# Ja 279 — Satapatta 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/ja279.html

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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

“As the youth upon his way,” etc. This story the Master told in Jetavana, about Panduka and Lohita. Of the Six Heretics, two—Mettiya and Bhummaja—lived hard by Rajagaha; two, Assaji and Punabbasu, near Kitagiri, and at Jetavana near Savatthi the two others, Panduka and Lohita. They questioned matters laid down in the doctrine; whoever were their friends and intimates, they would encourage, saying, “You are no worse than these, brother, in birth, lineage, or character; if you give up your opinions, they will have much the better of you,” and by saying this kind of thing they prevented their giving up their opinions, and thus strifes and quarrels and contentions arose. The Brethren told this to the Blessed One. The Blessed One assembled the Brethren for that cause, to make explanation; and causing Panduka and Lohita to be summoned, addressed them: “Is it true, Brethren, that you really yourselves question certain matters, and prevent people from giving up their opinions?” “Yes,” they replied. “Then,” said he, “your behaviour is like that of the Man and the Crane;” and he told them an old-world tale.

Once on a time, when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born to a certain family in a Kasi village. When he grew up, instead of earning a livelihood by farming or trade, he gathered five hundred robbers, and became their chief, and lived by highway robbery and housebreaking.

Now it so happened that a landowner had given a thousand pieces of money to some one, and died before receiving it back again. Some time after, his wife lay on her deathbed, and addressing her son, said,

“Son, your father gave a thousand pieces of money to a man, and died without getting it back; if I die too, he will not give it to you. Go, while I yet live, get him to fetch it and give it back.”

So the son went, and got the money.

The mother died; but she loved her son so much, that she suddenly reappeared as a jackal on the road by which he was coming. At that time, the robber chief with his band lay by the road in wait to plunder travellers. And when her son had got to the entrance of the wood, the Jackal returned again and again, and sought to stay him; saying, “My son, don’t enter the wood! there are robbers there, who will slay thee and take thy money!

But the man understood not what she meant. “Ill luck!” said he, “here’s a jackal trying to stop my way!” he said; and he drove her off with sticks and clods, and into the wood he went.

And a crane flew towards the robbers, crying out—“Here’s a man with a thousand pieces in his hand! Kill him, and take them!” The young fellow did not know what it was doing, so he thought, “Good luck! here’s a lucky bird! now there is a good omen for me!” He saluted respectfully, crying, “Give voice, give voice, my lord!”

The Bodhisatta, who knew the meaning of all sounds, observed what these two did, and thought: “Yon jackal must be the man’s mother; so she tries to stop him, and tell him that he will be killed and robbed; but the crane must be some adversary, and that is why it says ‘Kill him, and take the money;’ and the man does not know what is happening, and drives off his mother, who wishes his welfare, while the crane, who wishes him ill, he worships, under the belief that it is a well-wisher. The man is a fool.”

(Now the Bodhisattas, even though they are great beings, sometimes take the goods of others by being born as wicked men; this they say comes from a fault in the horoscope.)

So the young man went on, and by and bye fell in with the robbers. The Bodhisatta caught him, and “Where do you live?” said he.

“In Benares.”

“Where have you been?”

“There was a thousand pieces due to me in a certain village; and that is where I have been.”

“Did you get it?”

“Yes, I did.”

“Who sent you?”

“Master, my father is dead, and my mother is ill; it was she sent me, because she thought I should not get it if she were dead.”

“And do you know what has happened to your mother now?”

“No, master.”

“She died after you left; and so much did she love you, that she at once became a jackal, and kept trying to stop you for fear you should get killed. She it was that you scared away. But the crane was an enemy, who came and told us to kill you, and take your money. You are such a fool that you thought your mother was an illwisher, when she wished you well, and thought the crane was a wellwisher when it wished ill to you. He did you no good, but your mother was very good to you. Keep your money, and be off!” And he let him go.

When the Master had finished this discourse, he repeated the following stanzas:

“As the youth upon his way

Thought the jackal of the wood

Was a foe, his path to stay,

While she tried to do him good:

That false crane his true friend deeming

Which to ruin him was scheming:

“Such another, who is here,

Has his friends misunderstood;

They can never win his ear

Who advise him for his good.

“He believes when others praise—

Awful terrors prophesying:

As the youth of olden days

Loved the crane above him flying.”

When the Master had enlarged upon this theme, he identified the Birth: “At that time the robber chief was I myself.”

The friend who robs another without ceasing;

He that protests, protests incessantly;

The friend who flatters for the sake of pleasing;

The boon companion in debauchery;

These four the wise as enemies should fear,

And keep aloof, if there be danger near.

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.

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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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