STORIE DI RINASCITA DEL BUDDHISMO TIBETANO

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Now that a translation of the complete pāli text of the Buddhist birth-stories is in course of preparation under the editorship of Professor E. B. Cowell, it seems opportune to call attention to the material contained in the Tibetan canonical books (Kandjur), and to its importance in connection with such a work; and though I cannot here do more than touch on the subject, the labor which even a cursory examination of the numerous and ponderous volumes of the Kandjur entails is so great and existing indexes to this work are so imperfect, that I am led to believe that even a brief notice of the subject may prove acceptable.

Ora che una traduzione completa del testo pāli delle storie buddhiste di rinascita è in corso di preparazione sotto la direzione del Professor E. B. Cowell, appare opportuno richiamare l’attenzione sul materiale contenuto nei libri canonici tibetani (Kandjur), ed alla sua importanza nel collegamento con tale lavoro; e benché io qui non possa far di più che toccare appena il soggetto, il lavoro che comporta un sia pur superficiale esame dei numerosi e ponderosi volumi del Kandjur è così grande, e gli indici esistenti di questo testo così imperfetti, che sono portato a credere che perfino una breve scorsa del soggetto può dimostrarsi accettabile.
By far the larger number of Jātakas I have come across are in volumes III. and IV. of the Dulwa (Vinaya) section of the Tibetan Kandjur. Some of them have been translated into German by Anton Schiefner of St. Petersburg, and published in English by W. R. S. Ralston in a volume of Trübner’s Oriental Series entitled Tibetan Tales derived from Indian sources (London, 1 vol., 8º, 1882); a few have been rendered into English by the present writer in his Life of the Buddha (London, 1 vol., 8º, 1884); and twenty-two are found in the Tibetan canonical work entitled Djang-lun, “The Sage and the Fool,” published in German translation by I. J. Schmidt (1 vol., 4º, St. Petersburg, 1843); but with the exception of these and of a few scattered about in various works, the great bulk of Tibetan birth-stories still remains untranslated and, in fact, unknown.

Although I have, at various times, read the whole Dulwa, I can at present only find my notes on the third and fourth volumes. For the convenience of students, I have, in the following index, not only noted the untranslated stories, but also those translated by Schiefner and myself, the page-references being to the copy of the Kandjur in the British India Office Library. I have also appended brief references to the various Jātakas which occur in the Djang-lun, in Schmidt’s edition of that work.

Among the untranslated birth stories in the Dulwa I have chosen five from the fourth volume, and one from the sixteenth volume of the Mdo (Sūtra); and though perhaps they are not the best to be found in it, I offer them as fair specimens of this style of stories, in the hope that they may prove of interest.

[There follows here a catalogue of birth stories in the Dulwa approximately 4 pages long, which I have not reproduced.]
Mendicants, in days of yore there lived in a mountain village a very wealthy man, who married a woman of caste equal to his own. After a while she bore him a daughter, and on the twenty-first day after her birth they had a great naming-feast, and they called her “Having-a-bracelet” (Gdu-bu-chan).

And then a son was born, and the father thought: “Since there is born to us a maker of debts and a diminisher of means, I will take merchandise and go to foreign parts.” And he said also: “This wife of mine is handsome and young; if I give her too much money on going away, she will spend it with some other man; so I will give her but very little money before I go.” So he gave her a little money, poured the rest into a golden vase, the neck of which he tied with a necklace of pearls, and having hid it near the horse-ear tree 1 in the cemetery, he departed for foreign lands. There he gained great wealth, and he staid there and married a woman who bore him many children.

After a while his first wife with her two children became dependent on the work of their hands and the kindness of their relatives. So the children said: “Where is our father?”

“My son,” the mother answered, “he is in such a country, in such a town, I have heard say, and he lives in great wealth; go to him, and if he gives you a little, you will be able to make a living.”

So the son set out to seek his father, and when he had come to the town where he lived, and was wandering about the streets, his father recognized him and called to him and said: “Where did you come from and where are you going?” And the lad told him his history.

Then the father thought: “Of a truth, this is my son, and he embraced him and told him to let no one know that he was his father, and he showed him great affection. His other children said: “Father, whose boy is this?” “It is the son of one of the mendicants, in Tibetan. | Shing rta-rna, in tibetano.
my friends,” he answered. Then they thought: “If he is so very fond of him, it can only be because he is his own child.” So they commenced ordering him about, thinking he was a motherless boy.

Then the father thought: “Among haters there are greater and lesser ones, but these (other sons of mine) will seek an occasion to kill this boy, so I will send him away. But if I send him away with something, they will kill him on the way for his money; so I will give him something that no one (not even himself) knows anything about.” So he told him: “If you dig intelligently and carefully in the east of the earth and in the vicinity of the horse’s ear in the suburb of the village, measuring with a yojana, you will find a part of my wealth; give to your sister what is part of my wealth; give to your sister what is of my portion.”

His mother said to him: “Have you got anything from your father?”

“Only this secret, but it is nothing.”

“Son,” she answered, “he has deceived you, you may seek the whole road, but you will find nothing.”

“Mother,” the son answered, “that noble man has not deceived me,” and then he explained the secret. “Village” means the one where he was born; “suburb” means where corpses are burnt; “near the horse’s ear” means horse-ear tree; “near it” means just what the words imply; “in the east of the earth” means to the east; “to measure with a yojana” means as much as a yoke will measure off.

Having thus explained the sense of the verse, he went, as soon as it was dark, to the cemetery, and looking around, saw a horse-ear tree, and miei amici”, lui rispose. Allora essi pensarono: “Se lui gli è così affezionato, significa solo che è suo figlio”. Quindi cominciarono a ordire contro di lui, pensando che fosse rimasto senza madre.

Poi il padre pensò: “Tra quelli che odiano, ve ne sono di maggiori e minori, ma questi (gli altri miei figli) cercheranno un’occasione per ucciderre questo ragazzo, così io lo manderò via. Ma se io lo mando via con qualcosa, essi l’uccideranno per strada per prendere i suoi soldi; quindi io gli darò una cosa di cui nessuno (neanche lui) è a conoscenza”. Quindi gli disse: “Se con perizia ed intelligenza tu scavi la terra ad est vicino all’orecchio del cavallo nel sobborgo del villaggio, alla distanza di un yojana, troverai una parte della mia ricchezza; dai a tua sorella la collana di perle che sta intorno al collo del vaso ed il resto è tuo, vai per la tua strada”.


Sua madre gli disse: “Hai ottenuto qualcosa da tuo padre?”

“Solamente questo segreto, ma non è niente.”

“Figlio” lei rispose, “lui ti ha ingannato, puoi cercare per tutta la strada, ma non troverai nulla”

“Madre”, rispose il figlio, “quell’uomo nobile non mi ha ingannato”, e poi lui spiegò il segreto. “Villaggio” significa quello dove lui nacque; “sobborgo” significa dove sono bruciati i cadaveri; “vicino all’orecchio del cavallo” significa l’albero dell’orecchio-di-cavallo; “vicino” significa ciò che implica la parola; “nella terra ad est” significa ad est; “la distanza di un yojana” significa quanto può misurare un giogo…

Avendo spiegato così il senso del verso, appena fu scuro, lui andò al cimitero, e guardando intorno, vide un albero fatto ad orecchio di caval-
having measured a yoke’s length\(^2\) on the eastern side of it, he dug a little and found a golden vase with a strand of pearls around its neck. He picked it up joyfully, carried it home, and taking off the pearl necklace, gave it to his sister.

What think ye, Mendicants? At that time I was the householder, and he who was then the son is now this doctor who rightly interprets my (enigmatical) thoughts.

lo, ed avendo misurato la lunghezza\(^2\) di un gio-go sul suo lato orientale, scavò un po’ e trovò un vaso dorato con una collana di perle intorno al suo collo. Lui gioiosamente lo prese, lo portò a casa, e dette la collana di perle a sua sorella, tendendo per sé il resto dei gioielli.

Cosa ne pensate voi, o mendicanti? A quel tempo, io ero il padrone di casa, e colui che allora era il figlio, ora è questo dottore che esattamente interpreta i miei (enigmatici) pensieri.

\(^2\) The text reads Dpag-\(ts’\)ad-kyis bchal, while in the preceding paragraph in which the phrase occurs the last word is bchad. I take it that bchal (from bjal “to measure off”) is correct, as bchad, which means “to cut off,” does not appear to me to supply any sense in this connection.
TRANSLATION NO. II
THE HERMIT AND THE ELEPHANT.
[DULWA, Volume IV, Pages 277-278]

Mendicants, in days of old there was a certain wild country where were no hamlets, but only groves, flowers, and fruit-trees of many kinds and pleasing to the eye, and also delicious springs. Here lived a hermit of the Kauśika clan; fallen fruit, roots, and water were his food and drink, and skins and bark supplied him with raiment, and the deer and birds used to come to his hermitage.

Now it happened one day that a she-elephant calved nearby, but hardly was the calf born when the mother heard a lion roar; so, filled with terror, she abandoned her young, after having dunged on it, and ran away.

After a while the hermit came out of his hut, and looking around he espied the new-born elephant without a mother, and his heart was touched with compassion, and he sought everywhere for the mother, but not finding her, he took the calf home and nursed and fed it as he would a child.

When (the elephant) had grown big, it hurt the hermit even in his dwelling, tore up the shrubs, stripped the branches off the fruit-trees, and did other innumerable wicked pranks. The hermit scolded it but it heeded him not. When its evil passions had shown themselves, he warned it, but it scorned him. After a while the hermit reproached it in the strongest terms, when (the elephant) rushed at him, killed him, and breaking through the side of the hut, ran away.

A god then spoke these verses:

“The vicious one, he who is always bad,
Is not a fit companion;
So it was that in Kauśika’s hermitage
The long-fondled elephant did evil.

“Kindness, food and drink,
Avail thee naught with a wicked one,
For surely in Kauśika’s hermitage,
The elephant killed his holy friend.”

The Blessed One then said: “Mendicants, what think you? He who was then the hermit, the same now am I, and he who was then the ele-

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dal sito “centronirvana.it” e dal bollettino “Nirvana News” che hanno cessato di esistere
phant is now Devadatta, who then as now knew not his own ingratitude.”

Devadatta (il malvagio cugino del Buddha), che sia ora come allora non riconosce la sua stessa ingratitude.”
TRANSLATION NO. III
THE UNGRATEFUL WREATH-MAKER.
[DULWA, Volume IV, Pages 283-285]

In times of yore, mendicants, there lived on a mountain a wreath-maker. His flower garden was on the farther side of a brook, and every day he crossed the stream to get flowers.

One day while crossing the stream he saw a perfect mango fruit floating down on the water. He took it and gave it to the gate-keeper (of the King); the gate-keeper gave it to the steward, and he gave it to the King, and the King gave it to his queen.

When the queen tasted it she was so delighted with its flavor that she said to the King: “Sire, I should like some more such mangoes.” So the King said to the steward: “From whom did you get that mango?” “From the porter,” he answered. “Well, tell the porter (that the queen wants some more).” So he told the porter, who said: “I got it from the wreath-maker.”

Then the King said: “Sirs, call the wreath-maker.” So, the King’s men being summoned, he said to them: “Tell the wreath-maker that the King orders him to bring another mango from whence he got the first one.”

Now, it is not right to disobey the orders of a sovereign of men, so (the wreath-maker) filled with awe, took some provisions, set out to look for mangoes, and came to where he had found the first one. On the side of the mountain he found a mango tree to which monkeys, but no man, had ever been. The wreath-maker examined the tree all around (and found) it could not be reached p. 9 on account of a great chasm; but he so much wanted the fruit that he staid there for many days until his provisions were all exhausted.

Then it occurred to him: “If I remain here without provisions I shall die. If there were only a little water (in the chasm?) I might finally get up to the tree,” and he clutched the rocks and tried to get over, but he could not reach the mangoes and fell in.

TRADUZIONE N. III
L’INGRATO GHIRLANDAIO
[DULWA, volume IV, pagine 283-285]

Nei tempi antichi, o mendicanti, su una montagna viveva un fabbricante di ghirlande. Il suo bel giardino floreale era sull’altro lato di un ruscello, ed ogni giorno lui attraversava il ruscello per cercare fiori.

Un giorno, mentre attraversava il ruscello, vide un bellissimo frutto di mango che galleggiava sull’acqua. Lo prese e lo diede al custode della porta (del Re); il custode lo diede all’assistente, e lui lo diede al Re, ed il Re lo diede alla sua regina.


Allora il Re disse: “Signori, chiamatemi questo ghirlandaio”. Quindi, furono chiamati gli uomini del Re, e lui disse loro: “Dite al ghirlandaio che il Re ordina che lui porti un altro mango da dove trovò il primo.”

Ora, non è giusto disubbidire gli ordini di un sovrano di uomini, così (il ghirlandaio) pieno di timore riverenziale, prese le provviste ed andò in cerca di altri manghi e arrivò là dove aveva trovato il primo. Sul lato della montagna, trovò un albero di mango presso cui nessun uomo mai era stato, ma solo le scimmie. Il ghirlandaio esaminò l’albero da lontano (e scoprì) che non poteva essere raggiunto a causa di un grande baratro; ma lui era così intenzionato di prendere quei frutti che si appostò là per molti giorni finché le sue provviste non furono tutte esaurite.

Allora egli pensò: “Se io rimango qui senza provviste, rischio di morire. Se solamente vi fosse un po’ di acqua (nel baratro?) facendo degli scalini alla fine potrei arrivare fin su all’albero”, e così si afferrò alle rocce tentando di scalarle, ma non poté arrivare al mango e precipitò giù.
Now, the future Buddha (Gotama) had been born on that mountain as a monkey, and was a monkey-chief. It so befell (lit., through the power of fate it happened) that he and his band were on the mountain, and coming along that way he saw in what dire distress the wreath-maker was, and knowing both what he had done and the circumstances of the case, he tried to help him, and as no single one of the monkeys could get him out, they decided to make steps with stones and by this means pull him up. So little by little, as they piled up the stones, they raised up the wreath-maker until finally, utterly exhausted, they dragged him out.

In those days beasts spoke the language of men, so they asked him: "How did this mishap befall you?" And when he had told them, the future Buddha thought: "Since it would be unsafe for him to go away without these mangoes, I will get him some;" and this noble creature, ever desirous and willing to help others, notwithstanding his fatigue, climbed the tree, plucked the fruit, and the man ate of them as many as he wanted and took as many away as he could carry.

Now future Buddhas (Bodhisattvas) sacrifice themselves for all creation, and this monkey-chief sacrificed himself here. He said to the man: "Master, I am weary, I must rest me for a little while." "Do as thou wilt," he answered. So he lay down and went to sleep.

Then the man thought: "I am without provisions, but should I eat the mangoes what could I give to the King! I will kill this monkey, take his flesh as food, and go my way." And so the cruel man, putting away all thought of the life to come, killed him with a big stone.

A deity spoke these verses:

"Succor and even miracles,
As well as benefits and friendly talk (are naught);
Some men there are for whom
A service, once rendered, is forgot."

What think you, mendicants? he who at that time was the capo-scimmia, ora sono io, e colui

Ora, il futuro Buddha (Gotama) era nato su quella montagna come scimmia, ed era un capo delle scimmie. E così successe (letteralm., tramite il potere del fato, accadde) che lui ed il suo clan erano lì sulla montagna, e arrivando sul luogo vide in quale atroce angoscia il ghirlandaio si trovava, e inoltre sapendo sia quello che lui aveva fatto sia le circostanze del caso, tentò di aiutarlo, e siccome nessuna delle scimmie riusciva a tirarlo fuori, decisero di fare un piedistallo di pietre e con questo sistema tirarlo su. Così, poco a poco, accumulando le pietre, finalmente poterono tirare su il povero fabricante di ghirlande, completamente esausto, e infine lo trascinarono fuori.

In quei giorni, le bestie erano in grado di parlare la lingua degli umani, così le scimmie gli chiesero: “Come ti è successa questa disavventura?” E quando lui gliela ebbe raccontata, il Buddha futuro pensò: “Siccome sarebbe pericoloso per lui andare via senza questi manghi, io gliene prenderò alcuni” e questa nobile creatura, sempre desideroso e ben disposto a aiutare gli altri, nonostante la fatica, scalò l’albero, strappò i frutti, e l’uomo ne mangiò tanti quanti ne volle, e ne portò via tanti quanti ne poteva portare.

Ora, poiché i futuri Buddha (cioè, i Bodhisattva) sacrificano loro stessi per tutte le creature, anche questo capo-scimmia sacrificò qui se stesso. Egli disse all’uomo: “Maestro, io sono stanco, devo riposarmi per un po’ di tempo”. “Fai come vuoi”, lui rispose. Quindi la scimmia si sdraiò e si mise a dormire.

Allora l’uomo pensò: “Io sono senza provvisi, e se al ritorno mangio il mango, cosa potrei dare al Re?! Io ucciderò questa scimmia, prendero la sua carne come cibo, e mi metterò in cammino”. E così il crudele uomo, lasciando da parte ogni pensiero per la vita seguente, lo uccise con una pietra.

Una divinità cantò questi versi:

“Soccorso e persino miracoli (sono inutili),
Come pure benefici e parole amichevoli;
Vi sono degli alcuni uomini per cui,
Un servigio, appena reso, è dimenticato.”

Che pensate, mendicanti? Colui che a quel tempo era il capo-scimmia, ora sono io, e colui
time was the monkey-chief, he I am now; and he who was then the wreath-maker is now Devadatta.
TRANSLATION NO. IV.
The Wood-Cutter and the Bear.
[DULWA, Volume IV, Pages 286-288]

In times of yore there lived in the city of Benares a poor man who supported himself by selling wood. One day he rose up early in the morning, and, taking his ax and carrying-frame, started off to the forest for wood. On a sudden, rain began to fall, accompanied by violent wind. The man sought everywhere a place of shelter and went from tree to tree, but in each place the rain drenched him to the skin, so he left the trees and took refuge in a cave.

Now in this cave there lived a brown bear, and when the man saw it, he was frightened and would have run away, but the bear said to him: “Uncle, why are you afraid?” But the man was timid and held back in fear. After a while the bear pressed him to his breast with both arms and gave him a quantity of roots and fruit (on which the man lived).

The storm lasted for seven days without the rain-god stopping it; but when seven days had passed and the eighth day had come, the rain-cloud passed away. Then the bear, having looked all around the horizon, took a quantity of roots and fruit (gave them to the man), and said to him: “Son, the rain-cloud has gone, the storm is over, go in peace.” The man cast himself at the bear’s feet and said: “Father, how can I show my gratitude?” “Son,” he answered, “tell no one of my whereabouts, and you have repaid me.” I will do as you request,” and having walked around him (as a sign of respect), he bowed down before him and went away.

When he had come to Benares, he met a hunter on his way to hunt deer, who said to him: “Comrade, where have you been these last few days? When that sudden rain-storm set in, your wife and family thought you had been killed by some wild beast; they were terrified and have been in dire despair. Tell me, how many birds and deer did you kill during the seven days’ storm?” And the man told him what had happened. Then the other said: “Tell me, where is that bear’s den?”

TRADUZIONE N. IV
Il Boscaiolo e l’Orso
[DULWA, volume IV, pagine 286-288]

Nei tempi antichi, nella città di Benares viveva un uomo povero che si sosteneva vendendo legno. Un giorno, egli si alzò di mattina presto e, prendendo la sua ascia e il suo carretto, se ne partì per la foresta a tagliare la legna. All’improvviso, cominciò a cadere la pioggia, accompagnata da un violento vento. L’uomo cercò dappertutto un luogo di riparo ed andò d’albero in albero, ma ovunque andasse la pioggia lo infradiciava fino alla pelle, così lasciò gli alberi e prese rifugio in una caverna.

Ora in questa caverna viveva un orso bruno, e quando l’uomo lo vide, si spaventò e avrebbe voluto fuggire, ma l’orso gli disse: “Ma perché hai paura?” Però l’uomo era ancora spaventato ed intimidito. Dopo un po’ l’orso con ambedue le braccia lo strinse al suo petto e gli diede una quantità di radici e frutta (delle quali l’uomo viveva).

Il temporale durò per sette giorni senza che il dio della pioggia la fermasse; ma poi quando i sette giorni furono passati e venne l’ottavo giorno, il temporale cessò. Allora l’orso, avendo guardato tutt’intorno all’orizzonte, prese una quantità di radici e frutta, (le diede all’uomo), dopodiché gli disse: “Figlio, la nuvola di pioggia se n’è andata, il temporale è finito, vai pure in pace”. L’uomo si gettò ai piedi dell’orso e disse: “Padre, come posso dimostrarti la mia gratitudine?” “Figlio”, lui rispose, “non dire a nessuno dove io mi trovo, e mi avrai ripagato”. “Farò come hai chiesto”, disse l’uomo e avendo fatto un giro intorno all’orso (come segno di rispetto), gli si inchinò ed andò via.

Quando arrivò a Benares, egli incontrò un cacciatore che stava andando a cacciare un cervo, e che gli disse: “Camerata, dove sei stato questi ultimi giorni? Quando insorse quell’improvviso temporale, tua moglie e la tua famiglia pensarono che tu fossi stato ucciso da qualche bestia selvatica; erano terrorizzati e sono stati in atroce disperazione. E dimmi, quanti uccelli e cervi hai ucciso per poter mangiare durante i sette giorni del temporale?” E l’uomo gli raccontò quello
“Promise me,” he replied, “that you will not, at some future time, go to the part of the forest in which he lives.” And this the other promised him. But after a while the hunter beguiled him with the promise of two-thirds of the bear’s meat (if he would go with him to its den), and having got his hunting-knife,3 they started off for the woodland den of the noble bear, and after a while the ungrateful man said to the cruel one: “Here is the bear’s den.” And the hunter, so as to kill it, put fire in the cave.

Choked with smoke, sorrowful at heart, and his eyes filled with tears, the noble bear spoke these verses:

“I lived in a hollow in the wilds,
Nourished with roots, fruit, and water,
With kindly feelings for all beings;
To no one have I done evil;
But when the hour of death has come,
With kindly feelings for all beings;
Then nothing can avail.
The desires of beings and undesirable acts
Must needs follow the one the other,”4

and with these words he died.

When the men had butchered him and finished dressing the carcass, the hunter said to him who had been the author of this crime: “Take your two-thirds of the meat,” but he spread out his hands and fell flat on the ground, and when the other hunters saw this, they exclaimed: “Alas! Alas!” and throwing away their share of meat they went away.

Hearing that a great miracle had occurred, a crowd went out to where it had happened, and King Brahmadatta went out also. Now, somewhere on the mountain side there was a convent (saṃghārāma), and King Brahmadatta, with wonder-opened eyes, took the bear’s skin with the intention of showing it to the monks who inhabited it, and he went to the monastery, and spreading out the skin, he seated himself and that was ever accaduto. Allora l’altro disse: “Mi dici dov’è questo luogo tranquillo in cui vi è quell’orso?” E l’uomo rispose, “Però, promettimi che in futuro tu non andrai in quella parte della foresta in cui esso vive”. E l’altro glielo promise. Ma tempo dopo, il cacciatore lo allettò con la promessa di dargli due terzi della carne dell’orso (se fosse andato insieme a lui alla sua tana), e portandosi dietro il coltello da caccia 3 si incaminarono verso la tana boschiva del nobile orso, e infine, l’ingrato uomo disse a quello più crudele: “Ecco la tana dell’orso”. Ed il cacciatore, per ucciderlo, dette fuoco alla caverna.

Soffocato dal fumo, addolorato nel cuore, con gli occhi pieni di lacrime, il nobile orso cantò questi versi:

“Io vissi in una selvaggia caverna,
Nutrendomi di radici, frutta, ed acqua,
Con sentimenti gentili verso tutti gli esseri;
A nessuno io ho fatto del male;
Ma quando è venuta l’ora della morte,
Allora più niente può essere utile.
Desideri degli esseri e atti indesiderabili,
Devono le necessità susseguirsi l’una all’altra.”4

E con queste parole morì.

Quando gli uomini lo ebbero macellato e finirono di scuoiare la carcassa, il cacciatore disse a colui che era stato l’autore di questo crimine: “Prendi i tuoi due terzi della carne”, ma lui distese in fuori le sue mani e si abbatté di colpo per terra, e quando l’altro cacciatore vide questo, esclamò “Ahimé! Ahimé!” e gettando via la sua razione di carne se ne andò via.

Sentendo che era avvenuto un grande miracolo, una gran folla si diresse là dove era accaduto, ed anche il Re Brahmadatta vi andò. Ora, in qualche luogo sul lato della montagna, c’era un monastero (saṃghārāma), e Re Brahmadatta, con occhi meravigliati, prese la pelle dell’orso con l’intenzione di mostrarla ai monaci che lo occupavano, quindi si recò al monastero, e distendendo la pelle per terra, vi si mise seduto

3 Lam-nts’on or “road-knife,”probably a big knife like the Gorkha kukree used for clearing a pathway through the jungle. | Lam-nts’on, o “coltello-da-viaggio”, probabilmente un grande coltello come il kukree Gorkha usato per aprire un sentiero attraverso la giungla.

4 The sense of these last two lines is not very clear, although there is no doubt as to the general sense of the text. | Il senso di queste ultime due righe non è molto chiaro, anche se senza dubbio è simile al senso generale del testo.
placed it at their feet, and told them the whole story. When he had finished, an elder (Sthavira), who was also a holy man (Arahant), spoke these verses:

“Mahârâja, this is no bear.
It has the splendor of a Future Buddha (Bodhisattva).
Mahârâja, the three worlds
And thou may rightly pay it homage.”

Then the King thought: “He shall be honored,” and the Monks said: “Sire, show him homage, for he is a future Buddha of this world-period.”

Then King Brahmadatta, his queens, sons, ministers, peasants, and the townspeople, all took sweet-smelling woods and went to the place where lay the body of the bear, and having collected in a heap all the flesh and bones, the King said: “Now put on it the sweet-smelling wood, and when you have done so, set it on fire.” So they heaped up the sweet-smelling wood, and having shown great marks of honor to the remains, set fire to the pile, and after this they built a monument (ch’ûrten) on the spot, and to it they fastened parasols, flags, and streamers, and here they made great offerings at stated periods. All those who took part in this great work reached heaven (svarga).

What say you now, mendicants? He who at that time was the brown bear, the same now am I; and he who was then the ungrateful man is now Devadatta.

davanti ai loro piedi, e raccontò loro l’intera storia. Quando poi ebbe finito, un monaco anziano (Sthavira) che era anche un sant’uomo (Arahant), recitò questi versi:

“Mahârâja, questo non è un orso comune.
Ha lo splendore di un Futuro Buddha (Bodhisattva).
Mahârâja, tu e tutti i tre mondi
Dovrete giustamente rendergli omaggio.”

Allora il Re pensò: “Esso dovrà essere onorato”, e i Monaci dissero: “Sire, porgigli omaggio, perché egli è un Buddha futuro di questa epoca del mondo”.

Allora Re Brahmadatta, le sue regine, figli, ministri, contadini, e tutto il popolo del paese, presero legna di soave profumo ed andarono al luogo dove giaceva il corpo dell’orso, ed avendo raccolto in un mucchio tutta la carne e le ossa, il Re disse: “Ora mettetelo sulla legna di soave profumo, e quando lo avrete fatto, dategli fuoco”. Quindi ammucchiarono quella legna dal soave profumo, ed avendo mostrato grandi segni di onore ai resti, dettero fuoco alla pila, dopodiché costruirono un monumento (ch’ûrten) sul posto, e su di esso misero parasoli, bandiere, e banderuole, e qui fecero grandi offerte in determinati periodi. Tutti quelli che presero parte a questo grande lavoro andarono poi nel paradiso (svarga).

Cosa dite, ora, mendicanti? Colui che a quel tempo era l’orso bruno, ora sono io stesso; e colui che fu allora l’uomo ingrato ora è Devadatta.
In days of old there was a great lotus-pond in a mountain country, where lived an elephant, and near by a jackal. Once upon a time the elephant went to the pond to drink, when the jackal came along and said to him: “If you do not want to have a quarrel, get out of my way.”

The elephant thought: “If I should destroy this mass of corruption with my feet or my trunk or my tusks, it would demean me, for he is too vile; forsooth, his own filth will kill him. So he spoke this verse:

“I will not kill thee with my feet, Nor my tusks, nor yet with my trunk; The filthy one shall be killed by filth, Thou shalt die then in corruption.”

The elephant then said to himself: “I will give up the road and take a byway, for I doubt not he is following me;” so quickly he got out of the road and went away. But the Jackal thought: “A simple word from me has frightened him, and he has run away,” and he went after him. Then the elephant, perceiving that he was near, threw at him with all his great might some dung, which hit him; and so he died.

What think you, mendicants? He who was then the elephant, the same now am I, and he who was the jackal, is now Devadatta.
In days of yore King Brahmadatta reigned in Benares; and his riches, treasures, and possessions were vast, and his storehouses were full. Now King Brahmadatta had a wife whose name was “Incomparable,” and she was handsome and stately, and her face was exceedingly lovely. This princess was very dear to the King, and he satisfied her every whim and fancy.

At this same time there lived on the southern slope of Mount Kāilās, the chief of mountains, a king of the peacocks, “Golden-sheen” (Suvarṇaprabhāsa) by name, and with him was a retinue of five hundred followers. His limbs were glossy, as was also his body, and as a jewel was his beak. Where’er he went, he was recognized as the grandest of all peacocks.

On a certain occasion, this King of peacock’s cry was heard in the middle of the night within the city of Benares, and everyone in the city talked of it. The wife of King Brahmadatta happened to be on the terrace of her palace when this sound was heard, and so she questioned the King. “Sire,” she said, “whose is this voice so sweet, which causes such emotion and delight?”

The King answered: “Princess, though I have not seen (its possessor), from its accents it must be that of Suvarṇaprabhāsa, the king of the peacocks, who lives on the southern slope of Kāilās, the chief of mountains (the rest as above). Then the Queen said: “Sire, I beg you to have this king of peacocks brought here.”King Brahmadatta said: “What is the use of my seeing him going through the air?”

But the Queen said: “Sire, if you do not let me see this Suvarṇaprabhāsa I shall die.”

So King Brahmadatta, who was very much in love with her, was touched; and he said: “I will send out all my huntsmen and bird-charmers.”

Nell’antichità, il Re Brahmadatta regnava in Benares; e la sua ricchezza, i tesori, e i possedimenti erano enormi, ed i suoi magazzini erano pieni. Ora Re Brahmadatta aveva una moglie il cui nome era “Incomparabile”, ed era bella e grandiosa, ed aveva un viso molto grazioso. Questa principessa era molto cara al Re, e lui ne soddisfaceva ogni capriccio e voglia.

In quello stesso periodo, sul pendio meridionale del Monte Kāilās, il capo delle montagne, viveva il re dei pavoni, di nome “Splendore dell’Oro” (Suvarṇaprabhāsa) che aveva un seguito di cinquecento seguaci. I suoi fianchi erano lucenti, come pure il suo corpo, e il suo becco era come un gioiello. Ovunque egli andasse, veniva riconosciuto come il più grande di tutti i pavoni.

In una certa occasione, questo Re dei pavoni fu sentito cantare nel mezzo della notte all’interno della città di Benares, ed in città ognuno parlava di lui. Alla moglie di Re Brahmadatta accadde di essere sul terrazzo del suo palazzo quando fu sentito questo suono, e così interrogò il Re. “Sire”, lei disse, “Di chi è questa voce così dolce che provoca tale emozione e delizia?”

Il Re rispose: “Mia Regina, sebbene io non abbia visto (il suo possidente), dai suoi accenti deve essere quello di Suvarṇaprabhāsa, il re dei pavoni, che vive sul pendio meridionale del Monte Kāilās, il capo delle montagne (il resto come sopra). Allora la Regina disse: “Sire, io ti imploro che questo re di pavoni sia portato qui”. Re Brahmadatta disse: “A che serve che io lo vedà fendere l’aria?”

Ma la Regina disse: “O mio Re, se tu non mi lasci vedere questo Suvarṇaprabhāsa io ne morro.”

Quindi Re Brahmadatta, che era innamoratissimo di lei, fu toccato; e così disse: “Io manderò tutti i miei capocaccia e gli ammaliatori di uccel-
So King Brahmadatta had all his huntsmen and fowlers called and said to them: “It is reported, sirs, that on the southern slope of Kāḷāś, the chief of mountains, lives the peacock king, Suvarṇaprabhāśa, whose limbs and body are glossy, and whose bill is like a jewel: go and net or snare him and bring him here. If you succeed, it is well; but if you fail, I will have you all put to death.”

So the hunters and fowlers, fearing for their lives, took their nets and snares and started for the southern slope of Kāḷāś, the chief of mountains. When they reached there, they stretched their nets and set their traps in the place where the king of peacocks lived, so that nets and hair nooses were all around him, but though they waited there seven days, pressed with hunger, they were unable to catch the peacock king.

Finally the king of peacocks, touched with compassion for them, came and said to the hunters: “Ye men of violence, why stay ye here, though pressed by hunger?” They answered him: “Here is the reason, O peacock king; King Brahmadatta has ordered us saying: ‘Go and take with your nets and snares Suvarṇaprabhāśa, the peacock king, whose limbs and body are glossy and whose bill is like a jewel, and who with five hundred followers lives on the southern slope of Kāḷāś, the chief of mountains. If you bring him here, it is well, but if you do not, you shall all be put to death;’ so we, fearing for our lives, have come here to try and capture you.” The king of peacocks said: “Men of violence, you cannot take me with snares and nets; but if King Brahmadatta wants to see me, let him have Benares swept, sprinkled with scented water, decorated with flowers, let him have white awnings stretched, flags hoisted, and cen- 

Quindi i cacciatori e uccellatori, temendo per le loro vite, presero le loro reti e tutte le trappole e si avviarono per il pendio meridionale del Monte Kāḷāś. Quando arrivarono là, stirarono le reti e misero le loro trappole nel luogo dove vi- 

dero il re dei pavoni, così che reti e cappi di fili erano tutt’intorno, ma benché essi aspettassero sette giorni, sfiniti ed affamati, non furono capa- ci di prendere il re dei pavoni.

Alla fine, il re dei pavoni, preso da compassio- ne per loro, venne e disse ai cacciatori: “Voi, uomini di violenza, perché siete qui, sebbene stanchi ed affamati?” Essi gli risposero: “Il mo- to è, o re dei pavoni, che Re Brahmadatta ci ha ordinato di venire a prendere con reti e trappole, il re dei pavoni Suvarṇaprabhāśa, i cui fianchi e corpo sono lucenti ed il cui becco è come un gioiello, il quale vive con cinquecento seguaci sul pendio meridionale del Monte Kāḷāś, il capo delle montagne. Se lo riportiamo giù, è bene, ma se non lo facciamo, saremo tutti messi a morte; quindi noi, temendo per le nostre vite, siamo ve- nuti qui a cercare di catturarti”. Il re dei pavoni allora disse: “Uomini di violenza, voi non potete prendermi con trappole e reti; ma se il Re Brah- madatta vuole vedermi, tenga ben pulita Benar- 

Quando i cacciatori e uccellatori ebbero sentito ciò che aveva detto Suvarṇaprabhāśa, re dei pa- 

voni, essi ritornarono a Benares ed andarono da Re Brahmadatta, a cui dissero: “Ascolta, Sire! 

eravamo partiti con reti e trappole e quindi an-
went to the south side of Kāliś, the chief of mountains. We stretched our nets and set our snares all around the place where the king of peacocks was living; but though we waited seven days, gnawed by the pangs of hunger, we were not able to catch him. But the king of peacocks, filled with compassion, came and spoke to us, asking us what we were doing staying there though suffering with hunger. When we had told him, he said to us, ‘If Brahmadatta wants to see me,’ etc. etc. (as above).

When King Brahmadatta had listened to the hunters and fowlers, he had the city of Benares arranged as the king of the peacocks had directed (the rest as previously), and with fine chariots ornamented with the seven kinds of precious stones, and surrounded by all his army, he went to the southern slope of Kāliś, the chief of mountains, and the king of peacocks, Suvarṇaprabhāśa, riding also on a chariot made of the seven kinds of precious stones, uttered a cry which the whole army heard. So then King Brahmadatta, delighted, his heart filled with joy, did homage before Suvarṇaprabhāśa, king of the peacocks; he bowed down before him, made him offerings, honored him, and then they went back together to the city of Benares. When they arrived at the gate of Benares, again he uttered his cry, and it was heard throughout the whole city; and throughout the city, men, women, boys, and girls all rushed to the gates.

Then King Brahmadatta again honored the king of the peacocks, did him homage, made him offerings, honored him, and going to his palace, he sought the Queen and said to her: “Princess, the king of the peacocks, Suvarṇaprabhāśa, is coming to your dwelling.”

Now King Brahmadatta made himself (daily) offerings of fruits and flowers to Suvarṇaprabhāśa, king of the peacocks; but it so happened, however, that on a day, the King, being busy, thought; “Who can make the offerings to Suvarṇaprabhāśa, the peacock king?” and it occurred to him that Princess “Incomparable”was clever and very learned, and that she could do it. So King Brahmadatta had his wife called and said to her: “Princess, please make the offerings dammo sul lato meridionale del Monte Kāliś, il capo delle montagne. Poi noi abbiamo steso le nostre reti e messo le nostre trappole tutt’intorno al luogo dove viveva il re dei pavoni; ma pur avendo aspettato sette giorni, morsi dai tormenti della fame, non siamo stati capaci di prenderlo. Però, poi, il re dei pavoni, pieno di compassione venne e ci parlò, chiedendoci che cosa noi stessimo facendo, mentre tuttavia stavamo soffrendo la fame. Dopo avergli detto il motivo della nostra venuta, lui ci disse, ‘Se Brahmadatta vuole vedermi,’ ecc. ecc. (come sopra).

Dopo aver ascoltato i cacciatore e gli uccellatori, Re Brahmadatta sistemò la città di Benares così come era stato ordinato dal re dei pavoni (il resto come prima), e con eccellenti carri ornati di sette vari tipi di pietre preziose, e circondati da tutto il suo esercito, lui andò sul pendio meridionale del Monte Kāliś, il capo delle montagne, ed anche Suvarṇaprabhāśa, il re dei pavoni, cavalcando anche lui un carro ornato dai sette tipi di pietre preziose, emise un canto che fu sentito dall’intero esercito. Allora, Re Brahmadatta, fu così contento che il suo cuore si colmò di gioia, rese omaggio davanti a Suvarṇaprabhāśa, il re dei pavoni; si inchinò di fronte a lui, gli donò offerte, lo onorò, e poi essi risalirono insieme sul carro per andare verso la città di Benares. Quando giunsero alle porte di Benares, di nuovo egli emise il suo canto, e fu sentito in tutta la città; ed in tutta la città, uomini, donne, ragazzi, e ragazze, si precipitarono tutti alle porte.

Poi Re Brahmadatta onorò ancora il re dei pavoni, e gli rese omaggio, gli donò offerte, lo onorò, ed andando al suo palazzo, cercò la Regina e le disse: “Principessa, il re dei pavoni, Suvarṇaprabhāśa, sta arrivando alla tua abitazione.”

Ora, il Re Brahmadatta faceva egli stesso offerte (quotidiane) di frutti e fiori a Suvarṇaprabhāśa, re dei pavoni; però, tuttavia, un giorno accadde che il Re, essendo occupato, pensò; “Chi può fare le offerte a Suvarṇaprabhāśa, il re dei pavoni?” e così ritenne che, essendo intelligente e assai istruita, potesse farlo la Regina “Incomparabile”. Quindi Re Brahmadatta chiamò sua moglie e le disse: “Principessa, per favore fai tu le offerte a Suvarṇaprabhāśa, il re dei pavoni,
to Suvarṇaprabhāsa, king of the peacocks, in the same way as I have done;” and King Brahmadatta’s consort herself offered to the king of peacocks flowers and fruits.

Now it happened that on a certain occasion the Queen committed adultery and was with child; so she bethought herself: “If this king of peacocks does not speak, King Brahmadatta will not hear of this, and so will not want to kill me.” So this woman gave the king of the peacocks poisoned food and drink; but the more she gave him, the healthier he looked, the more beautiful, the more pleasing, the more resplendent he became, and the Queen was filled with astonishment. But the king of the peacocks, Suvarṇaprabhāsa, cried out to her: “Thou rogue, thou rogue, I know thee! Thou didst think because thou wast with child by another man and this bird knows it, if he does not talk, the King will not hear of it and will not put me to death. So thou gavest me poisoned food and drink, but thou canst not kill me!”

On hearing these words, the Queen fell on her face, and having lost a great deal of blood (lit., arterial blood), was stricken down with a severe illness which caused her death, and after her death she was born in hell.

He who was the king of Benares is now Śāriputra, and I was the king of the peacocks, “Golden-sheen.”

Ora, successe che in una certa occasione, la Regina commise adulterio ed era incinta; perciò, temendo che Suvarṇaprabhāsa, re dei pavoni, se ne accorgesse pensò: “Se questo re dei pavoni non parla, Re Brahmadatta non sentirà di questo, e così non vorrà uccidermi”. Quindi questa donna diede cibo e bevande avvelenate al re dei pavoni; ma più lei gliene dava, più sano egli appariva, più bello, più piacevole e più risplendente lui diventò, e la Regina era colma di stupore. Ma il re dei pavoni, Suvarṇaprabhāsa, le gridò: “Tu, birbantella, tu vigliacca, io ti conosco bene! Tu hai pensato così perché sei rimasta incinta da un altro uomo e questo uccello lo sa, quindi se lui non parla, il Re non lo saprà e non ti metterà a morte. Quindi tu mi hai dato cibo e bevande avvelenate, ma tu non potevi sapere che esse non mi uccidono!”

Nel sentire queste parole, la Regina cadde di colpo per terra facendosi male al volto, ed avendo perso molto sangue (letteralm., sangue arterioso), fu colpita da una grave malattia che provocò la sua morte, e dopo la sua morte lei rinacque in un inferno.

In quel periodo, colui che era Brahmadatta, il re di Benares, ora è Śāriputra, ed io ero il re dei pavoni, “Splendore dell’Oro.”