Ja 299 — Komaya-Putta 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/ja299.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

“Aforetime you were used,” etc.—This story the Master told in Pubbarama, about some Brethren who were rude and rough in their manners. These Brethren, who lived on the floor below that where the Master was, talked of what they had seen and heard, and were quarrelsome and abusive. The Master called Mahamoggallana to him, and bade him go startle them. The Elder rose in the air, and just touched the foundation of the house with his great toe. It shook to the furthest edge of ocean! The Brothers were frightened to death, and came and stood outside. Their rough behaviour became known among the Brethren. One day they got to talking about it in the Hall of Truth. “Friend, there are some Brethren who have retired to this house of salvation, who are rough and rude; they do not see the impermanence, sorrow and unreality of the world, nor do their duty.” The Master came in, and asked what they were discussing as they sat there. They told him. “This is not the first time, Brethren,” said he, “that they have been rough and rude. They were the same before.” And he told them an old-world tale.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta reigned king in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born as a brahmin’s son in a village. They named him Komayaputta. By and bye he went out and embraced the religious life in the region of Himalaya. There were some frivolous ascetics who had made a hermitage in that region, and there they lived. But they did not take the means to induce religious ecstasy. They fetched the fruits from the woods, to eat; then they spent the time laughing and joking together. They had a monkey, rude-mannered like themselves, which gave them endless amusement by his grimaces and antics.

Long they lived in this place, till they had to go amongst men again to get salt and condiments. After they went away, the Bodhisatta lived in their dwelling-place. The monkey played his pranks for him as he had done for the others. The Bodhisatta snapt his fingers at him, and gave him a lecture, saying, “One who lives with well-trained ascetics ought to behave properly, ought to be well-advised in his actions, and devoted to meditation.” After that, the monkey was always virtuous and well-behaved.

After this, the Bodhisatta moved away. The other ascetics returned with their salt and condiments. But the monkey no longer played his pranks for them. “What’s this, my friend?” they asked. “Why don’t you make sport, as you used to do?” One of them repeated the first stanza:

“Aforetime you were used to play

Where in this hut we hermits stay.

O monkey! as a monkey do;

When you are good we love not you.”

On hearing this, the Monkey repeated the second stanza:

“All perfect wisdom by the word

Of wise Komaya I have heard.

Think me not now as I was late

Now ’Tis my love to meditate.”

Hereupon the anchorite repeated the third:

“If seed upon the rock you sow,

Though rain should fall, it’ will not grow.

You may hear perfect wisdom still;

But meditate you never will.”

When the Master had ended this discourse, he declared the Truths, and identified the Birth: “At that time these Brothers were the frivolous anchorites, but Komayaputta was I 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.