# Ja 19 — Ayacitabhatta Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja19.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

“Take thought of life hereafter.” This story was told by the Master while at Jetavana about the offering of a sacrifice under vow to gods. Tradition says that in those days folk when going a journey on business, used to slay living creatures and offer them as a sacrifice to gods, and set out on their way, after making this vow,—“If we come safely back with a profit, we will give you another sacrifice.” And when they did come safely back with a profit, the Idea that this was all due to gods made them slay a number of living creatures and offer them up as a sacrifice to obtain a release from their vow.

When the Brethren became aware of this, they asked the Blessed One, saying, “Can there be any good in this, sir?”

The Blessed One told this story of the past.

Once on a time in the Kasi country the squire of a certain little village had promised a sacrifice to the Fairy of a banyan-tree which stood at the entrance to the village. Afterwards when he returned, he slew a number of creatures and betook himself to the tree to get released from his vow. But the Tree-Fairy, standing in the fork of its tree, repeated this stanza—

Take thought of life hereafter when you seek

‘Release’; for this release is bondage strict.

Not thus the wise and good release themselves;

For this, the fool’s release, in bondage ends.

Thenceforth, men refrained from such taking of life, and by walking in righteousness thronged thereafter the city of the Devas.

His lesson ended, the Master shewed the connexion and identified the Birth, by saying, “I was the Tree-fairy of those days.”

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.