

Karmic Fruition of Princess Vajira, Daughter of King Pasenadi

A classic story told by the Buddha about the karmic fruition of self-deeds.
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King Pasenadi of Kosala in India has a princess named Vajira who was smart and elegant, cherished by her parents and loved by the people in the palace. One day, the King said to the princess, “Because of me, people in the palace love and respect you.” Princess Vajira answered, “I earn the respects from wholesome karmas of myself rather than from you, father.” The King queried her three times consecutively and still got the same reply. He was furious and said, “Let’s see if you earn the love and respect by yourself or from me?” The King ordered his guard to find the poorest and shabbiest beggar on the street and bring him to the palace. The King then ordered the beggar to marry the princess and said to her, “From now on, you can prove for yourself to see whether you depend on your wholesome karma to win the love and respect of people solely by yourself or not.” The princess persisted that she earn them solely dependent on her own wholesome karma. She then left the palace with her newly wedded husband.

Princess Vajira asked her husband along the way out of the palace, “Are your parents still alive?” He answered, “My father was the richest man in the town before but they had all passed away leaving me alone and poor without any family.” The princess asked again, “Do you still remember where your old house is?” The husband said, “I do, but the house is all ruined and barren.” Nonetheless, both of them went to the old home and walked around the place. The land caved in wherever they walked past, treasures from the underground emerged. The couple utilized these treasures to hire workers and rebuilt the dilapidated house in less than a month and employed many maids, choir entertainers and countless servants.

One day, King Pasenadi thought of the princess and asked his retinue, “I wonder how is Princess Vajira doing?” The retinue replied, “The wealth and houses of Princess Vajira are no less than yours, your majesty!” The King sighed and said, “What the Buddha said about the karmic fruition of self-deeds is so true!” The husband on behalf of Princess Vajira went to the Palace to invite the King to their house, and King Pasenadi accepted the invitation to see the princess on the same day. He praised the solemnity of her residence where the pavement of wool carpets and wool mats were more dignified than his palace which he has never seen before. Princess Vajira reassured the King of what she believed before and said, “The karmic fruitions of my current life owe its fruition to my wholesome deeds of my past lives.”

King Pasenadi went to see Buddha to inquire about his daughter, “World Honored One! What wholesome deeds did my daughter, Princess Vajira, do in the past lives to deserve being born to the royal family and that her body illuminate radiantly?” The World Honored One replied the King, “A Buddha once named *Vipaśyin* was born in the human world ninety-one eons ago in the kingdom ruled by King Pantou. King Pantou built a stūpa (a Buddhist religious monument) decorated with seven jewels to worship the relics of Buddha. The Queen used her crown jewels to make the offerings to Buddha *Vipaśyin* by placing them on top of the Buddha statue, and used other gems on the crown to decorate two poles at the entrance of the stūpa, and wished for the jewels to illuminate mundane world radiantly. Meanwhile, she made her vows by saying: “may the illumination of these jewels and gems shine on various merits and virtues of worldly gains, so that I have purplish golden lights on my body in future lives. Also, I can be revered and dignified, and never fall into the three evil destinies or the eight circumstances in which it is hard to see the Buddha or hear his teaching.” Princess Vajira was the queen of King Pantou at that time.

Moreover, in one of Princess Vajira's previous life, during the era of Buddha *Kāśyapa*, she made an exquisite gourmet to worship Buddha *Kāśyapa* and the other Four Great śrāvakas (Hinayana practitioners with achievement). She persuaded her husband who tried to stop her from making such offerings by saying, "Please let me make the offerings since I have already invited Buddha *Kāśyapa* and his Four Great śrāvakas here and allow me to complete such merits and virtues." The husband finally agreed and this is the beggar husband of Princess Vajira from this current life. The wife who made offerings to Buddha *Kāśyapa* and the Four Great śrāvakas is Princess Vajira. The husband suffered the retribution of being poor and squalid for many lives since this is the result of karma when he tried to stop his wife from making offerings to Buddha *Kāśyapa* and others. Nonetheless, he eventually listened to his wife and let her make the offerings; therefore he can enjoy the karmic fruition of being wealthy and respected at the end, due to his meeting his wife during the current life. In other words, if the husband does not meet the princess in the current wife, he will continue to suffer poverty and shabby status. All wholesome or unwholesome karmic seeds incurred by a person will always track back to the person without fail. After listening to the teachings of Buddha, King Pasenadi was in awe for karmas of one's body, verbal, and mental acts with thorough understandings and will neither dare to treat people with arrogance nor exaggerate himself anymore. The King deeply believed the preaching about karmic fruition, causes and conditions taught by the Buddha and left with joy.

Based on this story, we can say that: 1. One endures karmic retribution of self-created karma. 2. Direct almsgiving in person will generate merits and virtues that will eventually cause the same person to receive karmic retribution without routing through others.