



## The Weight Loss Journey of King Prasenajit

One day, King Prasenajit came to Jetavana-vihāra garden. He prostrated to Buddha and then took a seat aside. In such a short distance and movement, he panted and sweated profusely due to his overweight.

The Buddha said to King Prasenajit, "My lord, your body is corpulent."

King Prasenajit replied, "Yes, Buddha! Sometimes, I feel uncomfortable and embarrassed because of this corpulent body."

The Buddha then uttered a verse,

"We should watch over our mind;

When eating and drinking know when to stop;

With temperance in all sensory intake,

Peace, health, and longevity can be attained."

Meanwhile, a young servant stood behind King Prasenajit. The King asked the young servant, "If you can recite the verse Buddha just said every time I eat, I will reward you with one hundred thousand dollars, and many delicacies."

The young servant replied, "I will do as you wish, my lord." King Prasenajit then happily left the Jetavana-vihāra garden.

From then on, every time when King Prasenajit was having a meal, the young servant would recite the verse to remind the King. After few months, King Prasenajit became more well-built and stately in appearance.

One day, King Prasenajit was on the pavilion of the palace, respectfully prostrated toward the Buddha's residence, and repeated three times, "I now sincerely take refuge in the Buddha. I am so grateful that Buddha teaches me the principle about being disciplined with my desire for eating and drinking. This helps me to gain great benefits not only now but in the future.

--paraphrasing from "Samyukta Āgama Sutra"

## **Reflections:**

Confucius said, "Desire for food and lust is part of human nature." This actually means that we should not aid and abet these kinds of habits. People are misled in the belief that to feel comfortable is to indulge in sensual pleasures and that what makes people feel uncomfortable is to restrain their sensual desires. In Buddhist cultivation, it says "Take comfort in both restraint and discomfort as joys." Buddhist practitioners take moral discipline as liberation, and indulging in sensual pleasure as shackles. Excessive desires, and chasing more and more stimulus, bombards and burdens our bodies and minds. If we can be aware of the practice of "being content" and "desire less" in our daily life, we can be relieved from our fetters and purify our minds, which will lead toward a healthier, happier life.