Ja 365 — Ahigundika 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/ja365.html

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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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

“Lo! here we lie,” etc.—This story the Master, whilst living at Jetavana, told concerning an aged priest. The story has been already related in full in the Salaka Birth. In this version also the old man after ordaining a village lad abuses and strikes him. The lad escaped and returned to the world. The old man once more admitted him to orders, and acted just as before. The youth, after he had for the third time returned to the world, on being again solicited to come back, would not so much as look the old man in the face. The matter was talked over in the Hall of Truth, how that a certain elder could live neither with his novice nor without him, while the boy after seeing the old man’s fault of temper, being a sensitive youth, would not even look at him. The Master came and asked what was the subject of discussion. When they told him, he said, “Not now only, Brethren, but formerly also this same youth was a sensitive novice, who after observing the elder’s faults would not so much as look at him.” And so saying he told a story of the past.

Once upon a time in the reign of Brahmadatta, king of Benares, the Bodhisatta was born in a corn-factor’s family. And when he was grown up, he got his living by selling corn.

Now a certain snake-charmer caught a monkey and trained him to play with a snake. And when a festival was proclaimed at Benares, he left the monkey with the corn-merchant and roamed about for seven days, making sport with the snake. The merchant meanwhile fed the monkey with food both hard and soft. On the seventh day the snake-charmer got drunk at the festival merry-making, and came back and struck the monkey three times with a piece of bamboo, and then taking him with him to a garden, he tied him up and fell asleep. The monkey got loose from his chain, and climbing up a mango tree, sat there eating the fruit. The snake-charmer on waking up saw the monkey perched on the tree and thought, “I must catch him by wheedling him.” And in talking with him he repeated the first stanza:

Lo! here we lie, my pretty one,

Like gambler by the dice undone.

Let fall some mangoes: well we know,

Our living to thy tricks we owe.

The monkey, on hearing this, uttered the remaining verses:

Thy praises, friend, unmeaning sound;

A pretty monkey ne’er was found.

Who in the stores, when drunk, I pray,

Did starve and beat me sore to-day?

When I, snake-charmer, call to mind

The bed of pain where I reclined,

Though I should some day be a king,

No prayer from me this boon should wring,

Thy cruelty remembering.

But if a man is known to live

Content at home, is apt to give,

And springs of gentle race, the wise

With such should form the closest ties.

With these words the monkey was lost in a crowd of fellow-monkeys.

The Master here ended his lesson and identified the Birth: “At that time the old man was the snake-charmer, the novice was the monkey, and I myself was the corn-merchant.”

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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