Ja 327 — Kakati 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/ja327.html

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Edited by E. B. Cowell

Original edition: Cambridge University Press, volume 3, 1897

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

“Fragrant odours,” etc.—This story was told by the Master while residing at Jetavana, of a certain Brother who regretted having taken orders. On this occasion the Master asked the Brother if it were true that he was discontented, and on his answering, “Yes, Holy Sir,” he asked him the reason. The Brother replied, “By reason of sinful passion.” The Master said, “Woman cannot be guarded. There is no keeping her safe. Sages of old placed a woman in mid ocean in a palace by the Simbali lake, but failed to preserve her honour.” Then he told a story of the olden time.

Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life as the son of the king by his queen-consort. And when he was grown up, at his father’s death he bare rule. Kakati was his chief queen and as lovely as an Apsara. The old form of the legend will be found set forth in full in the Kunala Birth. Here follows a brief summary of it.

Now at this time a certain Garuda king came disguised as a man, and played at dice with the king of Benares. Falling in love with the chief queen Kakati, he carried her off with him to the dwelling place of the Garudas and lived happily with her. The king missing her told his musician named Natakuvera to go in quest of her. He found the Garuda king lying on a bed of eraka grass in a certain lake, and just as the Garuda was on the point of leaving that spot, he seated himself in the midst of the royal bird’s plumage, and was in this way conveyed to the dwelling place of the Garudas. There he enjoyed the lady’s favours, and again seating himself on the bird’s wing returned home. And when the time came for the Garuda to play at dice with the king, the minstrel took his lute and going up to the gaming board he stood before the king, and in the form of a song gave utterance to the first stanza—

Fragrant odours round me playing

Breath of fair Kakati's love,

From her distant home conveying

Thoughts my inmost soul to move.

On hearing this the Garuda responded in a second stanza—

Sea and Kebuk stream defying

Didst thou reach my island home?

Over seven oceans flying

To the Simbal grove didst come?

Natakuvera, on hearing this, uttered the third stanza—

'Twas through thee all space defying

I was borne to Simbal grove,

And o'er seas and rivers flying

'Twas through thee I found my love.

Then the Garuda king replied in the fourth stanza—

Out upon the foolish blunder,

What a booby I have been!

Lovers best were kept asunder,

Lo! I've served as go-between.

So the Garuda brought the queen and gave her back to the king of Benares, and came not there any more.

The Master, his lesson ended, revealed the Truths and identified the Birth— At the conclusion of the Truths the discontented Brother attained the fruition of the First Path— "At that time the discontented Brother was Natakuvera, and I myself was the king."

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.