

# SIDDHATTHA

## SAVED THE SWAN



**Retold by Ajahn Sujana**

## PART ONE



A long long time ago there was a beautiful garden near the Palace in ancient Kapilavatthu City, present day Nepal. There were many big trees and different kinds of flowers in the garden. Different birds were looking for their food. Bees were humming around and jumping on one flower to another collecting honey. Beautiful butterflies were flying around.

One sunny afternoon in that beautiful garden, Siddhattha, Devadatta, Ananda and Mahanama went to play in the garden. Siddhattha, Ananda and Mahanama started to play hide and seek. Devadatta was not interested in that game so went on his own to play behind the bushes.

Siddhattha loved playing with different animals and loved every creature. He fed animals and birds often. When Siddhattha stood still and was looking at the singing bird Mahanama breathlessly said;

‘Siddhattha! Come on, ‘let’s go and catch those beautiful butterflies.’

Mahanama and Ananda, immediately, ran after the butterflies laughing with great fun.

‘Wow! Very beautiful butterflies,’ said Ananda.

‘Aren’t they Siddhattha?’

Siddhattha nodded his head but didn't say a word. Siddhattha, Mahanama and Ananda chased those little butterflies deep inside the garden.

Suddenly, every one heard a Swan's cry and honking. The swan fell down on the ground from the sky. A Swan was lying on the ground nearby.

Siddhattha run up to the swan. The Swan was 30 inches in length and had a Wingspan of about 80.

Siddhattha walked up to the swan and said sadly, 'Oh! Poor bird, I wonder who hurt you,'.

The Swan out of fear of death, tried to run away by flapping its wings but couldn't. Its wing had been hit by an arrow quite badly.

Swans are a beautiful big, long-necked water-bird with short legs and short duck-like bills. Normally, we can see them on the canals with their long neck held straight up with a kink at base. Swans make noises or

if any threat coming over generally flaps their wings trying to fly across the water honking and hissing.

Siddhattha was very kind to everyone. He was gentle with every animal and every person. He knew everyone likes to be happy and no one likes to be hurt. Life is dear to everyone.

‘Don’t worry poor little bird,’ said Siddhattha. ‘I will take care of you.’

Siddhattha gently picked the swan up carefully and removed the arrow that was hurting the Swan. The Swan cried out loud.

‘I am sorry,’ Siddhattha said compassionately to Swan, ‘but the arrow has been removed.’

*The Swan looked at the Siddhattha and felt safe in his hands. The Swan placed its head on Siddhattha’s arm as a symbol of saying thank you.*

Removing the arrow from the Swan's wing, Siddhattha wrapped the wound with cool leaves to stop the bleeding and softly patted its body as if to say it 'don't worry you will be fine'. The Swan felt safe and leaned against Siddhattha's body.

## PART TWO



‘That is my bird, Siddhattha,’ demanded Devadatta. ‘I shot it with my arrow. Give it to me.’

Devadatta was not very nice and not very friendly with anyone. His behavior was not very good either. He was cruel to animals, impolite and jealous too. He was also as strong as Siddhattha too but was not as clever as him. Devadatta stepped towards Siddhattha hoping to take the Swan, demanding it.

‘No! Devadatta,’ replied Siddhattha. ‘If I give it to you, you will kill it.’

Siddhattha wrapped the Swan in his arms and rejected Devadatta’s demand. The Swan quickly hid his face under Siddhattha’s hand, savior of his life. It’s whole body was shaking out of fear.

‘Look at it Devadatta, you scared him. Isn’t it such a beautiful bird?’

‘The bird belongs to me, Siddhattha. Not yours.’

Devadatta didn’t wait for Siddhattha’s reply and went to grab the Swan. Siddhattha was a strong, brave and clever boy. Devadatta couldn’t reach the Swan.

‘I won’t give it to you, Devadatta,’ after he got away from Devadatta, Siddhattha replied. ‘If the bird had died, it would belong to you; but it is still alive and I saved it. So, it is naturally belonging to the saviour not the shooter.’



Devadatta wasn't happy with his answer and resisted letting him have the swan.

Devadatta spoke out loud with his big voice angrily. 'I shot the bird down. So, it belongs to me.'

Siddhattha wasn't scared of his angry loud voice. He was courageous and determined to save the Swan.

'We better go to see the King Suddhodana to decide.'

Siddhattha spoke out as a final solution as a final way to resolve the situation.

Siddhattha was hoping that the King would decide in favour of him on the basis of his kind intension to save the Swan.

'Hmmm,' Devadatta spoke softly but reluctantly. 'If you say so, Siddhattha, let's go to see him.'

## PART THREE



The case came to the court in front of the King Suddhodana. Although, King Suddhodana was the father of Siddhattha, He was a righteous King of the country called Kapilavatthu in the foothills of the mountains.

Siddhattha didn't even know where to start the story that had happened in the garden but his heart was telling him that he was doing the right thing to save

the Swan. When they arrived in the court, the King out of curiosity asked a question about the case.

‘Devadatta! Could you tell me, what rights have you to keep the bird?’

‘Your Majesty! I shot the bird down, so it should be belong to me.’ Devadatta insisted he had rights over the Swan and looked at Siddhattha and the Swan with angry face. Siddhattha remained still but the Swan hid his head immediately under Siddhattha’s arm out of fear and afraid of Devadatta. The King noticed the Swan was afraid and out of fear hid its face under Siddhattha.

‘Your Majesty! This Swan cannot belong to him.’ Siddhattha spoke up against Devadatta. ‘If I didn’t remove the arrow, the Swan would have died. The Swan owes its life to me.’

Siddhattha’s speech made everyone think and try to find a solution for it. Ministers divided into two

groups. There were plenty of discussion over the Swan case.

‘Devadatta shot the bird, so it should belong to him,’ said one group of ministers.

‘No! It shouldn’t be,’ another group spoke out against it and said, ‘the Swan was saved by Siddhattha. A life should belong to one who saved the life.’

The King, who was listening to the dispute over the Swan quietly, cleared his throat. Everyone immediately went silent and the King spoke up.

‘Siddhattha! What rights have you to keep the bird?’

‘All living creatures belong to those who protect their life. It should not belong to those who destroy, your Majesty. Since, I saved this wounded Swan, it shall belong to its saviour, that is me, Siddhattha.’

Siddhattha courageously stood up and loudly proclaimed. The court went silent for a while on his

clever-ness, love and kindness to the creatures. They all seemed to agree with Siddhattha's rights of ownership.

'I knew that,' said the King Suddhodana to his queen. 'Siddhattha really is a gentle, clever and kind hearted boy.'

'you are right my lord,' replied the Queen. 'Because of his gentle and friendship, Siddhattha has a lot of friends and everyone loves him. Now it's your time to give a decision my lord.'

'What the Siddhattha said is right,' announced the King to the court as a final decision. 'One who saves the life of the wounded Swan has a greater right. Devatatta! The Swan should belong to Siddhattha.'

'Thank you, your Majesty!, said Siddhattha happily and looked at the Swan. 'You are safe now.'

The Swan looked at the Siddhattha's face and also smiled. However, Devadatta wasn't happy with his loss but could do nothing over the King's verdict.

'One day, I will win over you, Siddhattha,' said Devadatta and ran off. However, Siddhattha begged the king to forgive Devadatta. The King agreed.

Siddhattha took good care of the Swan. He carefully nursed the bird until its wound completely cured and healed. When the Swan was able to fly, Siddhattha set the bird free to fly back to the forest and live freely with its own kind happily ever after.

**The moral of the story is:**

All living creatures belong to those who protect their life, not to those who destroy.



## SIDDHATTHA'S LIFE

Prince Siddhattha was born in 543 BC in ancient Nepal. When he was 16 years old, he married with princess Yasodhara. They had a son called Rahula. Prince Siddhattha, was 29, left the palace and went to study for Six years.

He became the Buddha when he was 35 years old. He travelled for 45 years spreading his message. He entered supreme happiness at the age of 80. Now, his message has become the philosophy of Buddhism. His followers are called Buddhists.

To become a Buddhist it is necessary of take three refuse;

1. I go to the Buddha for refuge
2. I go to the dhamma for refuge
3. I got to the Sangha for refuge

As a Buddhist you have to know and practice these five basic rules:

- Not harming any living beings but love every one
- Not taking what doesn't belong to you but share with every one
- Not being greedy but respect each other
- Not telling lies or speaking unkindly
- Not clouding the mind with drink or drugs but being mindful

Buddha teaches that

1. All life knows unhappiness
2. This unhappiness has a cause
3. Unhappiness can be brought to an end
4. The way to bring it to an end