

Sona's Mother and the Thieves
India, Sixth Century BCE

There was a wealthy lady at the time of the Buddha whose son Sona became a Buddhist monk known for his ability to expound the Dharma. Sona came to visit his hometown and so his mother built a pavilion where he could speak to the townspeople. She took her whole household with her to the gathering, leaving only a maid to look after the house.

During the talk, some thieves broke into the house; their leader went to the pavilion and sat near Sona's mother to keep an eye on her. The maid saw the thieves and ran to her mistress, but the lady only said, "Let the thieves take all my money, I don't care; don't disturb me while I'm listening to the Dharma."

When the maid went home she saw the thieves breaking into the room where the gold was kept. She ran back to her mistress. This time Sona's mother shouted, "Let the thieves take whatever they want! Don't you dare worry me again while I'm listening to the Dharma!"

The leader heard everything the lady said. He thought, "If we rob this noble person, we will surely pay a heavy price in some way." So he hurried to the lady's house and made his followers return everything. Then they went back to the pavilion. When Sona finished speaking, the leader told the noble lady what had happened, and they all asked for her forgiveness. Then Sona ordained them into the Buddhist order.