Ja 382 — Sirikalakanni 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/ja382.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

“Who is this,” etc.—The Master told this tale in Jetavana concerning Anathapindika. From the time when he was established in the fruition of the First Path he kept all the five first commandments unbroken; so also did his wife, his sons and daughters, his hired servants and his workpeople. One day in the Hall of Truth they began to discuss whether Anathapindika was pure in his walk and his household also. The Master came and was told their subject: so he said, “Brethren, the wise men of old had pure households,” and told an old tale.

Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was king in Benares, the Bodhisatta was a merchant, giving gifts, keeping the commands, and performing the fast day duties: and so his wife kept the five commands, and so also did his sons, his daughters and his servants and workpeople. So he was called the merchant Suciparivara (pure household). He thought, “If one of purer morals than I should come, it would not be proper to give him my couch to sit on or my bed to lie on, but to give him one pure and unused”: so he had an unused couch and bed prepared on one side in his presence-chamber. At that time in the Heaven of the Four Kings Kalakanni, daughter of Virupakkha, and Siri, daughter of Dhatarattha, both together took many perfumes and garlands and went on the lake Anotatta to play there. Now on that lake there are many bathing places: the Buddhas bathe at their own place, the paccekabuddhas at theirs, the Brethren at theirs, the ascetics at theirs, the gods of the six Kama-heavens at theirs, and the goddesses at theirs. These two came thither and began to quarrel as to which of them should bathe first. Kalakanni said, “I rule the world: it is proper that I bathe first.” Siri said, “I preside over the course of conduct that gives lordship to mankind: it is proper that I bathe first.” Then both said, “The Four Kings will know which of us ought to bathe first”: so they went to them and asked which of the two was worthy to bathe first in Anotatta. Dhatarattha and Virupakkha said, “We cannot decide,” and laid the duty on Virulha and Vessavana. They too said, “We cannot decide, we will send it to our Lord’s feet”: so they sent it to Sakka. He heard their tale and thought, “Those two are the daughters of my vassals; I cannot decide this case “: so he said to them, “There is in

Benares a merchant called Suciparivara; in his house are prepared an unused couch and bed: she who can first sit or lie there is the proper one to bathe first." Kalakanni hearing this on the instant put on blue raiment and used blue ointment and decked herself with blue jewels: she descended from the heaven as on a stone from a catapult, and just after the mid-watch of night she stood in the air, diffusing a blue light, not far from the merchant who was lying on a couch in the presence-chamber of his mansion. The merchant looked and saw her: but to his eyes she was ungracious and unlovely. Talking to her he spoke the first stanza:

Who is this so dark of hue,

So unlovely to the view?

Who are you, whose daughter, say,

How are we to know you, pray?

Hearing him, Kalakanni spoke the second stanza:

The great king Virupakkha is my sire:

I am Misfortune, Kalakanni dire:

Give me the house-room near you I desire.

Then the Bodhisatta spoke the third stanza:

What the conduct, what the ways,

Of the men with whom you dwell

This is what my question prays:

We will mark the answer well.

Then she, explaining her own qualities, spoke the fourth stanza:

The hypocrite, the wanton, the morose,

The man of envy, greed and treachery:

Such are the friends I love: and I dispose

Their gains that they may perish utterly.

She spoke also the fifth, sixth, and seventh stanzas:

And dearer still are ire and hate to me,

Slander and strife, libel and cruelty.

The shiftless wight who knows not his own good,

Resenting counsel, to his betters rude:

The man whom folly drives, whom friends despise,

He is my friend, in him my pleasure lies.

Then the Great Being, blaming her, spoke the eighth stanza:

Kali, depart: there's naught to please you here:

To other lands and cities disappear.

Kalakanni, hearing him, was sorrowful and spoke another stanza:

I know you well: there's naught to please me here.

Others are luckless, who amass much gear;

My brother-god and I will make it disappear.

When she had gone, Siri the goddess, coming with raiment and ointment of golden hue and ornament of golden brightness to the door of the presence-chamber, diffusing yellow light, rested with even feet on level ground and stood respectful. The Bodhisatta seeing her repeated the first stanza:

Who is this, divine of hue,

On the ground so firm and true?

Who are you, whose daughter, say,

How are we to know you, pray?

Siri, hearing him, spoke the second stanza:

The great king Dhatarattha is my sire:

Fortune and Luck am I, and Wisdom men admire:

Grant me the house-room with you I desire.

Then

What the conduct, what the ways

Of the men with whom you dwell?

This is what my question prays;

We will mark your answer well.

He who in cold and heat, in wind and sun,

Mid thirst and hunger, snake and poison-fly,

His present duty night and day hath done;

With him I dwell and love him faithfully.

Gentle and friendly, righteous, liberal,

Guileless and honest, upright, winning, bland,

Meek in high place: I tinge his fortunes all,

Like waves their hue through ocean that expand.

To friend or unfriend, better, like or worse,

Helper or foe, by dark or open day,

Whoso is kind, without harsh word or curse,

I am his friend, living or dead, alway.

But if a fool have won some love from me,

And waxes proud and vain,

His froward path of wantonness I flee,

Like filthy stain.

Each man’s fortune and misfortune are his own work, not another’s:

Neither fortune nor misfortune can a man make for his brothers.

Such was Siri’s answer when questioned by the merchant.

The Bodhisatta rejoiced at Siri's words, and said, "Here is the pure seat and bed, proper for you; sit and lie down there." She stayed there and in the morning departed to the Heaven of the Four Great Kings and bathed first in lake Anotatta. The bed used by Siri was called Sirisaya: hence is the origin of Sirisayana, and for this reason it is so called to this day.

After the lesson the Master identified the Birth: "At that time the goddess Siri was Uppalavanna, the merchant Suciparivara 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.

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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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