

**BUDDHIST TALES**  
FOR YOUNG AND OLD

# A Gang of Drunkards (Sobriety)

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Once upon a time, when Brahmadata was king, the Enlightenment Being was born in a wealthy family. He became the richest man in Benares.

There also happened to be a gang of drunkards who roamed the streets. All they ever thought about was finding ways to get alcohol, the drug they thought they couldn't live without.

One day, when they had run out of money as usual, they came up with a scheme to rob the richest man in Benares. But they didn't realise that he was the reborn Bodhisatta, so he wouldn't be so easy to fool!

They decided to make a 'Mickey Finn', which is a drink of liquor with a sleeping drug secretly added to it. Their plan was to get the rich man to drink the Mickey Finn. Then when he fell asleep they would rob all his money, jewellery, and even the rich clothes he wore. So they set up a temporary little roadside bar. They put their last remaining liquor into a bottle, and mixed in some strong sleeping pills.

Later the rich man came by on his way to the palace. One of the alcoholics called out to him, "Honourable sir, why not start your day right - by having a drink with us? And the first one is on the house!" Then he poured a glass of the dishonest liquor.



But the Enlightenment Being did not drink any form of alcohol. Nevertheless, he wondered why these drunkards were being so generous with their favourite drug. It just wasn't like them.

He realised it must be some kind of trick. So he decided to teach them a lesson. He said, "It would be an insult to appear before the king in a drunken state, or with even the slightest smell of liquor on my breath. But please be so kind as to wait for me here. I'll see you

again when I return from the palace."

The drunkards were disappointed. They would not be able to drink again as soon as they wanted. But they decided to be patient and wait.

Later that day the rich man came back to the little roadside bar. The alcoholics were getting desperate for a drink. They called him over and said, "Honourable sir, why not celebrate your visit to the king? Have a drink of this fine liquor. Remember, the first one is free!"

But the rich man just kept looking at the liquor bottle and glass. He said, "I don't trust you. That bottle and glass of liquor are exactly as they were this morning. If it were as good as you say it is, you would have tasted some yourselves by now. In fact, you couldn't help but drink it all! I'm no fool. You must have added another drug to the alcohol."

The richest man in Benares went on his way, and the gang of drunkards went back to their plotting and scheming.

**The moral is:** Keep sober - and keep your common sense.