Ja 236 — Baka 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/ja236.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

“See that twice-born bird,” etc.—This story the Master told while staying in Jetavana, about a hypocrite. When he was brought before the Master, the Master said, “Brethren, he was a hypocrite of old just as he is now,” and told the following story.

Once on a time, when Brahmadatta was king of Benares, the Bodhisatta became a Fish in a certain pond in the Himalaya region, and a great shoal went with him. Now a Crane desired to eat the fish. So in a place near the pond he drooped his head, and spread out his wings, and looked vacantly, vacantly at the fish, waiting till they were off their guard. At the same moment the Bodhisatta with his shoal came to that place in search of food. And the shoal of fish on seeing the crane uttered the first stanza—

“See that twice-born bird, how white—

Like a water-lily seeming;

Wings outspread to left and right—

Oh, how pious! dreaming, dreaming!”

Then the Bodhisatta looked, and uttered the second stanza:

“What he is ye do not know,

Or you would not sing his praises.

He is our most treacherous foe;

That is why no wing he raises.”

Thereupon the fish splashed in the water and drove the crane away.

When this discourse was ended, the Master identified the Birth—“This hypocrite was the Crane, and I was the chief of the shoal of fish.”

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.