

King Prasenjit



One day, King Shrenik was on his way to pay homage to Lord Mahavira, and he saw a sage who was meditating and had a bright glow around him. He bowed down to the sage and continued on his way. After reaching Lord Mahavira, King Shrenik asked the Lord, “Oh Lord, I saw a brilliant sage who was engaged in the meditation. If he died at that moment, what would be his destiny?”

The Lord replied, “He would have been hurled down to the seventh hell-region.”

The king was much astonished to hear this reply from the Lord. He thought, “Why would such a sage go to hell? Perhaps the Lord might have misunderstood me.” He asked the Lord again, “Oh Lord, if his soul leaves this body just now, where will it go?”

The Lord replied, “He will be an angel in the Sarvarthasiddhi, a heavenly region.”

The king was much surprised at this reply, too. He thought, “The Lord first said he would attain the seventh hell, and now he says that the sage would be an angel.” The king was perplexed. At that very moment, drums began sounding in the sky and voices of ‘victory’ were proclaimed. The king asked the Lord, “What is the cause of these sounds?”

The Lord said, “Oh, king, the sage about whom you were inquiring has acquired omniscience and so the angels are beating the drums and proclaiming the ‘Victory’.”

The king was extremely confused by these answers and requested for the explanations.

So Lord Mahavira explained, “Oh king, right before you approached the sage, two soldiers leading your procession diverted his mind by their conversation that his son was betrayed by his entrusted ministers and they were planning to overthrow his son and even kill him. His meditation was disturbed due to rising of the affection for his son. He was inflamed with rage, and he lost his mental equanimity. Therefore, he started mentally to fight against his ministers. He very violently discharged his weapons one after the other against his ministers. Soon his weapons were exhausted and his foes were not destroyed. So, he thought of throwing his steel helmet against them in order to destroy them. If he would have died at that moment, he would have gone to the 7th hell. Now as he reached for the steel helmet, he realized that he was not the King Prasenjit, but that he was a sage. His anger calmed down immediately. He remembered that he has been initiated into the vow of equanimity and of non-violence to all living beings mentally, verbally, and physically. He deeply regretted and repented for the breach of his vow and indulgence in the acute anger. He further thought that he ought to have maintained love for all the creatures of the world, ought to have no malice for the ministers, and no attachment for his son. He severely condemned his mental act. He despised it and withdrew himself from such a feat of anger and malice. Oh king, when he thought this way, you asked me the next question and I replied that he would be born in the Sarvarthasiddhi (heaven) as an angel. Even thereafter, he continued the purification of his mental reflections and gradually he reached the stage of ‘Kshapaka’, where he annihilated all of his ghati karmas, and attained omniscience.”

King Shrenik’s doubts were resolved and he learned how mental reflections can fluctuate. He, also learned that not only can physical acts or verbal abuses have such devastating effects, but so can mental acts.