

## THE MAN AND HIS HONEY

Here is a small parable for us to understand the nature of life and worldly pleasure.

A man had lost his way when he was going through a thick forest covered with thorns and rocks. Then he was confronted by a huge elephant which started to chase him. He started to run for fear of his life. While he was running he saw a well and he thought that this would be a good place for him to escape from the elephant. But very unfortunately he saw a big poisonous snake at the bottom of the well.

However, since there was no other way of escape from the elephant he jumped into the well and managed to get hold of a thick thorny creeper that was growing on the side wall of the well. While he was hanging on to the creeper he saw two mice, a white one and a black one. To his horror he saw that these two mice were slowly cutting the creeper which he was holding on to. He also found a beehive close by from which occasional drops of honey trickled down.

While facing his death in three ways in that dangerous position he greedily started to taste the honey drops. Seeing the pathetic situation of this poor man, another kind person who happened to pass by, volunteered to give a helping hand to save his life. But this greedy and foolish man refused to listen to him because of the taste of the honey he was enjoying. The taste of the honey had so intoxicated him that he preferred to ignore the dangerous position he was facing.

Here in this parable, the thorny path of the forest is equated to Samsara - the wheel of existence. The thorny path of Samsara is a very uncertain and troublesome one. It is not so easy for a person to carry on his life through the rough jungle of Samsara. The elephant here represents death. Death always follows us and makes us unhappy. Old age also creates unhappiness and insecurity in our minds. The creeper is our birth. Just as a creeper goes on growing and coiling with other plants, so also our birth goes on accumulating, holding, clinging to so many other things in this world. The two mice represent day and night. From the very day that we were born to this world, the passage of day and night goes on cutting and shortening our life span. The drops of honey are the fleeting sensual worldly pleasures which encourage man to remain in this impermanent and uncertain world. The kind man who came to give his helping hand to

show him the correct path and to get rid of his dangerous situation of life is the Buddha.

A man who thinks that it is better for him to remain in this world to enjoy worldly life without trying to attain Nibbana, is exactly like this man who refused to escape from the dangerous situation of his life just to taste a little bit of honey.