Ja 378 — Darimukha Jātaka

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

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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

“Pleasures of sense,” etc.—This tale was told by the Master while dwelling in Jetavana, concerning the Great Renunciation. The incident that led to the story has been told before.

Once upon a time the Magadha king reigned in Rajagaha. The Bodhisatta was born of his chief queen, and they called him prince Brahmadatta. On the day of his birth, the family priest also had a son: his face was very beautiful, so they called him Darimukha. Both grew up in the king’s court dear friends together, and in the sixteenth year they went to Takkasila and learned all the arts. Then, meaning to acquire all practical usages and understand country observances, they wandered through towns, villages and all the land. So they reached Benares, and staying in a temple they went into the city next day to beg. In one of the houses in the city the people of the house had cooked rice-porridge and prepared seats to feed brahmins and give them portions. These people seeing the two youths begging, thought, “The brahmins have come,” and making them come in laid a white cloth on the Bodhisatta’s seat and a red rug on Darimukha’s. Darimukha observed the omen and understood that his friend should be king in Benares and himself commander of the army. They ate and took their portions, and then with a blessing left and went to the king’s garden. The Bodhisatta lay on the royal stone-seat. Darimukha sat stroking his feet. The king of Benares had been dead seven days. The family priest had performed funeral rites and sent out the festal car for seven days as there was no heir to the throne. This ceremony of the car will be explained in the Mahajanaka Birth. This car left the city and reached the gate of the garden, accompanied by an army of the four divisions and by the music of hundreds of instruments. Darimukha, hearing the music, thought, “This car is coming for my friend, he will be king to-day and give me the commander’s place, but why should I be a layman? I will go away and become an ascetic”; so without a word to the Bodhisatta he went on one side and stood concealed. The priest stayed the car at the gate of the garden, and entering saw the Bodhisatta lying on the royal seat: observing the auspicious marks on his feet, he thought, “He has merit and is worthy to be king even of the four continents with two thousand islands around them, but what is his

courage?" So he made all the instruments sound their loudest. The Bodhisatta woke and taking the cloth from his face he saw the multitude: then covering his face again he lay down for a little, and rising when the car stopped sat cross-legged on the seat. The priest resting on his knee said, "Lord, the kingdom falls to you." "Why, is there no heir?" "No, lord." "Then it is well," and so he accepted, and they anointed him there in the garden. In his great glory he forgot Darimukha. He mounted the car and drove amid the multitude in solemn form round the city: then stopping at the palace-gate he arranged the places of the courtiers and went up to the terrace. At that instant Darimukha seeing the garden now empty came and sat on the royal seat in the garden. A withered leaf fell before him. In it he came to see the principles of decay and death, grasped the three marks of things, and making the earth re-echo with joy he entered on paccekabodhi. At that instant the characters of a householder vanished from him, a miraculous bowl and frock fell from the sky and clave to his body, at once he had the eight requisites and the perfect deportment of a centenarian monk, and by miracle he flew into the air and went to the cave Nandamula in the Himalaya.

The Bodhisatta ruled his kingdom with righteousness, but the greatness of his glory infatuated him and for forty years he forgot Darimukha. In the fortieth year he remembered him, and saying, "I have a friend named Darimukha; where is he now?" he longed to see him. Thenceforth even in the seraglio and in the assembly he would say, "Where is my friend Darimukha? I will give great honour to the man who tells me of his abode." Another ten years passed while he remembered Darimukha from time to time. Darimukha, though now a paccekabuddha, after fifty years reflected and knew that his friend remembered him: and thinking, "He is now old and increased with sons and daughters, I will go and preach the law to him and ordain him," he went by miracle through the air, and lighting in the garden he sat like a golden image on the stone seat. The gardener seeing him came up and asked, "Sir, whence come you?" "From the cave Nandamulaka." "Who are you?" "Friend, I am Darimukha the pacceka." "Sir, do you know our king?" "Yes, he was my friend in my layman days." "Sir, the king longs to see you, I will tell him of your coming." "Go and do so." He went and told the king that Darimukha was come and sitting on the stone-seat. The king said, "So my friend is come, I shall see him ": so he mounted his car and with a great retinue went to the garden and saluting the paccekabuddha with kindly greeting he sat on one side. The paccekabuddha said, "Brahmadatta, do you rule your kingdom with righteousness, never follow evil courses or oppress the people for money, and do good deeds with charity?" and after kindly greeting, "Brahmadatta, you are old, it is time for you to renounce pleasures, and be ordained," so he preached the law and spoke the first stanza:

Pleasures of sense are but morass and mire:

The "triply-rooted terror" them I call.

Vapour and dust I have proclaimed them, Sire:

Become a Brother and forsake them all.

Hearing this, the king explaining that he was bound by desires spoke the second stanza:

Infatuate, bound and deeply stained am I,

Brahmin, with pleasures: fearful they may be,

But I love life, and cannot them deny:

Good works I undertake continually.

Then Darimukha though the Bodhisatta said, “I cannot be ordained,” did not reject him and exhorted him yet again:

He who rejects the counsel of his friend,

Who pities him, and would avert his doom,

Thinking “this world is better,” finds no end,

Foolish, of long rebirths within the womb.

That fearful place of punishment is his,

Full of all filth, held evil by the good:

The greedy their desires can ne’er dismiss,

The flesh imprisons all the carnal brood.

So Darimukha the paccekabuddha showing the misery rising from conception and quickening, to show next the misery of birth spoke a stanza and a half:

Covered with blood and with gross foulness stained,

All mortal beings issue from the birth:

Whate’er they touch thereafter is ordained

To bring them pain and sorrow on the earth.

I speak what I have seen, not what I hear

From others: I remember times of old.

Now the Master in his Perfect Wisdom said, “So the paccekabuddha helped the king with good words,” and at the end spoke the remaining half-stanza:

Darimukha did to Sumedha’s ear

Wisdom in many a stanza sweet unfold.

The paccekabuddha, showing the misery of desires, making his words understood, said, “O king, be ordained or not, but anyhow I have told the wretchedness of desires and the blessings of ordination, be thou zealous,” and so like a golden royal goose he rose in the air, and treading on clouds he reached the Nandamulaka cave. The Great Being made on his head the salutations resplendent with the ten finger-nails put together and bowing down stood till Darimukha passed out of sight: then he sent for his eldest son and gave him the kingdom: and leaving desires, while a great multitude was weeping and lamenting, he went to the Himalaya and building a hut of leaves he was ordained as an ascetic: then in no long time he gained the Faculties and Attainments and at his life’s end he went to Brahma’s heaven.

The lesson ended, the Master declared the truths: then many attained the First Path and the rest—and he identified the Birth: “At that time the king was myself.”

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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