

## DHAMMA THROUGH PARABLES

### Life is a Dream

It was evening. The sun was setting slowly in the West. The birds were hastening to their nests while beasts were prowling for prey. Now a bee, - a little busy bee was buzzing this way and that, seeking a little honey to still its hunger. At last it saw a pond full of glowing lotuses and with great joy did the bee rest on the calyx of a tender little lotus to feast on a trifle of its hidden nectar. The bee did not harm the beauty of the lotus; it only drank the honey. But, alas! With the setting of the sun, the lotus closed its silky petals, thus trapping its hungry visitor. Yet, the little bee was not without hope. These were the thoughts that flashed through its heart as the poor creature lay snared in the dainty lotus-prison:

‘The night will pass away yielding place to the fair dawn; the sun will rise, and this lotus will expand and soon shall I quit this prison house to join my companions.’

But, lo! The unexpected happens. The lordly elephant, king of the forest, wends his way along the path that leads to the pond. He drinks his fill and splashes the cool water over his massive flanks. The questing sensitive trunk scents the luscious lotus, - the very lotus in which our little errant bee lay captive!

Instantly the mighty beast tears up the lotus plant. And, crunch, - leaves, flower and bee disappear into that vast maw! And the little bee quite contrary to its wishful optimism thus went to its death.

Such is life! One moment here then lost forever. Who can say with certainty that one will live to see the morrow? All meetings end in partings, while life ends in death. And we, in this mysterious universe live, love and laugh; and, “it is easy enough to be pleasant when life flows along like a song.” Yet “when sorrows come, they come not single spies but in battalions,” and then, the whole world appears to be one picture of pain. Still the man who views life with a detached outlook, who sees things in their proper perspective, whose cultural training urges him to be calm and unperturbed under all life’s vicissitudes, who could ‘smile when everything goes dead wrong’, - he, indeed, is man worthwhile.

The world in which we have taken our temporary abode is like unto a large lotus out of which we all, men and women, gather honey with strenuous struggle. We build up wishful hopes and plan for the morrow. But one day, sudden perhaps, and unexpected, there comes the inevitable hour when death, the elephant, - Maccu

Mara – tears up our lives and brings our hopes to naught. Therefore said the sages of yore:

“The eight great mountains and the seven seas,  
The sun, the gods, who sit and rule o’er these;  
Thou, I the Universe, must pass away,  
Time conquers all: why dote on Maya’s play?”

(The Buddha’s Ancient Path)