

### The Story of Sunita (Junk Collector)



Sunita was a junk collector and a road-sweeper. He did not earn enough money to feed himself. He did not have a house to go to. He slept on the sidewalk. People called him an outcast. Whenever he saw rich people, Sunita had to run and hide so they will not see him. If he was not quick enough to hide, he would be scolded and beaten. Poor Sunita lived a sad life.

One day, as he was sweeping a dirty, dusty road, Sunita saw the Buddha and thousands of monks were coming towards him. He was excited and forgot to find a place to hide. So he just stood, keeping his palms together to respect. The Buddha stopped and spoke to poor Sunita in a gentle voice saying, "My dear friend, would you like to leave this work and follow me?"

Nobody had ever spoken to Sunita like this before. He was surprised and asked "Dear Buddha, I have always received orders but never a kind word. If you are willing to accept a dirty and unhappy person like me, I will follow you."

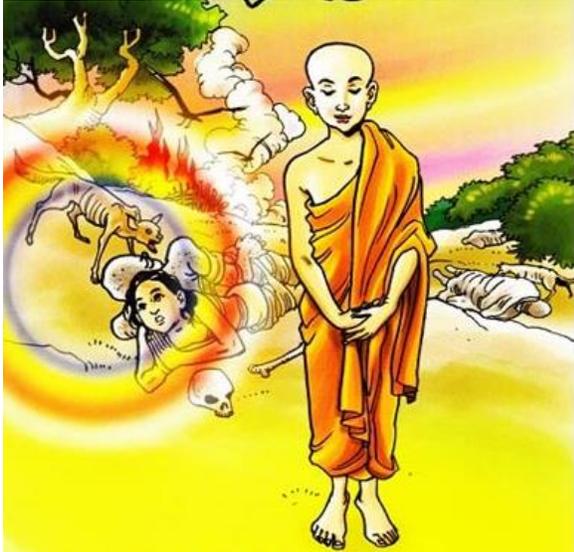
So the Buddha kindly spoke to Sunita and took him along with the other monks. From that day, nobody knew what Sunita's job was, and nobody treated him badly. Everybody respected him.

# Love and Kindness

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## The Story of Poor Sopaka



There was a boy called Sopaka, born to a very poor family. When this boy was seven years old, his father died and his mother married another man who was very mean. His new stepfather always beat and scolded Sopaka who was very kind, innocent and good.

The stepfather thought, "This boy is a problem, he is useless, but I cannot do anything to him because his mother loves him so much. What shall I do about him?" He planned to get rid of him.

One evening he said, "Dear son, let us go for

a walk."

The boy was surprised and thought, "My stepfather has never talked to me so kindly. Perhaps my mother has asked him to be kind to me." So he happily agreed to go with his stepfather.

They walked to a cemetery where there were many dead bodies. His stepfather tied Sopaka to one of the dead bodies and left him alone. Sopaka cried out, begging his stepfather not to leave him.

As the night became darker and darker, Sopaka became more scared. He was alone in the cemetery and so frightened. The noises of the wild animals around the cemetery made him even more frightened. Then he saw a shining noble-looking person with a bright light coming towards him saying, "Sopaka, don't cry. I am here to help you, so don't fear." It was the Buddha. The Buddha took him to the temple, bathed him, gave him food to eat, cloths to wear and comforted him.

When Sopaka's mother came home she was looking for him. The husband said nothing, so she was worried and went out to look for Sopaka. She couldn't find him anywhere. She ran through the streets of asking everyone if they had seen her son, but no one could help her. Finally an old man told her that only the Buddha can help. She went to the temple to see the Buddha for help. "Why are you crying, sister?" asked the Buddha.

She replied "I have only one son and since last night he has been missing. My husband took Sopaka for a walk and the little boy never returned home."

"Don't worry, sister. Your son is safe. Here he is." And so saying the Buddha showed her Sopaka, who had become a monk. The mother was very happy to see her son again, and after listening to the Buddha's teachings she also became a follower.