Ja 115 — Anusasika Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja115.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 greed-denouncing bird.”—This story was told by the Master while at Jetavana, about a Sister who gave a warning to others. For we are told that she came of a good Savatthi family, but that from the day of her entrance into the Order she failed of her duty and was filled with a gluttonous spirit; she used to seek alms in quarters of the city unvisited by other Sisters. And dainty food was given her there. Now her gluttony made her afraid that other Sisters might go there too and take away from her part of the food. Casting about for a device to stop them from going and to keep everything to herself, she warned the other Sisters that it was a dangerous quarter, troubled by a fierce elephant, a fierce horse, and a fierce dog. And she besought them not to go there for alms. Accordingly not a single Sister gave so much as a look in that direction.

Now one day on her way through this district for alms, as she was hurrying into a house there, a fierce ram butted her with such violence as to break her leg. Up ran the people and set her leg and brought her on a litter to the convent of the Sisterhood. And all the Sisters tauntingly said her broken leg came of her going where she had warned them not to go.

Not long after the Brotherhood came to hear of this; and one day in the Hall of Truth the Brethren spoke of how this sister had got her leg broken by a fierce ram in a quarter of the city against which she had warned the other Sisters; and they condemned her conduct. Entering the Hall at this moment, the Master asked, and was told, what they were discussing. “As now, Brethren,” said he, “so too in a past time she gave warnings which she did not follow herself; and then as now she came to harm.” So saying, he told this story of the past.

Once on a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born a bird, and growing up became king of the birds and came to the Himalayas with thousands of birds in his train. During their stay in that place, a certain fierce bird used to go in quest

of food along a highway where she found rice, beans, and other grain dropped by passing waggons. Casting about how best-to keep the others from coming there too, she addressed them as follows—"The highway is full of peril. Along it go elephants and horses, waggons drawn by fierce oxen, and such like dangerous things. And as it is impossible to take wing on the instant, don't go there at all." And because of her warning, the other birds dubbed her 'Warner'.

Now one day when she was feeding along the highway she heard the sound of a carriage coming swiftly along the road, and turned her head to look at it. "Oh it's quite a long way off," thought she and went on as before. Up swift as the wind came the carriage, and before she could rise, the wheel had crushed her and whirled on its way. At the muster, the King marked her absence and ordered search to be made for her. And at last she was found cut in two on the highway and the news was brought to the king. "Through not following her own caution to the other birds she has been cut in two," said he, and uttered this stanza—

The greed-denouncing bird, to greed a prey,

The chariot wheels leave mangled on the way.

His lesson ended, the Master identified the Birth by saying, "The warning sister was the bird 'Warner' of those times, and I the King of the birds."

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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