# Ja 7 — Katthahari Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja7.html

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Edited by E. B. Cowell

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Pinned source revision: https://github.com/suttacentral/sc-data/commit/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

Scope: Complete numbered source article from the traditional Jātaka commentary; canonical verses appear in story context. This is not a verse-only edition.

Changes: Converted the pinned SuttaCentral HTML article to plain text; removed inline print page-reference labels and normalized whitespace. The original source retains references.

## Text

“Your son am I.”—This story was told by the Master while at Jetavana about the story of Vasabha-Khattiya, which will be found in the Twelfth Book in the Bhaddasala-jataka. Tradition tells us that she was the daughter of Mahanama Sakka by a slave-girl named Nagamunda, and that she afterwards became the consort of the king of Kosala. She conceived a son by the king; but the king, coming to know of her servile origin, degraded her from her rank, and also degraded her son Vidudabha. Mother and son never came outside the palace.

Hearing of this, the Master at early dawn came to the palace attended by five hundred Brethren , and, sitting down on the seat prepared for him, said, “Sire, where is Vasabha-Khattiya?”

Then the king told him what had happened.

Sire, whose daughter is Vasabha-Khattiya?” “Mahanama’s daughter, sir.” “When she came away, to whom did she come as wife?” “To me, sir.” “Sire, she is a king’s daughter; to a king she is wed; and to a king she bore her son. Wherefore is that son not in authority over the realm which owns his father’s sway? In bygone days, a monarch who had a son by a casual faggot-gatherer gave that son his sovereignty.”

The king asked the Blessed One to explain this. The Blessed One made clear what had been concealed from him by re-birth.

Once on a time in Benares Brahmadatta the king, having gone in great state to his pleasaunce, was roaming about looking for fruits and flowers when he came on a woman who was merrily singing away as she picked up sticks in the grove. Falling in love at first sight, the king became intimate with her, and the Bodhisatta was conceived then and there. Feeling as heavy within as though weighed down with the bolt of Indra, the woman

knew that she would become a mother, and told the king so. He gave her the signet-ring from his finger and dismissed her with these-words—"If it be a girl, spend this ring on her nurture; but if it be a boy, bring ring and child to me."

When the woman's time was come, she bore the Bodhisatta. And when he could run about and was playing in the playground, a cry would arise, "No-father has hit me!" Hearing this, the Bodhisatta ran away to his mother and asked who his father was.

"You are the son of the King of Benares, my boy." "What proof of this is there, mother?" "My son, the king on leaving me gave me this signet-ring and said, 'If it be a girl, spend this ring on her nurture; but if it be a boy, bring ring and child to me.'" "Why then don't you take me to my father, mother?"

Seeing that the boy's mind was made up, she took him to the gate of the palace, and bade their coming be announced to the king. Being summoned in, she entered and bowing before his majesty said, "This is your son, sire."

The king knew well enough that this was the truth, but shame before all his court made him reply, "He is no son of mine." "But here is your signet-ring, sire; you will recognise that." "Nor is this my signet-ring." Then said the woman, "Sire, I have now no witness to prove my words, except to appeal to truth. Wherefore, if you be the father of my child, I pray that he may stay in mid-air; but if not, may he fall to earth and be killed." So saying, she seized the Bodhisatta by the foot and threw him up into the air.

Seated cross-legged in mid-air, the Bodhisatta in sweet tones repeated this stanza to his father, declaring the truth—

Your son am I, great monarch; rear me, Sire!

The king rears others, but much more his child.

Hearing the Bodhisatta thus teach the truth to him from mid-air, the king stretched out his hands and cried, "Come to me, my boy! None, none but me shall rear and nurture you!" A thousand hands were stretched out to receive the Bodhisatta; but it was into the arms of the king and of no other that he descended, seating himself in the king's lap. The king made him viceroy, and made his mother queen-consort. At the death of the king his father, he came to the throne by the title of King Katthavahana—the faggot-bearer—, and after ruling his realm righteously, passed away to fare according to his deserts.

His lesson to the king of Kosala ended, and his two stories told, the Master made the connexion linking them both together, and identified the Birth by saying—"Mahamaya was the mother of those days, King Suddhodana was the father, and I myself King Katthavahana."

The Jātaka, or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births, edited by E.B. Cowell, published by The Cambridge University Press.

Vol. 1, translated by Robert Chalmers, 1895.

Vol. 2, translated by W.H.D. Rouse, 1895.

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Vol. 4, translated by W.H.D. Rouse, 1901.

Vol. 5, translated by H.T. Francis, 1905.

Vol. 6, translated by E.B. Cowell and W.H.D. Rouse, 1907.

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Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.