Ja 169 — Araka Jātaka

English translation by W. H. D. Rouse.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol2/ja169.html

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Edited by E. B. Cowell

Original edition: Cambridge University Press, volume 2, 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 heart that boundless pity feels,” etc.—This story the Master told at Jetavana, about the Scripture on Lovingkindness.

On one occasion the Master thus addressed the Brotherhood: “Brethren, charity practised with all devotion of thought, meditated upon, increased, made a vehicle of progress, made your one object, practised, well begun, may be expected to produce Eleven Blessings, What are these eleven? Happy he sleeps and happy he awakes; he sees no bad dreams; men love him; spirits guard him; fire, poison, and sword come not near him; quickly he becomes absorbed in mind; his look grows calm; he dies undismayed; without need of further wisdom he goes to Brahma’s heaven. Charity, Brethren, practised with renunciation of one’s wishes”—and so forth—“may be expected to produce these Eleven Blessings. Praising the Charity which holds these Eleven Blessings, Brethren, a Brother ought to show kindness to all creatures, whether expressly commanded or not, he should be a friend to the friendly, aye a friend to the unfriendly, and a friend to the indifferent: thus to all without distinction, whether expressly bidden or not, he should show Charity: he should show sympathy with joy and sorrow and practise equanimity; he should do his work by means of the Four Excellences. By so doing he will go to Brahma’s heaven even without Path or Fruit. Wise men of old by cultivating charity for seven years, have dwelt in Brahma’s heaven seven ages, each with its one period to wax and one to wane.” And he told them a story of the past.

Once upon a time, in a former age, the Bodhisatta was born in a brahmin’s family. When he grew up, he forsook his lusts and embraced the religious life, and attained the Four Excellences. His name was Araka, and he became a Teacher, and lived in Himalaya region, with a large body of followers. Admonishing his band of sages, he said, “A recluse must show Charity, sympathetic must he be both in joy and sorrow, and full of equanimity; for this thought of charity attained by resolve prepares him for Brahma’s heaven.” And explaining the blessing of charity, he repeated these verses—

“The heart that boundless pity feels for all things that have birth,

In heaven above, in realms below, and on this middle earth,

“Filled full of pity infinite, infinite charity,

In such a heart nought narrow or confined can ever be.”

Thus did the Bodhisatta discourse to his pupils on the practice of charity and its blessings. And without a moment’s interruption of his mystic trance, he was born in the heaven of Brahma, and for seven ages, each with his time to wax and wane, he came no more to this world.

After finishing this discourse, the Master identified the Birth: “The band of sages of that time are now the Buddha’s followers; and I myself am he that was the Teacher Araka.”

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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Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.