Ja 193 — Culla-Paduma Jātaka

English translation by W. H. D. Rouse.

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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

"'Tis I—no other," etc.—This story the Master told while dwelling at Jetavana about a backsliding brother. The circumstances will be explained in the Ummadanti Birth. When this brother was asked by the Master whether he were really a backslider, he replied that he was. "Who," said the Master, "has caused you to backslide?" He replied that he had seen a woman dressed up in finery, and overcome by passion he had backslidden. Then the Master said, "Brother, womankind are all ungrateful and treacherous; wise men of old were even so stupid as to give the blood from their own right knee for them to drink, and made them presents all their life long, and yet did not win their hearts." And he told an old-world tale.

Once upon a time, when king Brahmadatta reigned over, Benares, the Bodhisatta was born as his chief queen's son. On his name-day, they called him Prince Paduma, the Lotus Prince. After him came six younger brothers. One after another these seven came of age and married and settled down, living as the king's companions.

One day the king looked out into the palace courts, and as he looked he saw these men with a great following on their way to wait upon himself. He conceived the suspicion that they meant to slay him, and seize his kingdom. So he sent for then, and after this fashion bespake them.

"My sons, you may not dwell in this town. So go elsewhere, and when I die you shall return and take the kingdom which belongs to our family."

They agreed to their father's words; and went home weeping and wailing. "It matters not where we go!" they cried; and taking their wives with them, they left the city, and journeyed along the road. By and bye they came to a wood, where they could get no food or drink. And being unable to bear the pangs of hunger, they determined to save their lives at the women's cost. They seized the youngest brother's wife, and slew her; they cut up her

body into thirteen parts, and ate it. But the Bodhisatta and his wife set aside one portion, and ate the other between them.

Thus they did six days, and slew and ate six of the women; and each day the Bodhisatta set one portion aside, so that he had six portions saved. On the seventh day the others would have taken the Bodhisatta's wife to kill her; but instead he gave them the six portions which he had kept. "Eat these," said he; "to-morrow I will manage." They all did eat the flesh; and when the time came that they fell asleep, the Bodhisatta and his wife made off together.

When they had gone a little space, the woman said, "Husband, I can go no further." So the Bodhisatta took her upon his shoulders, and at sunrise he came out of the wood. When the sun was risen, said she—"Husband, I am thirsty!"

"There is no water, dear wife!" said he.

But she begged him again and again, until he struck his right knee with his sword, and said,

"Water there is none; but sit you down and drink the blood here from my knee." And so she did.

By and bye they came to the mighty Ganges. They drank, they bathed, they ate all manner of fruits, and rested in a pleasant spot. And there by a bend of the river they made a hermit's hut and took up their abode in it.

Now it happened that a robber in the regions of Upper Ganges had been guilty of high treason. His hands and feet, and his nose and ears had been cut off, and he was laid in a canoe, and left to drift down the great river. To this place he floated, groaning aloud with pain. The Bodhisatta heard his piteous wailing.

"While I live," said he, "no poor creature shall perish for me!" and to the river bank he went, and saved the man. He brought him to the hut, and with astringent lotions and ointments he tended his wounds.

But his wife said to herself, "Here is a nice lazy fellow he has fetched out of the Ganges, to look after!" and she went about spitting for disgust at the fellow.

Now when the man's wounds were growing together, the Bodhisatta had him to dwell there in the hut along with his wife, and he brought fruits of all kinds from the forest to feed both him and the woman. And as they thus dwelt together, the woman fell in love with the fellow, and committed sin. Then she desired to kill the Bodhisatta, and said to him, "Husband, as I sat on your shoulder when I came out from the forest, I saw yon hill, and I vowed that if ever you and I should be saved, and come to no harm, I would make offering to the holy spirit of the hill. Now this spirit haunts me: and I desire to pay my offering!"

“Very good,” said the Bodhisatta, not knowing her guile. He prepared an offering, and delivering to her the vessel of offering, he climbed the hill-top. Then his wife said to him,

“Husband, not the hill-spirit, but you are my chief of gods! Then in your honour first of all I will offer wild flowers, and walk reverently round you, keeping you on the right, and salute you: and after that I will make my offering to the mountain spirit.” So saying, she placed him facing a precipice, and pretended that she was fain to salute him in reverent fashion. Thus getting behind him, she smote him on the hack, and hurled him down the precipice. Then she cried in her joy, “I have seen the back of my enemy!” and she came down from the mountain, and went into the presence of her paramour.

Now the Bodhisatta tumbled down the cliff; but he stuck fast in a clump of leaves on the top of a fig tree where there were no thorns. Yet he could not get down the hill, so there he sat among the branches, eating the figs. It happened that a huge Iguana used to climb the hill from the foot of it, and would eat the fruit of this fig tree. That day he saw the Bodhisatta and took to flight. On the next day, he came and ate some fruit on one side of it. Again and again he came, till at last he struck up a friendship with the Bodhisatta.

“How did you get to this place?” he asked; and the Bodhisatta told him how.

“Well, don’t be afraid,” said the Iguana; and taking him on his own back, he descended the hill and brought him out of the forest. There he set him upon the high road, and showed him what way he should go, and himself returned to the forest.

The other proceeded to a certain village, and dwelt there till he heard of his father’s death. Upon this he made his way to Benares. There he inherited the kingdom which belonged to his family, and took the name of King Lotus; the ten rules of righteousness for kings he did not transgress, and he ruled uprightly. He built six Halls of Bounty, one at each of the four gates, one in the midst of the city, and one before the palace; and every day he distributed in gifts six hundred thousand pieces of money.

Now the wicked wife took her paramour upon her shoulders, and came forth out of the forest; and she went a-begging among the people, and collected rice and gruel to support him withal. If she was asked what the man was to her, she would reply, “His mother was sister to my father, he is my cousin; to him they gave me. Even if he were doomed to death I would take my own husband upon my shoulders, and care for him, and beg food for his living!”

“What a devoted wife!” said all the people. And thenceforward they gave her more food than ever. Some of them also offered advice, saying, “Do not live in this way. King Lotus is lord of Benares; he has set all India in a stir by his bounty. It will delight him to see you; so delighted will he be, that he will give you rich gifts. Put your husband in this basket, and make your way to him.” So saying, they persuaded her, and gave her a basket of osiers.

The wicked woman placed her paramour in the basket, and taking it up she repaired to Benares, and lived on what she got at the Halls of Bounty. Now the Bodhisatta used to ride

to an alms-hall upon the back of a splendid elephant richly dight; and after giving alms to eight or ten people, he would set out again for home. Then the wicked woman placed her paramour in the basket, and taking it up, she stood where the king was used to pass. The king saw her. “Who is this?” he asked. “A devoted wife,” was the answer. He sent for her, and recognised who she was. He caused the man to be put down from the basket, and asked her, “What is this man to you?”—“He is the son of my father’s sister, given me by my family, my own husband,” she answered.

“Ah, what a devoted wife!” cried they all: for they knew not the ins and outs of it; and they praised the wicked woman.

“What—is the scoundrel your cousin? did your family give him to you?” asked the king; “your husband, is he?”

She did not recognise the king; and “Yes, my lord!” said she, as bole as you like.

“And is this the king of Benares’ son? Are you not the wife of prince Lotus, the daughter of such and such a king, your name so and so? Did not you drink the blood from my knee? Did you not fall in love with this rascal, and throw me down a precipice? Ah, you thought that I was dead, and here you are with death written upon your own forehead—and here am I, alive!” Then he turned to his courtiers. “Do you remember what I told you, when you questioned me? My six younger brothers slew their six wives and ate them; but I kept my wife unhurt, and brought her to Ganges’ bank, where I dwelt in a hermit’s hut: I hauled a condemned criminal out of the river, and supported him; this woman fell in love with him, and threw me down a precipice, but I saved my life by showing kindness. This is no other than the wicked woman who threw me off the crag: this, and no other, is the condemned wretch!” And then he uttered the following verses:

“‘Tis I—no other, and this quean is she;

The handless knave, no other, there you see;

Quoth she—‘This is the husband of my youth.’

Women deserve to die; they have no truth.

“With a great club beat out the scoundrel’s life

Who lies in wait to steal his neighbour’s wife.

Then take the faithful harlot by and bye,

And shear off nose and ears before she die.”

But although the Bodhisatta could not swallow his anger, and ordained this punishment for them, he did not do accordingly; but he smothered his wrath, and had the basket fixed

upon her head so fast that she could not take it off; the villain he had placed in the same, and they were driven out of his kingdom.

When the Master had ended this discourse, he declared the Truths and identified the Birth—at the conclusion of the Truths the backsliding Brother entered on the Fruit of the First Path—"In those days certain elders were the six brothers, the young lady Cinca was the wife, Devadatta was the criminal, Ananda was the Iguana, and King Lotus was I myself."

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