Ja 391 — Dhajavihetha 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/ja391.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

“Noble of face,” etc.—The Master told this while dwelling in Jetavana, concerning his going about for the whole world’s good. The occasion will appear in the Mahakanha Birth. Then the Master said, “Brethren, this is not the first time the Tathagata has gone about for the world’s good,” and so told an old tale.

Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was king in Benares, the Bodhisatta was Sakka. At that time a wizard, using his magic, came at midnight and corrupted the chief queen of Benares. Her handmaids knew of this. She herself went to the king and said, “Your majesty, some man enters the royal chamber at midnight and corrupts me.” “Could you make any mark on him?” “I can.” So she got a bowl of real vermilion, and when the man came at night and was going away after enjoyment, she set the mark of her five fingers on his back and in the morning told the king. The king gave orders to his men to go and looking everywhere bring a man with a vermilion mark on his back.

Now the wizard after his misconduct at night stands by day in a cemetery on one foot worshipping the sun. The king’s men saw him and surrounded him: but he, thinking that his action had become known to them, used his magic and flew away in the air. The king asked his men when they came back from seeing this, “Did you see him?” “Yes, we saw him.” “Who is he?” “A Brother, your majesty.” For after his misconduct at night he lived by day in disguise of a Brother. The king thought, “These men go about by day in ascetic’s garb and misconduct themselves at night;” so being angry with the Brethren, he adopted heretical views, and sent round a proclamation by drum that all the Brethren must depart from his kingdom and that his men would punish them wherever found. All the ascetics fled from the kingdom of Kasi, which was three hundred leagues in extent, to other royal cities, and there was no one, righteous Buddhist or Brahmin, to preach to the men of all Kasi; so that the men without preaching became savage, and being averse to charity and the commandments were born in a state of punishment for the most part as they died, and never got birth in heaven. Sakka, not seeing any new gods, reflected on what the

reason might be, and saw that it was the expulsion of the Brethren from the kingdom by the king of Benares owing to his adopting heretical views in anger about the wizard: then he thought, “Except myself there is no one who can destroy this king’s heresy; I will be the helper of the king and his subjects,” so he went to the paccekabuddhas in the Nandamula cave and said, “Sirs, give me an old paccekabuddha, I wish to convert the kingdom of Kasi.” He got the senior among them. When he took his bowl and robes Sakka set him before and came himself after, making respectful salutation and venerating the paccekabuddha: himself becoming a beautiful young Brother he went thrice round the whole city from end to end, and then coming to the king’s gate he stood in the air. They told the king, “Your majesty, there is a beautiful young Brother with a priest standing in the air at the king’s gate.” The king rose from his seat and standing at the lattice said, “Young Brother, why do you, who are beautiful, stand venerating that ugly priest and holding his bowl and robes?” and so talking with him he spoke the first stanza—

Noble of face, you make obeisance low;

Behind one mean and poor to sight you go:

Is he your better or your equal, say,

Declare to us your name and his, we pray.

The Sakka answered, “Great king, priests are in the place of teacher; therefore it is not right that I should utter his name: but I will tell you my own name,” so he spoke the second stanza—

Gods do not tell the lineage and the name

Of saints devout and perfect in the way:

As for myself, my title I proclaim,

Sakka, the lord whom thirty gods obey.

The king hearing this asked in the third stanza what was the blessing of venerating the Brother—

He who beholds the saint of perfect merits,

And walks behind him with obeisance low:

I ask, O king of gods, what he inherits,

What blessings will another life bestow?

Sakka replied in the fourth stanza—

He who beholds the saint of perfect merits,

Who walks behind him with obeisance low:

Great praise from men in this world he inherits,

And death to him the path of heaven will show.

The king hearing Sakka's words gave up his own heretical views, and in delight spoke the fifth stanza—

Oh, fortune's sun on me to-day doth rise,

Our eyes have seen thy majesty divine:

Thy saint appears, O Sakka, to our eyes,

And many a virtuous deed will now be mine.

Sakka, hearing him praising his master, spoke the sixth stanza—

Surely 'Tis good to venerate the wise,

To knowledge who their learned thoughts incline:

Now that the saint and I have met thine eyes,

O king, let many a virtuous deed be thine.

Hearing this the king spoke the last stanza—

From anger free, with grace in every thought,

I'll lend an ear whenever strangers sue:

I take thy counsel good, I bring to nought

My pride and serve thee, Lord, with homage due.

Having said so he came down from the terrace, saluted the paccekabuddha and stood on one side. The paccekabuddha sat cross-legged in the air and said, "Great king, that wizard was no Brother: henceforward recognise that the world is not vanity, that there are good Buddhists and Brahmins, and so give gifts, practise morality, keep the holy-days," preaching to the king. Sakka also by his power stood in the air, and preaching to the townsfolk, "Henceforward be zealous," he sent round proclamation by drum that the Buddhists and Brahmins who had fled should return. Then both went back to their own place. The king stood firm in the admonition and did good works.

After the lesson, the Master declared the Truths and identified the Birth—“At that time the paccekabuddha reached Nirvana, the king was Ananda, Sakka 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.

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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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