

The Story of Five Hundred Boys

Dhammapada – Verse 217

While residing at the Veluvana monastery, the Buddha uttered Verse (217) of this book, with reference to five hundred boys.

On one festival day, the Buddha entered the city of Rajagaha for alms-food, accompanied by a number of Bhikkhus. On their way, they met five hundred boys going to a pleasure garden.

The boys were carrying some baskets of pan-cakes, but they did not offer any thing to the Buddha and his Bhikkhus. But the Buddha said to his Bhikkhus, "Bhikkhus, you shall eat those pan-cakes today; the owner is coming close behind us. We shall proceed only after taking some of these pan-cakes." After saying this, the Buddha and his Bhikkhus rested under the shade of a tree. Just at that moment Thera Kassapa came along, and the boys seeing him paid obeisance to him and offered all their pan-cakes to the theras.

The theras then told the boys, "My teacher the Exalted One is resting underneath a tree over there accompanied by some Bhikkhus; go and make an offering of your pan-cakes to him and the Bhikkhus." The boys did as they were told. The Buddha accepted their offering of pan-cakes. Later, when the Bhikkhus remarked that the boys were very partial to Thera Kassapa, the Buddha said to them, "Bhikkhus, all Bhikkhus, who are like my son Kassapa are liked by both devas and men. Such Bhikkhus always receive ample offerings of the four requisites of Bhikkhus."

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Verse 217: *He who is endowed with Virtue and Insight, who is established in the Dhamma, who has realized the Truth and performs his own duties, is loved by all men.*

At the end of the discourse, the five hundred boys attained Sotapatti Fruition.