# Ja 213 — Bharu Jātaka

English translation by W. H. D. Rouse.

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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

“The king of Bharu,” etc. This story the Master told while staying at Jetavana, about the king of Kosala.

Now we read that magnificent presents were made to the Blessed One and his company, and they were held in great respect, as it is written: ‘At that time the Blessed One was honoured and revered, respected, reverenced, highly esteemed, and received rich presents—robes, food, lodgement, drugs and medicines, and provisions; and the Brotherhood was honoured, etc. (as before); but the pilgrims of heterodox schools were not honoured, etc. (as before).” Well, the sectaries, finding that honour and gifts diminished, convened a secret meeting for deliberation. “Since the appearance of the Priest Gotama,” they said, “honour and gifts come no more to us, but he has got the best of both. What can be the reason of his good fortune?” Then one of them spoke as follows. “Priest Gotama has the best and chiefest place in all India to live in, and that is the reason of his success.” Then the others said, “If this is the reason, we will make a rival settlement above Jetavana, and then we shall receive presents.” This was the conclusion they came to.

“But,” thought they, “if we make our settlement unknown to the king, the Brethren will prevent us. If he accepts a present, he will not be disinclined to break up their settlement. So we had best bribe him to give us a place for ours.”

So by the intervention of his courtiers, they offered an hundred thousand pieces to the king, with this message; “Great King, we want to make a rival settlement in Jetavana. If the Brethren tell you they won’t permit it, please do not give them any answer.” To this the king agreed, because he wanted the bribe.

After thus conciliating the king, the schismatics got an architect and put the work in hand. There was a good deal of noise about it.

“What is all this great noise and tumult, Ananda?” the Master asked. “The noise,” said he, “is some sectaries who are having a new settlement built.” “That is not a fit place,” he rejoined, “for them to settle. These sectaries are fond of noise; there’s no living with them.” Then he called the Brotherhood together, and bade them go inform the king, and have the building put a stop to.

The Brethren went and stood by the palace door. The king, as soon as he heard of their coming, knew they must be come about stopping the new settlement. But he had been bribed, and so he ordered his attendants to say the king was not at home. The Brethren went back and told the Master. The Master guessed that a bribe had been given, and sent his two chief disciples. But the king, as soon as he heard of their coming, gave the same order as before; and they too returned and told the Master. The Master said, “Doubtless the king is not able to stay at home to-day; he must be out.”

Next forenoon, he dressed himself, took his bowl and robe, and with five hundred brethren walked to the door of the palace. The king heard them come; he descended from the upper story, and took from the Buddha his alms-bowl. Then he gave rice and gruel to him and his followers, and with a salutation sat down on one side.

The Master began an exposition for the king’s behoof, in these words. “Great King, other kings in by-gone days have taken bribes, and then by making virtuous people quarrel together have been dispossessed of their kingdom, and been utterly destroyed.” And then, at his request, the Master told an old-world tale.

Once upon a time, king Bharu was reigning over the kingdom of Bharu. At the same time the Bodhisatta was Teacher of a troop of monks. He was an ascetic who had acquired the Five Supernatural Faculties and the Eight Attainments; and he dwelt a long time in the region of Himalaya.

He came down from Himalaya to buy salt and seasoning, followed by five hundred ascetics; and they came by stages to the city of Bharu. He went a-begging through the city; and then coming forth from it, he sat down by the northern gate, at the root of a banyan tree all covered with twigs and branches. There he made a meal, and there he took up his abode.

Now when that band of hermits had dwelt there by the space of half a moon, there came another Teacher with another five hundred, who went seeking alms about the city, and then came out and sat beneath just such another banyan tree by the south gate, and ate, and dwelt there. And the two bands abode there so long as they would, and then returned again to Himalaya.

When they had gone, the tree by the south gate withered away. Next time, they who had dwelt under it came first, and perceiving that their tree was withered, they first went on their rounds throughout the city, seeking alms, and then passing out by the northern gate, they ate and abode under the banyan tree that was by that gate. And the other band, coming afterwards, went their rounds in the city, and then made ready their meal and

would have dwelt by their own tree. “This is not your tree, ’Tis ours!” they cried; and they began to quarrel about the tree. The quarrel waxed great: these said—“Take not the place where we dwelt aforetime!” and those—“This time are we first come; do not you take it!” So crying aloud each that they were the owners of it, they all went to the king’s palace.

The king ordained that they who had first dwelt there should hold it. Then the others thought—“We will not allow ourselves to say that we have been beaten by these!” They looked about then with divine vision, and observing the body of a chariot fit for an emperor to use, they took it and offered it as a gift to the king, begging him to give them too possession of the tree. He took their gift, and ordained that both should dwell under the tree; and so they were there all masters together. Then the other hermits fetched the jewelled wheels of the same chariot, and offered them to the king, praying him, “O mighty king, make its to possess the tree alone!” And the king did so. Then the ascetics repented, and said: “To think that we, who have overcome the love of riches and the lust of the flesh, and have renounced the world, should fall to quarrelling by reason of a tree, and offer bribes for it! This is no seemly thing.” And they went away in all haste till they came to Himalaya. And all the spirits that dwelt in the realm of Bharu with one miner were angry with the king, and they brought up the sea, and for the space of three hundred leagues they made the kingdom of Bharu as though it were not. And so for the sake of the king of Bharu alone, all the inhabitants of the kingdom perished thus.

When the Teacher had ended this tale, in his perfect wisdom, he uttered the following stanzas—

“The king of Bharu, as old stories say,

Made holy hermits quarrel on a day:

For the which sin it fell that he fell dead,

And with him all his kingdom perished.

“Wherefore the wise do not approve at all

When that desire into the heart doth fall.

He that is free from guile, whose heart is pure,

All that he says is ever true and sure.”

When the Master had ended this story, he added, “Great King, one should not be under the power of desire. Two religious persons ought not to quarrel together.” Then he identified the Birth—“In those days, I was the leader of the sages.”

When the king had entertained the Buddha, and he had departed, the king sent some men and had the rival settlement destroyed, and the sectaries became homeless.

The Jātaka, or Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, edited by E.B. Cowell, published by The Cambridge University Press.

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