Ja 216 — Maccha 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/ja216.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

License: Public Domain (original English edition, published 1895–1907)

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

"'Tis not the fire," etc.—This story the Master told during a stay in Jetavana, about one who hankered after a former wife. The Master asked this Brother, "Is it true, Brother, what I hear, that you are lovesick?" "Yes, Sir." "For whom?" "For my late wife." Then the Master said to him: "This wife, Brother, has been the mischief to you. Long ago by her means you came near being spitted and roasted for food, but wise men saved your life." Then he told a tale of the past.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta was king of Benares, the Bodhisatta was his chaplain. Some fishermen drew out a Fish which had got caught in their net, and cast it upon hot sand, saying, "We will cook it in the embers, and eat." So they sharpened a spit. And the Fish fell a-weeping over his mate, and said these two verses:

"'Tis not the fire that burns me, nor the spit that hurts me sore;

But the thought my mate may call me a faithless paramour.

"'Tis the flame of love that burns me, and fills my heart with pain;

Not death is the due of loving; O fishers, free me again!"

At that moment the Bodhisatta approached the river bank; and hearing the Fish's lament, he went up to the fishermen and made them set the Fish at liberty.

This discourse ended, the Master declared the Truths and identified the Birth—at the conclusion of the Truths the lovesick Brother reached the Fruit of the First Path—"The wife was in those days the fish's mate, the lovesick Brother was the fish, and I myself was the 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.

These translations are in the public domain. You are free to do whatever you like with them.

Scanned, proofed and formatted at sacred-texts.com, January 2006–February 2010, by John Bruno Hare and others. Thanks to the Sacred Texts Archive for making these texts available in digital form.

Prepared for SuttaCentral by Bhikkhu Sujato.