Ja 368 — Tacasara 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/ja368.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

204] “Fallen into hand of foes,” etc.—This story the Master, whilst dwelling at Jetavana, told concerning the Perfection of Wisdom. It was then the Master said, “Not now only, Brethren, but formerly also the Tathagata proved himself wise and full of resources.” And herewith he related an old legend of the past.

Once upon a time in the reign of Brahmadatta, king of Benares, the Bodhisatta was born in the household of a village proprietor. The whole story runs on exactly like that of the previous birth. But in this version when the doctor was dead, his village neighbours said, “These youths have caused the man’s death. We will bring them before the king.” And they bound them in fetters and led them to Benares. The Bodhisatta in the course of his journey admonished the other lads and said to them: “Do not be afraid. Even when you are brought into the presence of the king, show yourselves fearless and happy in your mind. The king will first of all talk with us, and afterwards I shall know what to do.” They readily acquiesced in what he said, and acted accordingly. When the king found them calm and happy, he said, “These poor wretches have been bound in chains and brought here as murderers, and although they have come to such misery, they are without fear and even happy. I will ask them the reason why they are not troubled.”

And he repeated the first stanza:

Fallen into hand of foes

And with bamboo fetters bound,

How can ye conceal your woes,

And with smiling face be found?

On hearing this the Bodhisatta uttered the remaining verses:

There is no good however slight,

That man from groans and mourning e'er will gain;

His adversaries feel delight,

When they behold a foe o'ercome with pain.

But enemies with grief are filled

When with bold front he goes to meet his fate,

And blenches not, as one well-skilled

All things with judgment to discriminate.

Be it by muttered spell or charm,

By lavish gifts, or help of powerful kin,

That he may best escape from harm,

A man should strive some vantage ground to win.

But should he fail to reach success,

With others' aid or by himself alone,

He should not grieve but acquiesce;

Fate is too strong, his utmost he has done.

The king on hearing the Bodhisatta's exposition of the law, investigated the matter, and discovering the innocence of the boys, he had their fetters removed, and bestowed much honour on the Great Being, and made him his temporal and spiritual adviser and his valued minister. He also conferred honour on the other youths and appointed them to various offices.

When the Master had brought this lesson to an end, he identified the Birth: "At that time Ananda was the king of Benares, the inferior clergy were the other youths, and I myself was the wise youth."

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.