Ja 271 — Udapana-Dusaka 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/ja271.html

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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

“This well a forest-anchorite,” etc.—This story the Master told whilst dwelling at Isipatana, about a Jackal that fouled a well.

We learn that a Jackal used to foul a well where the Brethren used to draw water, and then used to make off. One clay the novices pelted him with clods of earth, and made it uncomfortable for him. After that he never came to look at the place again.

The Brethren heard of this and began to discuss it in the Hall of Truth. “Friend, the jackal that used to foul our well has never come near it since the novices chased him away with clods!” The Master came in, and asked what they were talking about now as they sat together. They told him. Then he replied, “Brethren, this is not the first time that this jackal fouled a well. He did the sane before;” and then he told an old-world tale.

Once on a time, in this place near Benares called Isipatana was that very well. At that time the Bodhisatta was born of a good family. When he grew up he embraced the religious life, and with a body of followers dwelt at Isipatana. A certain Jackal fouled the well as has been described, and took to his heels. One day, the ascetics surrounded him, and having caught him somehow, they led him before the Bodhisatta. He addressed the Jackal in the lines of the first stanza—

“This well a forest-anchorite has made

Who long has lived a hermit in the glade.

And after all his trouble and his toil

Why did you try, my friend, the well to spoil?”

On hearing this, the Jackal repeated the second stanza—

“This is the law of all the Jackal race,

To foul when they have drunk in any place:

My sires and grandsires always did the same;

So there is no just reason for your blame.”

Then the Bodhisatta replied with the third:

“If this is ‘law’ in jackal polity

I wonder what their ‘lawlessness’ can be!

I hope that I have seen the last of you,

Your actions, lawful and unlawful too.”

Thus the Great Being admonished him, and said, “Do not go there again.” Thenceforward he did not even pause to look at it.

When the Master had ended this discourse he declared the Truths and identified the Birth—“The Jackal that fouled the well is the same in both cases; and I was the chief of the ascetic band.”

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.