Ja 393 — Vighasa 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/ja393.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

“Happy life is theirs,” etc.—The Master told this tale while dwelling in the East Garden, concerning some Brethren who were given to amusement. The great Moggallana had shaken their dwelling and alarmed them. The Brethren sat discussing their fault in the Hall of Truth. The Master being told this said to them, “They are not given to amusement for the first time,” and so told an old tale.

Once upon a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was Sakka. Seven brothers in a certain village of Kasi seeing the evil of desires had renounced them and become ascetics: they dwelt in Mejjharanna but lived in various kinds of amusement, not practising devotion diligently and being of full habit of body. Sakka, king of gods, said, “I will alarm them;” and so he became a parrot, came to their dwelling-place and perching on a tree spoke the first stanza to alarm them—

Happy life is theirs who live on remnants left from charity:

Praise in this world is their lot, and in the next felicity.

Then one of them hearing the parrot’s words called to the rest, and spoke the second stanza—

Should not wise men listen when a parrot speaks in human tongue:

Hearken, brethren: ’Tis our praises clearly that this bird has sung.

Then the parrot denying this spoke the third stanza—

Not your praises I am singing, carrion-eaters: list to me,

Refuse is the food you eat, not remnants left from charity.

When they heard him, they all together spoke the fourth stanza—

Seven years ordained, with duly tonsured hair,

In Mejjharanna here we spend our days,

Living on remnants: if you blame our fare,

Who is it then you praise?

The Great Being spoke the fifth stanza, putting them to shame—

Leavings of the lion, tiger, ravening beast, are your supply:

Refuse truly, though ye call it remnants left from charity.

Hearing him the ascetics said, “If we are not eaters of remnants, then who pray are?” Then he telling them the true meaning spoke the sixth stanza—

They who giving alms to priests and brahmins, wants to satisfy

Eat the rest, ’Tis they who live on remnants left from charity.

So the Bodhisatta put them to shame and went to his own place.

After the lesson, the Master declared the Truths and identified the Birth: “At that time the seven brothers were the sportive Brethren, 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.

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.