoured sir,” these mahouts answered Devadatta in assent.

Then the Lord, having dressed in the morning, taking his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms-food together with several monks. Then the Lord went along that Carriage-road. Then those mahout saw the Lord coming along that carriage-road; seeing him, having let loose the elephant Nālagiri,, they brought him down that carriage-road. The elephant Nālagiri, saw the Lord coming from afar; seeing him, having lifted up his trunk, he rushed toward the Lord, his ears and tail erect. Those monks saw the elephant Nālagiri, coming in the distance; seeing him, they spoke thus to the Lord:

41 From the Vinaya-Piṭaka Vol5., 5th – 1st C.B.C.E.
42 Aiken Molly Emma, Meeting with Buddha on Pilgrimage in Buddhist India p.. 216
“Lord, this elephant Nālagiri, coming along this carriage-road, is a fierce man-slayer; Lord let the Lord turn back, let the well-farer turn back.”

“wait, monks do not be afraid, this is impossible, monks, it cannot come to pass that anyone should deprive a Truth-finder of life by aggression; monks, Truth-finders attain nibbāna not because of an attack.” And a second time… And a third time these monks spoke thus to the Lord … “wait, monks .. Truth-finders attain nibbāna not because of an attack.”

Now at that time people, having mounted up onto the long houses and the curved houses and the roofs, waited there. Those people who were of little faith, not believing, who were of poor intelligence, these spoke thus: “This great recluse is indeed lovely; he will be hurt by the bull elephant.” But those people who had faith and were believing, who were wise and intelligent, these spoke thus: “Soon, good sirs, the bull-elephant will come into conflict with the elephant .. (among men).”

Then the Lord suffused the elephant Nālagiri, with loving-kindness of mind. Then the elephant Nālagiri, suffused by the Lord with loving-kindness of mind, having approached, he stood in front of the Lord. Then the Lord, stroking the elephant Nālagiri,’s forehead with his right hand, addressed the elephant Nālagiri, with verses:

“Do not elephant, strike the elephant (among men), for painful elephant, (among men)

For there is no good bourn, elephant, for a slayer of the elephant (among men) when he is hence beyond. Be not proud, be not wanton, for the wanton reach not a good bourn;

Only that should you do by which you will go to a good bourn.”

43. Aiken Molly Emma, Meeting with Buddha on Pilgrimage in Buddhist India ,p. 217
44. Ibid
Then the elephant Nálagiri, having taken the dust of the Lord’s feet with his trunk, having scatted it over his head, moved back bowing while he gazed upon the Lord. Then the elephant Nálagiri, having returned to the elephant stable, stood in his own place; and it was in this way that the elephant Nálagiri, became tamed. Now at that time people sang this verse:

"Some are tamed by stick, by goads and whips. The elephant was tamed by the great seer without a stick, without a weapon."

People looked down upon, criticized, spread it about, saying: “How evil is this Devadatta, how inauspicious, in that he tried to murder the recluse Gotama who is of such great psychic power, of such great might,” and Devadatta’s gains and honours declined; the Lord’s gains and honours increased.45

45. Aiken Molly Emma, op.cit.p. 218

Subjugation of Nálagiri, Ajanta cave 17.7
The tradition believes that had the elephant not been a beast he would certainly have become a Sotapanna (the first step to the Arahatthhood) after having listened to the sermon.

The Nálagiri, elephant-episode, however, made Devadatta very unpopular and he had to flee from the city. Further, the royal favour, which he had enjoyed so far, was also withdrawn to honour the public opinion.

This last story has long been a favourite with artists and the earliest depiction of it is to be found on a a medallion from the railing of the Amaravati Stūpa built in about 200 CE. The sculptor shows the elephant first charging and then bowing before the Buddha, thus giving a sense of movement. The terrified onlookers are realistically depicted highlights the drama of the scene. The next piece is a carved 4th century CE fragment from Gandhara showing the Buddha stroking Nálagiri,’s head, a detail mentioned in the Tipiṭaka account of the story. Likewise the people watching from the balcony above are specifically mentioned in the text.

46. Sravasti Dhammika, *Dhamma musings, Animals in Buddhist Art* p. 1
Nālagiri, Amarāvati Stūpa

Gāndhāra - Buddha stroking Nālagiri’s head
4. Siddhártha and the Swan

The young Prince Siddhartha grew up surrounded by luxury. The King watched over him and made sure that he had the best of everything. He was proud of his son and wanted him to be happy and enjoy the royal life.

Once he was sitting in his garden in deep thought, as many a time before, when a flock of silver white swans flew over the garden, on their way to the Himalayas. When Devadatta, the prince’s cousin, who was ever ready with his bow and arrow to show his skillfulness in shooting, aimed at the leading swan and shot through its wing, it fell down bleeding among the bushes. Siddhartha heard the fall and running to the rescue of the wounded swan, lifted it up, put it on his knee and soothed the frightened bird. 47

47. Musaeus Higgins, *Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica* No.50 *Jataka Mala or a garland of Birth stories* p. 209
The little prince caressed it and spoke to it and drew the cruel arrow out of its quivering wing. He stopped the rushing blood with his gentle hand and nursed the bird back to life, putting cooling leaves and honey on the bleeding wound. Curious himself how it must feel when hurt by an arrow he pressed the sharp point into his own wrist. Then he turned back to the swan to cure it, with compassion in his heart. Thus he was found by the attendants of prince Devadatta, who asked him for the swan which their master had shot.

But Prince Siddhartha, laying his smooth cheek against the white swan’s neck said: “Tell my cousin that the swan is not dead, but that I nursed it back to life, and therefore the swan is mine, as I rescued it. This swan is the first of many things that shall be mine by the right of mercy and love. If he is not satisfied, let this matter be brought before the king and be decided by the Wise Ones.”

And this was done and it was decided that the rescuer of life had the right to keep the bird, not the one who tried to destroy its life.\textsuperscript{48}

So Prince Siddhartha began his life of mercy.

\footnote{48. Musaeus Higgins, \textit{Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica} No.50 \textit{Jataka Mala or a garland of Birth stories} p. 210}
Siddhārtha and hearted Swan

(Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica No.50  Jataka Mala or a garland of Birth stories  by Marie Musaeus-Higgins  pp. 208, 209, 210)

The story of Siddhartha and the swan is a favourite with Buddhists all over the world. It is not found in the Pali scriptures but comes from a Sanskrit text which has also been translated into Tibetan. It is also mentioned in the book biography of the Buddha, the light of Asia, by Edwin Arnold which is a free adaptation of the Sanskrit text Lalitavistara.

Life belongs to those who preserve Life

A tale of the Buddha’s inherent sympathetic response to the natural world is told in an event that occurred when he was still the young prince Siddhartha residing in his father’s kingdom. Edwin Arnold in his verse biography of the Buddha, The Light of Asia, tells that the young Siddhartha was out in the royal garden on a spring
day with his cousin Devadatta who had with him a bow and arrow and was intent on finding something to hunt. When a flock of wild swans passed over on their way to their nesting grounds in the Himalayas, Devadatta shot down the lead bird. Here is how the downing of the swan is told in Arnold’s moving lines of verse.49

And Devadatta, cousin of the Prince,
Pointed his bow, and loosed a willful shaft
Which found the wide wing of the foremost swan
Broad-spread to glide upon the free blue road,
So that it fell, the bitter arrow fixed
Bright scarlet blood-gouts staining the pure plumes.

Seeing the fallen swan struggling to regain flight, Siddhartha ran to the swan and took the bird
Tenderly up, rested it in his lap
Sitting with knees crossed, as Lord Buddha sits
And, soothing with a touch the wild thing’s fright

And when Siddhartha had claimed the swan, he pulled the arrow from its wounded wing, and
Yet all so little knew the boy of pain
That curiously into his wrist he pressed
The arrow’s barb, and winced to fell its sting,
And turned with tears to soothe the bird again.

When Siddhartha’s cousin Devadatta demanded that the bird be turned over to him, arguing that it belonged to him who shot it down, Siddhartha refused to release the injured bird. But Devadatta argued that the swan was rightfully his because “’Twas no man’s in the clouds, but fallen ‘tis mine.” Siddhartha responded to Devadatta’s claim acknowledging that were the bird dead it might well belong to Devadatta, but since “the swan lives,” it belongs to he who preserves life.”50

49. Arnold Edwin, biography of the Buddha, the Light of Asia.
50. Ibid.
This story is also mentioned in the book Life of the Buddha According to the Ancient texts and Monuments in India by Foucher, that both were barely twelve years old, we are told, when one day Devadatta wounded the wing of one of the fine royal geese with an arrow. The bird fell at Siddhartha’s feet. He picked it up to bind its wing to heal it, refusing to give it to his cruel cousin, who wanted to kill it. Such was the cause of the latter’s animosity – at least in this life, for it goes without saying that this hostility had been constantly reborn from one existence to the other and loses itself in the darkness of the past.

Elephant and Monkey

5. Elephant Parileyyaka

A noble elephant named Parileyyaka, who was much worried by a crowd of male and female elephants, young elephants and elephant calves. He had to feed on blades of grass with their tips broken off, and they ate the young branches which he himself had broken down. He had also to drink water that had been polluted and when he plunged (into the water) to cross over, the female elephant rubbed their bodies against him. In consequence of this crowd he was annoyed and lived ill at ease.\(^1\)

And this thought occurred to the noble elephant: “Surrounded by a crowd of male elephants, female elephants, young elephants and elephant calves, I have to feed on blades of grass with their tips broken off and they eat the young branches I myself have broken down. I have also to drink water that has been polluted and when I plunge to cross over, the female elephants rub their bodies against me. In consequence of this crowd I am annoyed and live ill at east. What if I were to live alone, remote from the crowd? “\(^2\)

---

51. Brewster E.H., The life of Gotama the Buddha, p 133
52. Ibid p. 134
So then this noble elephant withdrew from the herd and drew near to Parileyyakka, to Protected Forest, to the foot of the beautiful Sal-tree; even to where the Exalted One was, thither did he draw near. And when he had drawn near and paid obeisance to the Exalted One, he looked all about for a broom. And seeing none, he smote with his foot the beautiful Sal-tree below and hewed away with his trunk at the Sal-tree above. And taking a branch, he then swept the ground. Then he took a water-pot in his trunk and procured drinking water. And as hot water was required, he prepared hot water. (How was that possible?) First he produced sparks with a fire-drill which he worked with his trunk; then he dropped sticks of wood on the sparks. Thus did he kindle a fire. In the fire he heated small stones; these he rolled along with a stick and dropped into a little depression in the rock. Then, lowering his trunk and finding the water hot enough, he went and made obeisance to the Teacher. The Teacher asked, “Is your water hot, Parileyyakka? “ and went there and bathed. After that the elephant brought various kinds of wild fruits and presented them to the Teacher. 53

Now when the teacher enters the village for alms, the elephant takes his bowl and robe, puts them on top of his head, and accompanies him. When the Teacher reaches the vicinity of the village, he bids the elephant bring him his bowl and robe, saying, “Parileyyaka, farther than this you are not permitted to go. Fetch me my bowl and robe.” The Teacher then enters the village, and the elephant stands right there until he returns. When the Teacher returns, the elephant advances to meet him, takes his bowl and robe just as he did before deposits them in the Teacher’s place of abode, pays him the usual courtesies, and fans him with the branch of a tree. At night, to ward off danger from beasts of prey, he takes a big club in his trunk, says to himself, “I’ll protect the Teacher,” and back and forth in the interstices of the forest he paces until sunrise. (from that time forth, we are told, that forest was called “protected forest”. When the sun rises, the elephant gives the Teacher water wherewith to bathe his face, and in he manner before related performs all of the other duties. 54

53. Burlingame Eugene Watson, Buddhist Legends translated from the original Pali text of the Dhammapada Commentary p. 179
54. Ibid p. 180
It became known over all the land of the Rose-apple that the Tecaher was residing in protected forest, attended by a noble elephant. From the city of Savatthi, Anathapindika, Visakha, he eminent female lay disciple, and other such great personages sent the following message to the Elder Ānanda.

“Reverend Sir, obtain for us the privilege of seeing the Teacher.” Likewise five hundred monks residing abroad approached the Elder Ānanda at the close of the rainy season and made the following request, “It is a long time, Ānanda, since we have heard a discourse on the Law from the lips of the Exalted One. We should like, brother Ānanda, if you please, to have the privilege of hearing a discourse on the Law from the lips of the Exalted one.” 55

So the elder took those monks with him and went to Protected forest. When he reached the forest, he thought to himself. “The Tathāgata has resided in solitude for a period of three months. It is therefore not fitting that I should approach him all at once with so many monks as these.” (61) Accordingly he left those monks outside and approached the Teacher quite along when the elephant Parileyyaka saw the Elder, he took his staff and rushed forward. The Teacher looked around and said to the elephant “Come back, Parileyyaka; do not drive him away. He is a servitor of the Buddha.” The elephant immediately threw away his staff and requested the privilege of taking the Elder’s bowl and robe. The Elder refused. The elephant thought to himself. “If he is versed in the rules of etiquette, he will refrain from placing his monastic requisites on the stone slab where the teacher is accustomed to sit. “ The Elder placed his bowl and robe on the ground. (For those who are versed in the rules of etiquette never place their own monastic requisites on the seat or bed of their spiritual superiors.) The Elder, after saluting the Teacher, seated himself on one side. 56

55. Burlingame Eugene Watson, op.cit.p. 180
56. Ibid p. 181
The Teacher asked him, “Did you come along?” The Elder informed him that he had come with five hundred monks. “But where are they?” asked the Teacher. “I did not know how you would feel about it, and therefore I left them outside and came in along.” “Tell them to come in.” The Elder did so. The Teacher exchanged friendly greetings with the monks. Then the monks said to the Teacher.

“Reverend Sir, the Exalted One is a delicate Buddha, a delicate prince. You must have endured much hardship, standing and sitting here along as you have during these three months.

For of course you had no one to perform the major and minor duties for you, no one to offer you water for bathing the face or to perform any of the other duties for you.” The Teacher replied,

“Monks, the elephant Parileyyaka performed all of these offices for me. For one who obtains such a companion as he may well live along; did one fail to find such, even so the life of solitude were better for him.” So saying, the pronounced these three Stanzas in the Naga Vagga.57

At the conclusion of the Stanzas the five hundred monks were established in Arahatship.

The Elder Ānanda then delivered the message sent by Anathapindika and the rest, saying, “Reverend Sir, fifty million Noble Disciples headed by Anathapindika desire your return.”

“Very well,” said the Teacher, “take bowl and robe.” Causing them to take bowl and robe, he set out. The elephant went and stood crosswise on the road.

57. Burlingame Eugene Watsonop.cit p.. 181
“Reverend Sir, what is the elephant doing?” “Monks, he desires to give alms to you. For a long time he has served me; it is not right to hurt his feelings. Turn back, monks!” The Teacher and the monks turned back. The elephant entered the forest, gathered bananas and various other fruits, heaped them together, and on the following day gave them to the monks. The five hundred monks were unable to dispose of them all. When they had finished eating, the Teacher took bowl and robe and set out. The elephant, threading his way through the monks, went and crosswise in front of the Teacher.58

“Reverend Sir, what is the elephant doing?” “Monks, having sped your parting, he desires to make me turn back.” Said the Teacher to the elephant, “Parileyyakka, I am going now, never to return. You cannot hope in this existence to enter into states of trance, or to attain Spiritual Insight, or the paths, or the Fruits. Halt!” When the elephant heart that, he thrust his trunk into his mouth and retreated very slowly, weeping as he went. (Could he have made the Teacher turnback, he would have cared for him in the very same way to the end of his days.)

Now when the Teacher reached the vicinity of the village, he said, “Parileyyaka, farther than this it is unsafe for you to go. The habitations of men are fraught with danger to you. Halt!” The elephant halted where he was and wept. As the Teacher slowly passed out of sight, he died of a broken heart. Through faith in the Teacher the was reborn in the World of the Thirty-three in a golden mansion thirty leagues in measure, with a retinue of a thousand celestial nymphs. God Parileyyaka was his name.59

58. Burlingame Eugene Watsonop.cit p.. 182
59. Ibid
Elephant Parilleyaka and Lord Buddha Painted By Vasudev Kamath
6. The Gift of the Monkey

A monkey saw the elephant up and doing each day, performing the lesser duties for the Tathāgata. (After observing an elephant attend the Buddha by bringing water and fruits, a monkey said to himself,) “I’ll do something too.” One day as he was running about, he happened to see some stick-honey free from flies. He broke the stick off, took the honey-comb, stick and all, broke off a plantain-leaf, placed the honey on the leaf, and offered it to the Teacher (the Buddha). The teacher took it. The monkey watched to see whether or not he would eat it. He observed that the Teacher, after taking the honey, sat down without eating. “What can be the matter?” thought he. He took hold of the stick by the tip, turned it over, carefully examining it as he did so, whereupon he discovered some insect’s eggs. Having removed these gently, he again gave the honey to the Teacher. The Teacher ate it.
The monkey was so delighted (because the Buddha had accepted his offering) that he leaped from one branch to another and danced about in great glee. But the branches he grasped and the branches he stepped on broke off. Down he fell on the stump of a tree and was impaled. So he died. And solely because of his faith in the Teacher he was reborn in the World of the Thirty-three (Trāyastriṃśa) in a golden mansion thirty leagues in measure, with a retinue of a thousand celestial nymphs.\(^{60}\)

Not far to the south is a stūpa,; this is the place where the monkeys offered the honey to Buddha. At the north-west angle of the late there is still a figure of a monkey.

To the south is the pond near which monkeys were said to have piously filled the Blessed One’s bowl with honey. The Sanskrit canon tells us that Belvedere Hall, which was the Master’s favorite lodging near Vaisāli, was situated in the Great Wood “on the edge of the Monkey Pond.” Nothing is left of the edifice and the trees are sparse, but the essential marks of the landscape are still before our eyes: the column, the tumulus, and the pond. We can be pretty certain of being on the site of the Vaisāli miracle, thanks to our excellent Oriental guide.

So far so good, but a number of difficulties now arise. IF, as is our habit, we turn to the texts to find more information concerning the monkey’s gift, we find either omissions or contradictions. The Pali canon entirely omitted the episode and our Sanskrit sources, though recognizing by place and name the Monkey Pond, made no mention of the incident for which it was named. Fa-hsien did no better, but Hsuan Tsang expanded the event by having the monkeys dig the pond, and insisted upon speaking of them in the plural. What is more disconcerting is that the same story was

---

60. Burlingame Engelene Watson, *Buddhist Legend* p. 180
set here and there by various writers, and translators have persisted in calling the offering “honey”. It is quite out of the question that a monkey, no matter what his noble aim be, should steal honey from the fierce wild bees of India. ①

Fortunately, once more the figured monuments come to our rescue. First the representation of the Monkey’s Offering on the north gate at Sanchi shows that the legend was popular before our era. Twelve centuries later the title on a Nepalese miniature locates it “as Vaisāli in the Tirabhukti.” Between these two we find several other sculptured versions of our story, and these images make it possible for us to give a completely coherent if not entirely believable version.②

The imitative instinct of the monkey is well known and in India, where monkeys live freely and at large, they become not only friendly but often impudent. The sculptors have shown them sitting in the ‘yogi manner,’ imitating the Buddha’s meditating attitude. The simian hero of the Vaisali Miracle goes further, and due to the artists we can follow his activities. He climbs the tall palm trees to fetch the madhu, the sweet syrup that comes from the incised tops of various palm trees but which is not honey. Our monkey knows full well what he is doing and having brought this offering to the Buddha who graciously accepts it, he bows and politely withdraws. This is what is shown on the ancient bas-relief.③

---

① Foucher op.cit.p. 217
② Ibid
③ Ibid
Monkeys offering honey to the Buddha (not shown, his presence implied by the platform beneath a bodhi-tree). Such carvings predate any extant written texts. Carved in the sandstone railings, crossbeams, and in gateways of reliquary stūpas at places like Bharhut and Sanchi, these early Buddhist carvings from India consistently avoid depiction of the Buddha in human form. In other artwork, the monkey is shown dancing in joy when the meditating Buddha accepts the monkey's offering of a bowl of honey.

Madhu Pūrīmā

Madhu Pūrīmā (Bengali for 'honey full-moon') is a Buddhist festival celebrated in India and Bangladesh, especially in the region of Chittagong. It occurs on the day of the full moon in the month of Bhadro (August/September).
The day commemorates an occasion on which the Buddha retreated to the wilderness of Parileyya forest to bring peace between two quarrelling factions of disciples. According to legend, a monkey and an elephant named Parileyyaka fed him during this time, the elephant bringing fruit and the monkey bringing a honeycomb. The monkey was so excited when the Buddha accepted his gift that he began leaping from tree to tree and fell to his death. However, he was immediately reborn in Tāvatimsa as a result of his generosity.

Madhu Pūrṇimā is celebrated as a joyous day of unity and charity. Indian and Bangladeshi Buddhists observe it by bringing gifts of honey and fruit to monasteries.

This is the monkey and elephant at the base of a hill in Chaiyaphum, Thailand.
• the pictures of the monkey, he indeed does appear to be offering
Buddha some honey comb. Thailand,

Early pilgrims revered Vaisali above all for the story of the monkey who, in
the excitement of his devotional feelings for the Buddha, plunged to his death from a
tree in Vaisali. The monkey became a symbol of the depth to which devotion could
be felt and expressed. :

Weeds are the bane of the fields, passion is the
bane of humankind; so a gift to those free of desire
bears great fruit.

- The Dhammapada, 5th – 1st CBCE
translated from the Pali by Thomas Cleary.