Ja 16 — Tipallattha-Miga Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja16.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

License: Public Domain (original English edition, published 1895–1907)

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

“In all three postures.”—This story was told by the Master while dwelling do the Badarika Monastery in Kosambi, about the Elder Rahula whose heart was set on observing the rules of the Brotherhood.

Once when the Master was dwelling in the Aggalava Temple hard by the town of Alavi, many female lay-disciples and Sisters used to flock thither to hear the Truth preached. The preaching was in the daytime, but as time wore on, the women did not attend, and there were only Brethren and men disciples present. Then the preaching took place in the evening; and at the close the Elder Brethren retired each to his own chamber. But the younger ones with the lay-disciples lay down to rest in the Service-hall. When they fell asleep, loud was the snoring and snorting and gnashing of teeth as they lay. After a short slumber some got up, and reported to the Blessed One the impropriety which they had witnessed. Said he, “If a Brother sleeps in the company of Novices, it is a Pacittiya offence (requiring confession and absolution).” And after delivering this precept he went away to Kosambi.

Thereon the Brethren said to the Reverend Rahula, “Sir, the Blessed One has laid down this precept, and now you will please find quarters of your own.” Now, before this, the Brethren, out of respect for the father and because of the anxious desire of the son to observe the rules of the Brotherhood, had welcomed the youth as if the place were his; they had fitted up a little bed for him, and had given him a cloth to make a pillow with. But on the day of our story they would not even give him house-room, so fearful were they of transgressing. The excellent Rahula went neither to the Buddha as being his father, nor to Sariputta, Captain of the Faith, as being his preceptor, nor to the Great Moggallana as being his teacher, nor to the Elder Ananda as being his uncle; but betook himself to the Buddha’s jakes and took up his abode there as though in a heavenly mansion. Now in a Buddha’s jakes the door is always closely shut: the levelled floor is of perfumed earth; flowers and garlands are festooned round the walls; and all night long a lamp burns there.

But it was not this splendour which prompted Rahula to take up his residence here. Nay, it was simply because the Brethren had told him to find quarters for himself, and because he reverenced instruction and yearned to observe the rules of the Order. Indeed, from time to time the Brethren, to test him, when they saw him coming from quite a distance, used to throw down a hand-broom or a little dust-sweepings, and then ask who had thrown it down, after Rahula had come in. "Well, Rahula came that way," would be the remark, but never did the future Elder say he knew nothing about it. On the contrary, he used to remove the litter and humbly ask pardon of the Brother, nor go away till he was assured that he was pardoned; so anxious was he to observe the rules. And it was solely this anxiety which made him take up his dwelling in the jakes.

Now, though day had not yet dawned, the Master halted at the door of the jakes and coughed 'Ahem.' 'Ahem,' responded the Reverend Rahula. "Who is there?" said the Buddha. "It is I, Rahula," was the reply; and out came the young man and bowed low. "Why have you been sleeping here, Rahula?" "Because I had nowhere to go to. Up till now, sir, the Brethren have been very kind to me; but such is their present fear of erring that they won't give me shelter any more. Consequently, I took up my abode here, because I thought it a spot where I should not come into contact with anybody else."

Then thought the Master to himself, "If they treat even Rahula like this, what will they not do to other youths whom they admit to the Order?" And his heart was moved within him for the Truth. So, at an early hour he had the Brethren assembled, and questioned the Captain of the Faith thus, "I suppose you at all events, Sariputta, know where Rahula is now quartered? '

"No, sir, I do not."

"Sariputta, Rahula was living this day in the jakes. Sariputta, if you treat Rahula like this, what will not be your treatment of other youths whom you admit to the Order? Such treatment will not retain those who join us. In future, keep your Novices in your own quarters for a day or two, and only on the third day let them lodge out, taking care to acquaint yourself with their lodging." With this rider, the Master laid down the precept.

Gathering together in the Hall of Truth, the Brethren spoke of the goodness of Rahula. "See, sirs, how anxious was Rahula to observe the rules. When told to find his own lodging, he did not say, 'I am the son of the Buddha; what have you to do with quarters? You turn out!' No; not a single Brother did he oust, but quartered himself in the jakes."

As they were talking thus, the Master came to the Hall and took his seat on his throne of state, saying, "What is the subject of your talk, Brethren?" "Sir," was the reply, "we were talking of the anxiety of Rahula to keep the rules, nothing else."

Then said the Master, "This anxiety Rahula has shewn not only now, but also in the past, when he had been born an animal." And so saying, he told this story of the past.

Once on a time a certain king of Magadha was reigning in Rajagaha; and in those days the Bodhisatta, having been born a stag, was living in the forest at the head of a herd of deer. Now his sister brought her son to him, saying, “Brother, teach your nephew here the ruses of deer.” “Certainly,” said the Bodhisatta; “go away now, my boy, and come back at such and such a time to be taught.” Punctually at the time his uncle mentioned, the young stag was there and. received instruction in the ruses of deer.

One day as he was ranging the woods he was caught in a snare and uttered the plaintive cry of a captive. Away fled the herd and told the mother of her son’s capture. She came to her brother and asked him whether his nephew had been taught the ruses of deer. “Fear not; your son is not at fault,” said the Bodhisatta. “He has learnt thoroughly deer’s ruses, and will come back straightway to your great rejoicing.” And so saying, he repeated this stanza—

In all three postures—on his back or sides

Your son is versed; he’s trained to use eight hoofs,

And save at midnight never slakes his thirst;

As he lies couched on earth, he lifeless seems,

And only with his under-nostril breathes.

Six tricks my nephew knows to cheat his foes.

Thus did the Bodhisatta console his sister by shewing her how thoroughly her son had mastered the ruses of deer. Meantime the young stag on being caught in the snare did not struggle, but lay down at full length on his side, with his legs stretched out taut and rigid. He pawed up the ground round his hoofs so as to shower the grass and earth about; relieved nature; let his head fall; lolled out his tongue; beslavered his body all over; swelled himself out by drawing in the wind; turned up his eyes; breathed only with the lower nostril, holding his breath with the upper one; and made himself generally so rigid and so stiff as to look like a corpse. Even the blue-bottles swarmed round him; and here and there crows settled.

The hunter came up and smacked the stag on the belly with his hand, remarking, “He must have been caught early this morning; he’s going bad already.” So saying, the man loosed the stag from his bonds, saying to himself, “I’ll cut him up here where he lies, and take the flesh home with me.” But as the man guilelessly set to work to gather sticks and leaves (to make a fire with), the young stag rose to his feet, shook himself, stretched out his neck, and, like a little cloud scudding before a mighty wind, sped swiftly back to his mother.

After repeating what he had said as to Rahula’s having shewn no less anxiety in time past to keep rules than in the present, the Master made the connexion and identified the Birth by saying, “Rahula was the young stag of those days, Uppala-vanna his mother, and I the

stag his uncle."

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.

These translations are in the public domain. You are free to do whatever you like with them.

Scanned, proofed and formatted at sacred-texts.com, January 2006–February 2010, by John Bruno Hare and others. Thanks to the Sacred Texts Archive for making these texts available in digital form.

Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.