

Monk Anathi



King Shrenik was the ruler of Magadh. He was a powerful king. Many kings accepted his supreme authority. He was married to Queen Chelana. Chelana was the daughter of King Chetak of Vaishali.



Shrenik was fond of hunting. Chelana was a pious lady. She requested King Shrenik to give up hunting and eating meat. But Shrenik did not pay any attention to it. He was proud of his achievements.



Once, King Shrenik was on a pleasure trip to Mandi-Kukshi Park. It was a beautiful park. It was full of ornamental trees. Creepers were adding to its beauty. It was full of fragrant multi-colored flowers. Birds were chirping. King Shrenik saw a young saint sitting under a tree. He looked very handsome and he felt that he might be belonging to a rich family. He was in deep meditation. His face was shining bright like a lotus. The King had not seen such a monk before. He was deeply astonished to see him. He was impressed by his complexion, his figure, the beauty of his face, his tranquility, and his indifference for pleasures.



King Shrenik went near the young monk. He sat near him and with folded hands politely asked:
KING SHRENIK: O Reverend Monk, you have left the worldly pleasures at a young age. I want to know the reason for your indifference to sensual pleasures.

MONK: I was without a protector. I am Anath, O King. There is nobody to take care of me. I know no friend. None has sympathy for me.



KING: Strangely, there is none to protect a handsome young and accomplished man like you. I will be your protector. O, monk, you enjoy pleasures along with your friends and relatives. It is a rare chance to be born as a man. A man should not miss sensual pleasures. You come with me. I shall give you all the comforts of life.

MONK: O King Shrenik, you are yourself without protection. How then can you give protection to anyone else? The King was proud of his property. He was astonished at the remarks of the monk.



He said:

KING: I have elephants, horses, and subjects. I have great power. I have full command over the large kingdom. How can you say that I am without protection? You are mistaken. You do not know my wealth. I have all the means of protection.

MONK: O King, you do not know the meaning of words 'without protection'. You do not know how one can be with protection. You listen to my life story. Then you will know how one is without protection.



KING: Please tell me. I want to know about it.

MONK: You know Kausambhi is a famous town. My father lived there. He was very rich. In my childhood, I got very bad eye trouble and a burning fever all over my body. The pain in the eyes was unbearable. It seemed as if someone was pricking sharp needles in my eyes. Expert physicians were called. They tried to cure me but no medicine could reduce my pain. My father was helpless. He was ready to spend all he had on my treatment. But the doctors were not hopeful. My mother loved me very much. She was worried when I was crying with pain. She contacted many learned people. But her efforts also could not produce results.



My wife did not eat or drink. She was weeping throughout the day and night. She was praying for my recovery but there was no improvement in my pain. So I am saying that I was without protection. Then I thought that it is very hard to bear pains again and again in the endless circle of births and deaths. I decided that in case my pain subsided, I shall take Diksha and become a monk. In this thought, I fell asleep.



O ruler, during that night my pain vanished completely. Then next morning, I told my decision to my parents, family members, wife, and relatives. I became a monk. I adopted the path of self-restraint. I am now the protector of myself and all other living beings whether they move or not. I am free to choose the right or wrong path. I, myself is the doer of misery or happiness. My self is a friend or enemy depending on how I act. O King, there are many types of situations when one is without protection.



KING SHRENIK: I am interested to know more about it please tell me.

MONK: O King, listen carefully. I shall tell you what kinds of monks are without protection. A person becomes a monk but does not follow the vows strictly. He desires sensual pleasures. He is careless in walking, in sleeping. He neglects penance and self-control. He has been a monk since long ago but he has not controlled his desires. He is like a piece of glass. His vows and monkhood cannot help him. He is without protection. A person has the character of a sinner; he gives great importance to the outward signs of a monk. He does not control himself but pretends to be so. He will come to grief.



A monk tells predictions from bodily marks and dreams. He is an expert in superstitious rites. He leads a sinful living by practicing magic tricks. He will have no protection. He will go from darkness to darkness. A monk accepts food not allowed according to holy books. He accepts the food bought for him. He accepts the food specially prepared for him. He is without protection. A dreaded enemy is not as harmful to a monk as his own perverse will. His becoming a monk cannot give him protection. A wise monk possesses virtuous conduct. He practices self-control. He keeps away from sinful influences. He is austere and calm. He destroys the karma and will reach the permanent place, salvation. He will get liberation from the cycle of birth and death.



KING: O monk, you are very kind. You are very gracious. You have shown me the true path of liberation. You have made the best use of human birth. I have committed the greatest blunder by inviting you to sensual pleasures. I am extremely sorry for it. I seek pardon for my mistake. The king, all the members of his family, his relatives, and servants then became devoted followers of Jin Dharam.

