Ja 113 — Sigala Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja113.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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Edited by E. B. Cowell

Original edition: Cambridge University Press, volume 1, 1895

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

“The drunken jackal.”—This story was told by the Master while at the Bamboo-grove, about Devadatta. The Brethren had assembled in the Hall of Truth and were telling how Devadatta had gone to Gayasisa with five hundred followers, whom he was leading into error by declaring that the Truth was manifest in him “and not in the ascetic Gotama”; and how by his lies he was breaking up the Brotherhood; and how he kept two fast-days a week. And as they sate there talking of the wickedness of Devadatta, the Master entered and was told the subject of their conversation. “Brethren,” said he, “Devadatta was as great a liar in past times as he is now.” So saying, he told this story of the past.

Once on a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born a Tree-sprite in a cemetery grove. In those days a festival was proclaimed in Benares, and the people resolved to sacrifice to the ogres. So they strewed fish and meat about courtyards, and streets, and other places, and set out great pots of strong drink. At midnight a jackal came into the town by the sewer, and regaled himself on the meat and liquor. Crawling into some bushes, he was fast asleep when morning dawned. Waking up and seeing it was broad daylight, he know that he could not make his way back at that hour with safety. So he lay down quietly near the roadside where he could not be seen, till at last he saw a solitary brahmin on his way to rinse his mouth in the tank. Then the jackal thought to himself, “Brahmins are a greedy lot. I must so play on his greediness as to get him to carry me out of the city in his waist-cloth under his outer robe.” So, with a human voice, he cried “Brahmin.”

“Who calls me?” said the brahmin, turning round. “I, brahmin.” “What for?” “I have two hundred gold pieces, brahmin; and if you will hide me in your waist-cloth under your outer robe and so get me out of the city without my being seen, you shall have them all.”

Closing with the offer, the greedy brahmin hid the jackal and carried the beast a little way out of the city. “What place is this, brahmin?” said the jackal. “Oh, it’s such and such a

place," said the brahmin. "Go on a bit further," said the jackal and kept urging the brahmin on always a little further, till at last the cremation-park was reached. "Put me down here," said the jackal; and the brahmin did so. "Spread your robe out on the ground, brahmin." And the greedy brahmin did so.

"And now dig up this tree by the roots," said he, and while the brahmin was at work he walked on to the robe, and dunged and staled on it in five places,—the four corners and the middle. This done, he made off into the wood.

Hereon the Bodhisatta, standing in the fork of the tree, uttered this stanza—

The drunken jackal, brahmin, cheats thy trust!

Thou 'lt find not here a hundred cowry-shells,

Far less thy quest, two hundred coins of gold.

And when he had repeated these verses, the Bodhisatta said to the brahmin, "Go now and wash your robe and bathe, and go about your business." So saying, he vanished from sight, and the brahmin did as he was bidden, and departed very mortified at having been so tricked.

His lesson ended, the Master identified the Birth by saying, "Devadatta was the jackal of those days, and I the Tree-sprite."

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.

Vol. 3, translated by H.T. Francis and R.A. Neil, 1897.

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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