Ja 313 — Khantivadi Jātaka

English translation by H. T. Francis and R. A. Neil.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol3/ja313.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

“Whoso cut of,” etc.—This story the Master, while dwelling at Jetavana, told about a wrathful Brother. The incident that gave rise to the story has been already described. The Master asked that Brother, saying, “Why after taking orders under the dispensation of the Buddha who knows not what wrath is, do you show anger? Wise men in bygone days, though they suffered a thousand stripes, and had their hands and feet and ears and nose cut off, showed no anger against another.” And he then told a story of the olden time.

Once upon a time a king of Kasi named Kalabu reigned at Benares. At that time the Bodhisatta came to life in a brahmin family endowed with eighty crores of treasure, in the form of a youth named Kundakakumara. And when he was of age, he acquired a knowledge of all the sciences at Takkasila and afterwards settled down as a householder.

On the death of his parents, looking at his pile of treasure he thought: “My kinsmen who amassed this treasure are all gone without taking it with them: now it is for me to own it and in my turn to depart.” Then he carefully selected persons, who by virtue of their almsgiving deserved it, and gave all his wealth to them, and entering the Himalaya country he adopted the ascetic life. There he dwelt a long time, living on wild fruits. And descending to the inhabited parts for the sake of procuring salt and vinegar he gradually made his way to Benares, where he took up his abode in the royal park. Next day he went his rounds in the city for alms, till he came to the door of the commander-in-chief. And he being pleased with the ascetic for the propriety of his deportment, brought him into the house and fed him with the food prepared for himself. And having gained his consent he got him to take up his abode in the royal park.

Now one day king Kalabu being inflamed with strong drink came into the park in great pomp, surrounded by a company of dancers. Then he had a couch spread on the royal seat of stone, and lay with his head on the lap of a favourite of the harem, while the nautch girls who were skilful in vocal and instrumental music and in dancing provided a musical

entertainment—So great was his magnificence, like to that of Sakka, Lord of heaven—And the king fell asleep. Then the women said, “He for whose sake we are providing music, is gone to sleep. What need is there for us to sing?” Then they cast aside their lutes and other musical instruments hither and thither, and set out for the garden, where tempted on by the flowers and fruit-bearing shrubs they were soon disporting themselves.

At this moment the Bodhisatta was seated in this garden, like a royal elephant in the pride of his vigour, at the foot of a flowering Sal tree, enjoying the bliss of retirement from the world. So these women in wandering about came upon him and said, “Come hither, ladies, and let us sit down and hear somewhat from the priest who is resting at the foot of this tree, until the king awakes.” Then they went and saluted him and sitting in a circle round about him, they said, “Tell us something worth hearing.” So the Bodhisatta preached the doctrine to them.

Meanwhile the royal favourite with a movement of her body woke up the king. And the king on waking up, and not seeing the women asked, “Where are those wretches gone?” “Your Highness,” she said, “they are gone away and are sitting in attendance on a certain ascetic.” The king in a rage seized his sword and went off in haste, saying, “I will give this false ascetic a lesson.” Then those of the women that were most in favour, when they saw the king coming in a rage, went and took the sword from the king’s hand and pacified him. Then he came and stood by the Bodhisatta and asked, “What doctrine are you preaching, Monk?” “The doctrine of patience, Your Majesty,” he replied. “What is this patience?” said the king. “The not being angry, when men abuse you and strike you and revile you.” Said the king, “I will see now the reality of your patience,” and he summoned his executioner. And he in the way of his office took an axe and a scourge of thorns, and clad in a yellow robe and wearing a red garland, came and saluted the king and said, “What is your pleasure, Sire?” “Take and drag off this vile rogue of an ascetic,” said the king, “and throwing him on the ground, with your lash of thorns scourge him before and behind and on both sides, and give him two thousand stripes.” This was done. And the Bodhisatta’s outer and inner skins were cut through to the flesh, and the blood flowed. The king again asked, “What doctrine do you preach, Monk?” “The doctrine of patience, Your Highness,” he replied. “You fancy that my patience is only skin deep. It is not skin deep, but is fixed deep within my heart, where it cannot be seen by you, Sire.” Again the executioner asked, “What is your pleasure, Sire?” The king said, “Cut off both the hands of this false ascetic.” So he took his axe, and placing the victim within the fatal circle, he cut off both his hands. Then the king said, “Off with his feet,” and his feet were chopped off. And the blood flowed from the extremities of his hands and feet like lac juice from a leaking jar. Again the king asked what doctrine he preached. “The doctrine of patience, Your Highness,” he replied. “You imagine, Sire, that my patience dwells in the extremities of my hands and feet. It is not there, but it is deep seated somewhere else.” The king said, “Cut off his nose and ears.” The executioner did so. His whole body was now covered with blood. Again the king asked of his doctrine. And the asetic said, “Think not that my patience is seated in the tips of my nose and ears: my patience is deep seated within my heart.” The king said, “Lie down, false Monk, and thence exalt your patience.” And so saying, he struck the Bodhisatta above the heart with his foot, and betook himself off.

When he was gone, the commander-in-chief wiped off the blood from the body of the Bodhisatta, putting bandages on the extremities of his hands, feet, ears and nose, and then having gently placed him on a seat, he saluted him and sitting on one side he said, “If, Reverend Sir, you would be angry with one who has sinned against you, be angry with the king, but with no one else.” And making this request, he repeated the first stanza—

Whoso cut off thy nose and ear, and lopped off foot and hand,

With him be wroth, heroic soul, but spare, we pray, this land.

The Bodhisatta on hearing this uttered the second stanza—

Long live the king, whose cruel hand my body thus has marred,

Pure souls like mine such deeds as these with anger ne’er regard.

And just as the king was leaving the garden and at the very moment when be passed out of the range of the Bodhisatta’s vision, the mighty earth that is two hundred and forty thousand leagues in thickness split in two, like unto a strong stout cloth garment, and a flame issuing forth from Avici seized upon the king, wrapping him up as it were with a royal robe of scarlet wool. Thus did the king sink into the earth just by the garden gate and was firmly fixed in the great Hell of Avici. And the Bodhisatta died on that same day. And the king’s servants and the citizens came with perfumes and wreaths and incense in their hands and performed the Bodhisatta’s obsequies. And some said that the Bodhisatta had gone straight back to the Himalayas. But in this they said the thing that was not.

A saint of old, as men have told,

Great courage did display:

That saint so strong to suffer wrong

The Kasi king did slay.

Alas! the debt of vain regret

That king will have to pay;

When doomed to dwell in lowest Hell,

Long will he rue the day.

These two stanzas were inspired by Perfect Wisdom.

The Master, his lesson ended, revealed the Truths and identified the Birth—At the conclusion of the Truths the choleric Brother attained fruition of the Second Path, while many others attained fruition of the First Path—“At that time Devadatta was Kalabu king of

Kasi, Sariputta was the Commander-in-Chief, and I myself was the Ascetic, the Preacher of Patience."

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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