Ja 220 — Dhammaddhaja 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

"You look as though," etc.—This was told by the Master while staying at the Bamboo Grove, about attempts to murder him. On this occasion, as before, the Master said, "This is not the first time Devadatta has tried to murder me and has not even frightened me. He did the same before." And he told this story.

Once upon a time reigned at Benares a king named Yasapani, the Glorious. His chief captain was named Kalaka, or Blackie. At that time the Bodhisatta was his chaplain, and had the name of Dhammaddhaja, the Banner of the Faith. There was also a man Chattapani, maker of ornaments to the king. The king was a good king. But his chief captain swallowed bribes in the judging of causes; he was a backbiter; he took bribes, and defrauded the rightful owners.

On a day, one who had lost his suit was departing from the court, weeping and stretching out his arms, when he fell in with the Bodhisatta as he was going to pay his service to the king. Falling at his feet, the man cried out, telling how he had been worsted in his cause: "Although such as you, my lord, instruct the king in the things of this world and the next, the Commander-in-Chief takes bribes, and defrauds rightful owners!"

The Bodhisatta pitied him. "Come, my good fellow," says he, "I will judge your cause for you!" and he proceeded to the court-house. A great company gathered together. The Bodhisatta reversed the sentence, and gave judgement for him that had the right. The spectators applauded. The sound was great. The king heard it, and asked—"What sound is this I hear?"

"My lord king," they answered, "it is a cause wrongly judged that has been judged aright by the wise Dhammaddhaja; that is why there is this shout of applause."

The king was pleased and sent for the Bodhisatta. “They tell me,” he began, “that you have judged a cause?”

“Yes, great king, I have judged that which Kalaka did not judge aright.”

“Be you judge from this day,” said the king; “it will be a joy for my ears, and prosperity for the world!” He was unwilling, but the king begged him—“In mercy to all creatures, sit you in judgement!” and so the king won his consent.

From that time Kalaka received no presents; and losing his gains he spoke calumny of the Bodhisatta before the king, saying, “O mighty King, the wise Dhammaddhaja covets your kingdom!” But the king would not believe; and bade him say not so.

“If you do not believe me,” said Kalaka, “look out of the window at the time of his coming. Then you will see that he has got the whole city into his own hands.”

The king saw the crowd of those that were about him in his judgement hall. “There is his retinue,” thought he. He gave way. “What are we to do, Captain?” he asked.

“My lord, he must be put to death.”

“How can we put him to death without having found him out in some great wickedness?”

“There is a way,” said the other.

“What way?”

“Tell him to do what is impossible, and if he cannot, put him to death for that.”

“But what is impossible to him?”

“My lord king,” replied he, “it takes two years or twice two for a garden with good soil to bear fruit, being planted and tended. Send you for him, and say—‘We want a garden to disport ourselves in to-morrow. Make us a garden!’ This he will not be able to do; and we will slay him for that fault.”

The king addressed himself to the Bodhisatta. “Wise Sir, we have sported long enough in our old garden; now we crave to sport in a new. Make us a garden! If you cannot make it, you must die.”

The Bodhisatta reasoned, “It must be that Kalaka has set the king against me, because he gets no presents.—If I can,” he said to the king, “O mighty king, I will see to it.” And he went home. After a good meal he lay upon his bed, thinking. Sakka’s palace grew hot. Sakka reflecting perceived the Bodhisatta’s difficulty. He made haste to him, entered his chamber, and asked him—“Wise Sir, what think you on’?”—poised the while in mid-air.

“Who are you?” asked the Bodhisatta.

“I am Sakka.”

“The king bids me make a garden: that is what I am thinking upon.”

“Wise Sir, do not trouble: I will make you a garden like the groves of Nandana and Cittalata! In what place shall I make it?”

“In such and such a place,” he told him. Sakka made it, and returned to the city of the gods.

Next day, the Bodhisatta beheld the garden there in very truth, and sought the king’s presence. “O king, the garden is ready: go to your sport!”

The king came to the place, and beheld a garden girt with a fence of eighteen cubits, vermilion tinted, having gates and ponds, beautiful with all manner of trees laden heavy with flowers and fruit! “The sage has done my bidding,” said he to Kalaka: “now what are we to do?”

“O mighty King!” replied he, “if he can make a garden in one night, can he not seize upon your kingdom?”

“Well, what are we to do?”

“We will make him perform another impossible thing.”

“What is that?” asked the king.

“We will bid him make a lake possessed of the seven precious jewels!”

The king agreed, and thus addressed the Bodhisatta:

“Teacher, you have made a park. Make now a lake to match it, with the seven precious jewels. If, you cannot make it, you shall not live!”

“Very good, great King,” answered the Bodhisatta, “I will make it if I can.”

Then Sakka made a lake of great splendour, having an hundred landing-places, a thousand inlets, covered over with lotus plants of five different colours, like the lake in Nandana.

Next clay, the Bodhisatta beheld this also, and told the king: “See, the lake is made!” And the king saw it, and asked of Kalaka what was to be done.

“Bid him, my lord, make a house to suit it,” said he.

“Make a house, Teacher,” said the king to the Bodhisatta, “all of ivory, to suit with the park and the lake: if you do not make it, you must die!”

Then Sakka made him a house likewise. The Bodhisatta beheld it next day, and told the king. When the king had seen it, he asked Kalaka again, what was to do. Kalaka told him to bid the Bodhisatta make a jewel to suit the house. The king said to him, “Wise Sir, make a jewel to suit with this ivory house; I will go about looking at it by the light of the jewel: if you cannot make one, you must die! “Then Sakka made him a jewel too. Next day the Bodhisatta beheld it, and told the king. When the king had seen it, he again asked Kalaka what was to be done.

“Mighty king!” answered he, “I think there is some sprite who does each thing that the Brahmin Dhammaddhaja wishes. Now bid him make something which even a divinity cannot make. Not even a deity can make a man with all four virtues; therefore bid him make a keeper with these four.” So the king said, “Teacher, you have made a park, a lake, and a palace, and a jewel to give light. Now make me a keeper with four virtues, to watch the park; if you cannot, you must die.”

“So be it,” answered he, “if it is possible, I will see to it.” He went home, had a good meal, and lay down. When he awoke in the morning, he sat upon his bed, and thought thus. “What the great king Sakka can make by his power, that he has made. He cannot make a park-keeper with four virtues’. This being so, it is better to die forlorn in the woods, than to die at the hand of other men.” So saying no word to any man, he went down from his dwelling and passed out of the city by the chief gate, and entered the woods, where he sat him down beneath a tree and reflected upon the religion of the good. Sakka perceived it; and in the fashion of a forester he approached the Bodhisatta, saying,

“Brahmin, you are young and tender: why sit you here in this wood, as though you had never seen pain before?” As he asked it, he repeated the first stanza—

“You look as though your life must happy be;

Yet to the wild woods you would homeless go,

Like some poor wretch whose life was misery,

And pine beneath this tree in lonely woe.”

To this the Bodhisatta made answer in the second stanza—

“I look as though my life must happy be;

Yet to the wild woods I would homeless go,

Like some poor wretch whose life was misery,

And pine beneath this tree in lonely woe,

Pondering the truth that all the saints do know.”

Then Sakka said, “If so, then why, Brahmin, are you sitting here?”

“The king,” he made answer, “requires a park-keeper with four good qualities; such an one cannot be found; so I thought—Why perish by the hand of man? I will off to the woods, and die a lonely death. So here I came, and here I. sit.”

Then the other replied, “Brahmin, I am Sakka, king of the gods. By me was your park made, and those other things. A park-keeper possessed of four virtues cannot be made; but in your country there is one Chattapani, who makes ornaments for the head, and he is such a man. If a park-keeper is wanted, go and make this workman the keeper.” With these words Sakka departed to his city divine, after consoling him and bidding him fear no more.

The Bodhisatta went home, and having broken his fast, he

repaired to the palace gates, and there in that spot he saw Chattapani. He took him by the hand, and asked him—“Is it true, as I hear, Chattapani, that you are endowed with the four virtues?”

“Who told you so?” asked the other.

“Sakka, king of the gods.”

“Why did he tell you?” He recounted all, and told the reason. The other said,

“Yes, I am endowed with the four virtues.” The Bodhisatta taking him by the hand led him into the king’s presence. “Here, mighty monarch, is Chattapani, endowed with four virtues. If there is need of a keeper for the park, make him keeper.”

“Is it true, as I hear,” the king asked him, “that you have four virtues?”

“Yes, mighty king.”

“What are they? “he asked.

“I envy not, and drink no wine;

No strong desire, no wrath is mine,”

said he.

“Why, Chattapani,” cried the king, “did you say you have no envy?”

“Yes, O king, I have no envy.”

“What are the things you do not envy?”

“Listen, my lord!” said he; and then he told how he felt no envy in the following lines —

“A chaplain once in bonds I threw—

Which thing a woman made me do:

He built me up in holy lore;

Since when I never envied more.”

Then the king said, “Dear Chattapani, why do you abstain from strong drink?” And the other answered in the following verse —

“Once I was drunken, and I ate

My own son’s flesh upon my plate;

Then, touched with sorrow and with pain,

Swore never to touch drink again.”

Then the king said, “But what, dear sir, makes you indifferent, without love?” The man explained it in these words —

“King Kitavasa was my name;

A mighty king was I;

My boy the Buddha’s basin broke

And so he had to die.”

Said the king then, “What was it, good friend, that made you to be without anger?” And the other made the matter clear in these lines:

“As Araka, for seven years

I practised charity;

And then for seven ages dwelt

In Brahma’s heaven on high.”

When Chattapani had thus explained his four attributes, the king made a sign to his attendants. And in an instant all the court, priests and laymen and all, rose up, and cried out upon Kalaka—“Fie, bribe-swallowing thief and scoundrel! You couldn’t get your bribes, and so you would murder the wise man by speaking ill of him!” They seized him by hand and foot, and bundled him out of the palace; and catching up whatever they could get hold

of, this a stone, and this a staff, they broke his head and did him to death: and dragging him by the feet they cast him upon a dunghill.

Thenceforward the king ruled in righteousness, until he passed away according to his deserts.

This discourse ended, the Master identified the Birth—"Devadatta was the Commander Kalaka, Sariputta was the artisan Chattapani, and I was Dhammaddhaja."

The free are bound, when folly has her say;

When wisdom speaks, the bond go free away.

Just as in the Birth now spoken of, this Chattapani became king. The queen intrigued with sixty-four of the slaves. She tempted the Bodhisatta, and when he would not consent she tried to ruin him by speaking calumny of him; then the king threw him into prison. The Bodhisatta was brought before him bound, and explained the real state of the case. Then he was set free himself; and then he got the king to release all those slaves who had been imprisoned, and advised him to forgive both the queen and them. All the rest is to be understood exactly as explained above. It was in reference to this he said

"A chaplain once in bonds I threw—

Which thing a woman made me do:

He built me up in holy lore;

Since when I never envied more."

But then I thought, 'I have avoided sixteen thousand women, and I cannot satisfy this one in the way of passion. Such is the anger of women, hard to satisfy. It is like being angry, saying, 'Why is it dirty?' when a worn garment is dirty; it is like being angry, saying, 'Why does it become like this?' when after s meal some passes into the draught. I made a resolve that henceforth no envy should arise in me by way of passion, lest I should fail to become a saint. From that time I have been free from envy. This is the point of saying, 'Since when I never envied more.'"

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