Ja 17 — Maluta Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja17.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 light or dark.”—This story was told by the Master while at Jetavana about two Brethren who had joined the Brotherhood in their old age. Tradition says that they were living in a forest-dwelling in the Kosala country, and that one was named the Elder Dark and the other the Elder Light. Now one day Light said to Dark, “Sir, at what time does what is called cold appear?” “It appears in the dark half of the month.” And one day Dark said to Light, “Sir, at what time does what is called cold appear?” “It appears in the light half of the month.”

As the pair of them together could not solve the question, they went to the Master and with due salutation asked, saying, “Sir, at what time does what is called cold appear?”

After the Master had heard what they had to say, he said, “Brethren, in bygone days also, I answered for you this same question; but your previous existences have become confused in your minds.” And so saying, he told this story of the past.

Once on a time at the foot of a certain mountain there were living together in one and the same cave two friends, a lion and a tiger. The Bodhisatta too was living at the foot of the same hill, as a hermit.

Now one day a dispute arose between the two friends about the cold. The tiger said it was cold in the dark half of the month, whilst the lion maintained that it was cold in the light half. As the two of them together could not settle the question, they put it to the Bodhisatta. He repeated this stanza

In light or dark half, whensoe’er the wind

Doth blow, ‘Tis cold. For cold is caused by wind.

And, therefore, I decide you both are right.

Thus did the Bodhisatta make peace between those friends.

When the Master had ended his lesson in support of what he had said as to his having answered the same question in bygone days, he preached the Four Truths, at the close whereof both of the Elders won the Fruit of the First Path. The Master shewed the connexion and identified the Birth, by saying, “Dark was the tiger of those days, Light the lion, and I myself the ascetic who answered the question.”

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.