Ja 199 — Gahapati 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/ja199.html

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Edited by E. B. Cowell

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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

“I like not this,” etc.—This story the Master told, also about a backsliding Brother, during a sojourn in Jetavana, and in the course of his address he said, “Womankind can never be kept right; somehow or other they will sin and trick their husbands.” And then he told the following story.

Once upon a time, in the reign of Brahmadatta, king of Benares, the Bodhisatta was born in the realm of Kasi as a householder’s son: and coming of age he married and settled down. Now his wife was a wicked woman, and she intrigued with the village headman. The Bodhisatta got wind of it, and bethought him how he might put her to the test.

At that time all the grain had been carried away during the rainy season, and there was a famine. But it was the time when the corn had just sprouted; and all the villagers came together, and besought help of their headman, saying, “Two months from now, when we have harvested the grain, we will pay you in kind”; so they got an old ox from him, and ate it.

One day, the headman watched his chance, and when the Bodhisatta was gone abroad he visited the house. Just as the two were happy together, the Bodhisatta came in by the village gate, and set his face towards home. The woman was looking towards the village gate, and saw him. “Why, who’s this?” she wondered, looking at him as he stood on the threshold. “It is he!” She knew him, and she told the headman. He trembled in terror.

“Don’t be afraid,” said the woman, “I have a plan. You know we have had meat from you to eat: make as though you were seeking the price of the meat; I will climb up into the granary; and stand at the door of it, crying. ‘No rice here!’ while you must stand in the middle of the room, and call out insisting, again and again, ‘I have children at home; give me the price of the meat! ‘

So saying, she climbed up to the granary, and sat in the door of it. The other stood in the midst of the house, and cried, “Give me the price of the meat!” while she replied, sitting at the granary door, “There is no rice in the granary; I will give it when the harvest is home: leave me now!”

The goodman entered the house, and saw what they were about.

“This must be that wicked woman’s plan,” he thought, and he called to the headman.

“Sir Headman, when we had some of your old ox to eat, we promised to give you rice for it in two months’ time. Not half a month has passed; then why do you try to make us pay now? That’s not the reason you are here: you must have come for something else. I don’t like your ways. That wicked and sinful woman yonder knows that there is no rice in the garner, but she has climbed up, and there she sits, crying ‘No rice here!’ and you cry ‘Give!’ I don’t like your doings, either of you!” and to make his meaning clear, he uttered these lines—

“I like not this, I like not that; I like not her, I say,

Who stands beside the granary, and cries ‘I cannot pay!’

“Nor you, nor you, Sir! listen now—my means and store are small;

You gave me once a skinny cow, and two months’ grace withal;

Now, ere the day, you bid me pay! I like it not at all.”

So saying, he seized the headman by the lock of hair on the top of his head, dragged him out into the courtyard, threw him down, and as he cried, “I’m the Headman!” mocked him thus—“Damages, please, for injury done to the chattels under another man’s watch and ward!” while he thrashed him till the man was faint. Then he took him by the neck and cast him out of the house. The wicked woman he seized by the hair of her head, pulled her away from the garner, knocked her down, and threatened her—“If you ever do this kind of thing again, I’ll make you remember it!”

From that day forward the headman durst not even look at that house, and the woman did not dare to transgress even in thought.

When this discourse was ended, the Master declared- the Truths, at the conclusion of which the backsliding Brother reached the Fruit of the First Path—“The goodman who punished that headman was I myself.”

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.

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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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