Ja 286 — Saluka 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/ja286.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

“Envy not what Celery eats” etc.—This story the Master told in Jetavana, about the temptation springing from a fat girl. The circumstances will be explained in the Cullanaradakassapa story. So the Master asked this brother whether it was true he had fallen in love. Yes, he said. “With whom?” the Master asked. “With a fat girl.” “That woman, brother,” said the Master, “is your bane; long ago, as now, you became food for the crowd through your desire to marry her.” Then at the request of the brethren he told an old-world tale.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, the Bodhisatta was an ox named Big Redcoat, and he had a young brother called Little Redcoat. Both of them worked for a family in some village.

There was in this family a grown-up girl, who was asked in marriage by another family. Now in the first family a pig called Saluka or Celery, was being fatted, on purpose to serve for a feast on the wedding-day; it used to sleep in a sty.

One day, Little Redcoat said to his brother, “Brother, we work for this family, and we help them to get their living. Yet they only give us grass and straw, while they feed you pig with rice porridge, and let it sleep in a sty; and what can it do for them?”

“Brother,” said Big Redcoat, “don’t covet his porridge. They want to make a feast of him on our young lady’s wedding-day, that’s why they are fattening him up. Wait a few days, and you’ll see him dragged out of his sty, killed, chopped into bits, and eaten up by the visitors.” So saying, he composed the first two stanzas:

“Envy not what Celery eats;

Deadly is the food he gets.

Be content and eat your chaff:

It means long life on your behalf.

“By and bye the guest will come,

With his gossips all and some.

All chopt up poor Celery

With his big flat snout will lie.”

A few days after, the wedding guests came, and Saluka was killed and made a meal of. Both oxen, seeing what became of him, thought their own chaff was the best.

The Master, in his perfect wisdom, repeated the third stanza by way of explanation:

“When they saw the flat-snout lie

All chopt up, poor Celery,

Said the oxen, Best by half

Surely is our humble chaff!”

When the Master had finished this discourse, he declared the Truths, and identified the Birth—at the conclusion of the Truths, the Brother in question attained the fruition of the First Path—“At that time, the stout girl was the same, the lovesick brother was Saluka, Ananda was Little Redcoat, and I was Big Redcoat 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.