# Ja 214 — Punna-Nadi 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/ja214.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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Edited by E. B. Cowell

Original edition: Cambridge University Press, volume 2, 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

“That which can drink,” etc.—This story the Master told while staying at Jetavana, about perfect wisdom.

On one occasion, the Brethren were gathered in the Hall of Truth, talking of the Buddha’s wisdom. “Friend, the Supreme Buddha’s wisdom is great, and wide, cutting, and quick, sharp, penetrating, and full of resource.” The Master came in, and asked what they talked of as they sat there together. They told him. “Not now only,” said he, “is the Buddha wise and resourceful; he was so in days of yore.” And then he told them a story.

Once on a time, while Brahmadatta was king of Benares, the Bodhisatta came into the world as the son of the court chaplain. When he grew up, he studied at Takkasila; and at his father’s death he received the office of chaplain, and he was the king’s counsellor in things human and divine.

Afterwards the king opened his ear to breedbates, and in anger bade the Bodhisatta dwell before his face no more, and sent him away from Benares. So he took his wife and family with him, and abode in a certain village of Kasi. Afterward the king remembered his goodness, and said to himself:

“It is not meet that I should send a messenger to fetch my teacher. I will compose a verse of poetry, and write it upon a leaf; I will cause crow’s flesh to be cooked; and after I have tied up letter and meat in a white cloth, I will seal it with the king’s seal, and send it to him. If he is wise, when he has read the letter and seen that it is crow’s-meat, he will come; if not, then he will not come.” And so he wrote on the leaf this stanza:

“That which can drink when rivers are in flood;

That which the corn will cover out of sight;

That which forebodes a traveller on the road—

O wise one, eat! my riddle read aright."

This verse did the king write upon a leaf, and sent it to the Bodhisatta. He read the letter, and thinking—"The king wishes to see me"—he repeated the second verse—

"The king does not forget to send me crow:

Geese, herons, peacocks,—other birds there are:

If he gives one, he'll give the rest, I know;

If he sent none at all 'twere worser far."

Then he caused his vehicle to be made ready, and went, and looked upon the king. And the king, being pleased, set him again in the place of the king's chaplain.

This discourse ended, the Master identified the Birth—"Ananda was the king in those days, and I was his chaplain."

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.