Ja 238 — Ekapada 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/ja238.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

“Tell me one word,” etc.—This story the Master told in Jetavana, about a certain landowner.

We are told that there was a landowner who lived at Savatthi. One day, his son sitting on his hip asked him what is called the “Door “ question. He replied, “That question requires a Buddha; nobody else can answer it.” So he took his son to Jetavana, and saluted the Master. “Sir,” said he, “as my son sat on my hip, he asked me the question called the ‘Door.’ I didn’t know the answer, so here I am to ask you to give it.” Said the Master, “This is not the first time, layman, that the lad has been a seeker after the way to accomplish his ends, and asked wise men this question; he did so before, and wise men in olden days gave him the answer; but by reason of the dimness caused by rebirth, he has forgotten it.” And at his request the Master told a tale of the olden time.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta came into this world as a rich merchant’s son. He grew up, and when in course of time the father died, he took his father’s place as a merchant.

And his son, a young boy, sitting on his hip, asked him a question, “Father,” said he, “tell me a thing in one word which embraces a wide range of meaning;” and he repeated the first stanza—

“Tell me one word that all things comprehends:

By what, in short, can we attain our ends?”

His father replied with the second—

“One thing for all things precious—that is skill:

Add virtue and add patience, and you will

Do good to friends and to your foes do ill."

Thus did the Bodhisatta answer his son's question. The son used the way which his father pointed out to accomplish his purposes, and by and bye he passed away to fare according to his deserts.

When this discourse was ended, the Master declared the Truths and identified the Birth—at the conclusion of the Truths father and son reached the Fruit of the First Path—"This man was then the son, and I was the merchant of Benares 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.