# Ja 320 — Succaja 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/ja320.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

"He might give," etc.—This story was told by the Master, while residing at Jetavana, with regard to a certain landowner. According to the story he went to a village with his wife to get in a debt, and seizing a cart in satisfaction for what was due to him he deposited it with a certain family, intending to fetch it later on. While on the road to Savatthi, they came in sight of a mountain. The wife asked him, "Suppose this mountain were to become all gold, would you give me some of it?" "Who are you?" he replied, "I would not give you a jot." "Alas!" she cried, "he is a hard-hearted man. Though the mountain should become pure gold, he would not give me an atom." And she was highly displeased.

When they drew nigh to Jetavana, feeling thirsty, they went into the monastery, and had some water to drink. At daybreak the Master seeing in them a capacity for Salvation, sat in a cell of his Perfumed Chamber, looking out for their arrival, and emitted the six-coloured rays of Buddhahood. And after they had quenched their thirst, they came to the Master and respectfully saluting him sat down. The Master, after the usual kindly greetings, asked them where they had been. "We have been, Reverend Sir, to call in a debt." "Lay Sister," he said, "I hope your husband is anxious for your good and ready to do you a kindness." "Reverend Sir," she replied, "I am very affectionate to him, but he has no love for me. To-day when I asked him, on catching sight of a mountain, "Supposing it were all pure gold, would you give me some?" he answered, "Who are you? I would not give you a jot." So hard-hearted is he." "Lay Sister," said the Master, "he talks like this. But whenever he calls to mind your virtues he is ready to give you lordship over all." "Tell us about it, your Reverence," they cried, and at their request he related this legend of the past.

Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was his minister, rendering him all due service. One day the king saw his son, who acted as his viceroy, coming to pay his respects to him. He thought to himself, "This fellow may do me wrong, if he gets an opportunity." So he sent for him and said, "As long as I live, you cannot dwell in this city. Live somewhere else, and at my death bear rule in the kingdom." He

agreed to these conditions, and bidding his father farewell he started from Benares with his chief wife. On coming to a frontier village, he built himself a hut of leaves in a wood, and stayed there, supporting life on wild roots and fruit. By and bye the king died. The young viceroy, from his observation of the stars, knew of his father's death, and as he journeyed to Benares, a mountain came into sight. His wife said to him, "Supposing, Sir, yonder mountain were turned into pure gold, would you give me some of it?" "Who are you?" he cried, "I would not give you an atom." She thought: "Through my love for him I entered this forest, not having the heart to desert him, and he speaks to me thus. He is very hard-hearted, and if he becomes king, what good will he do me?" And she was sore at heart.

On reaching Benares he was established on the throne and raised her to the dignity of chief queen. He merely gave her titular rank, but beyond this he paid her no respect or honour, and did not even recognize her existence. Thought the Bodhisatta, "This queen was helpmeet to the king, not counting the pain, and dwelt with him in the wilderness. But he, taking no count of this, goes about, taking his pleasure with other women. But I will bring it about that she shall receive lordship over all." And with this thought he went one day and saluting her said, "Lady, we do not receive from you so much as a lump of rice. Why are you so hard-hearted, and why do you thus neglect us?" "Friend," she replied, "if I myself were to receive aught, I would give it you, but if I get nothing, what am I to give? What, pray, is the king likely to give me? On the road here, when asked, "If yonder mountain were all pure gold, would you give me anything?" he answered, "Who are you? I would give you nothing." "Well, could you repeat all this before the king?" he said. "Why should I not, friend?" she answered. "Then when I stand in the king's presence," he said, "I will ask and you shall repeat it." "Agreed, friend," she said. So the Bodhisatta, when he stood and paid his respects to the king, asked the queen, saying, "Are we not, lady, to receive aught at your hands?" "Sir," she answered, "when I get anything, I will give you something. But, pray, what is the king likely to give me now? When we were coming from the forest, and a mountain came into sight, I asked him, "If yonder mountain were all pure gold, would you give me some of it?" "Who are you?" he said, "I will give you nothing." And in these words he refused what it was easy to give." To illustrate this, she repeated the first stanza:

He might give at little cost

What he would not miss, if lost.

Golden mountains I bestow;

He to all I ask says "No."

The king on hearing this uttered the second stanza:

When you can, say "Yes, I will,"

When you cannot, promise nil.

Broken promises are lies;

Liars all wise men despise.

The queen, when she heard this, raising her joined hands in respectful salutation, repeated the third stanza:

Standing fast in righteousness,

Thee, O prince, we humbly bless.

Fortune may all else destroy;

Truth is still thy only joy.

The Bodhisatta, after hearing the queen sing the praises of the king, set forth her virtues and repeated the fourth stanza.:

Known to fame as peerless wife,

Sharing weal and woe of life,

Equal she to either fate,

Fit with even kings to mate.

The Bodhisatta in these words sang the praises of the queen, saying, “This lady, your majesty, in the time of your adversity, lived with you and shared your sorrows in the forest. You ought to do her honour.” The king, at his words, called to mind the queen’s virtues and said, “Wise Sir, at your words I am reminded of the queen’s virtues,” and so saying he gave all power into her hand. Moreover he bestowed great power upon the Bodhisatta. “For it was by you,” he said, “I was reminded of the queen’s virtues.”

The Master, having ended his lesson, revealed the Truths and identified the Birth—At the conclusion of the Truths, the husband and wife attained to fruition of the First Path—“At that time this landowner was the king of Benares, this lay sister was the queen, and I myself was the wise councillor.”

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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