Ja 229 — Palayi 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/ja229.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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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

“Lo, my elephants,” etc.—This story the Master told at Jetavana, about a mendicant, with vagrant tastes.

He traversed the whole of India for the purpose of arguing, and found no one to contradict him. At last he got as far as Savatthi, and asked was there any one there who could argue with him. The people said, “There is One who could argue with a thousand such—all-wise, chief of men, the mighty Gotama, lord of the faith, who bears down all opposition, there is no adversary in all India who can dispute with Him. As the billows break upon the shore, so all arguments break against his feet, and are dashed to spray.” Thus they described the qualities of the Buddha.

“Where is he now?” asked the mendicant. He was at Jetavana, they replied. Now I’ll get up a disputation with him!” said the mendicant. So attended by a large crowd he made his way to Jetavana. On seeing the gate towers of Jetavana, which Prince Jeta had built at a cost of ninety millions of money, he asked whether that was the palace where the Priest Gotama lived. The gateway of it, they said. “If this be the gateway, what will the dwelling be like!” he cried. “There’s no end to the perfumed chambers!” the people said. “Who could argue with such a priest as this?” he asked; and hurried off at once.

The crowd shouted for joy, and thronged into the park. “What brings you here before your time?” asked the Master. They told him what had happened. Said he, “This is not the first time, laymen, that he hurried away at the mere sight of the gateway of my dwelling. He did the same before.” And at their request, he told an old-world tale.

Once upon a time, it befel that the Bodhisatta reigned king in Takkasila, of the realm of Gandhara, and Brahmadatta in Benares. Brahmadatta resolved to capture Takkasila; wherefore with a great host he set forth, and took up a position not far from the city, and set his army in array: “Here be the elephants, here the horses, the chariots here, and here

the footmen: thus do ye charge and hurl with your weapons; as the clouds pour forth rain, so pour ye forth a rain of arrows!" and he uttered this pair of stanzas—

"Lo, my elephants and horses, like the storm-cloud in the sky!

Lo, my surging sea of chariots shooting arrow-spray on high!

Lo, my host of warriors, striking sword in hand, with blow and thrust,

Closing in upon the city, till their foes shall bite the dust!

"Rush against them—fall upon them! shout the war-cry—loudly sing!

While the elephants in concert raise a clamorous trumpeting!

As the thunder and the lightning flash and rumble in the sky,

So be now your voice uplifted in the loud long battle-cry!"

So cried the king. And he made his army march, and came before the gate of the city; and when he saw the towers on the city gate, he asked whether was that the king's dwelling. "That," said they, "is the gate tower." "If the gate tower be such as this, of what sort will the king's palace be?" he asked. And they replied, "Like to Vejayanta, the palace of Sakka!" On hearing it, the king said, "With so glorious a king we shall never be able to fight!" And having seen no more than the tower set upon the city gate, he turned and fled away, and came again to Benares.

This discourse ended, the Master identified the Birth—"Our mendicant gadabout was then the king of Benares, and I was the king of Takkasila 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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