Ja 30 — Munika Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol1/ja30.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

“Then envy not poor Munika.”—This story was told by the Master while at Jetavana about being seduced by a plump young woman, as will be related in the Thirteenth Book in the Culla-Narada-Kassapa-jataka.

Then the Master asked that Brother, saying, “Is it true, Brother, as they say, that you are passion-test?” “It is true, sir,” was the reply. “Brother,” said the Master, “she is your bane; even in bygone days, you met your end and were made into a relish for the company on her marriage-day.” And so saying, he told this story of the past.

Once on a time, when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life as an ox, named Big Red, on the squire’s estate in a certain hamlet. And he had a younger brother who was known as Little Red. There were only these two brothers to do all the draught-work of the family. Also, the squire had an only daughter, whose hand was asked in marriage for his son by a gentleman of the town. And the parents of the girl, with a view to furnishing dainty fare for the wedding guests, began to fatten up a pig named Munika.

Observing this, Little Red said to his brother, “All the loads that have to be drawn for this household are drawn by you and me, my brother; but all they give us for our pains is sorry grass and straw to eat. Yet here is the pig being victualled on rice! What can be the reason why he should be treated to such fare?”

Said his brother, “My dear Little Red, envy him not; for the pig eats the food of death. It is but to furnish a relish for the guests at their daughter’s wedding, that the family are feeding up the pig. Wait but a little time and the guests will be coining. Then will you see that pig lugged out of his quarters by the legs, killed, and in process of conversion into curry.” And so saying, he repeated this stanza—

Then envy not poor Munika; ’Tis death

He eats. Contented munch your frugal chaff,—

The pledge and guarantee of length of days.

Not long afterwards the guests did arrive; and Munika was killed and cooked into all manner of dishes. Said the Bodhisatta to Little Red, “Did you see Munika, dear brother?” “I have indeed seen, brother, the outcome of Munika’s feasting. Better a hundred, nay a thousand, times than such food is ours, though it be but grass, straw, and chaff; for our fare harms us not, and is a pledge that our lives will not be cut short.”

When he had ended his lesson to the effect that the Brother had thus in bygone days been brought to his doom by that young woman and had been made into a relish for the company , he preached the Truths, at the close whereof the passion-tost Brother reached the First Path of Salvation. Also the Master shewed the connexion and identified the Birth by saying, “The passion-tost Brother was the pig Munika of those days, the young woman is the same in both cases, Ananda was Little Red, and I myself Big Red.”

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.