Ja 226 — Kosiya 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/ja226.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

“There is a time,” etc.—A story told by the Master at Jetavana, about the king of Kosala. This king started to quell a border rising at a bad season of the year. The circumstances have been described already. The Master as before told the king a story.

Once on a time, the king of Benares having started for the field of war at an unseasonable time, set up a camp in his park. At that time an Owl entered a thicket of bamboos, and hid in it. There came a flock of Crows: “We will catch him,” said they, “so soon as he shall come out.” And they compassed it around. Out he came before his time, nor did he wait until the sun should set; and tried to make his escape. The crows surrounded him, and pecked him with their beaks till he fell to the ground. The king asked the Bodhisatta: “Tell me, wise sir, why are the crows attacking this owl?” And the Bodhisatta made answer, “They that leave their dwelling before the right time, great king, fall into just such misery as this. Therefore before the time one should not leave one’s dwelling place.” And to make the matter clear, he uttered this pair of verses:

“There is a time for every thing: who forth from home will go

One man or many, out of time, will surely meet some woe;

As did the Owl, unlucky fowl! pecked dead by many a crow.

“Who masters quite each rule and rite; who others’ weakness knows;

Like wise owls, he will happy be, and conquer all his foes.”

When the king heard this, he turned back home again.

This discourse ended, the Master identified the Birth—“Ananda was then the king, and the wise courtier 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.

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.