Ja 428 — Kosambi 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

“Whene’er the Brotherhood,” etc.—This story the Master, while dwelling in the Ghosita park near Kosambi, told concerning certain quarrelsome folk at Kosambi. The incident that led to the story is to be found in the section of the Vinaya relating to Kosambi. Here is a short summary of it. At that time, it is said, two Brothers lived in the same house, the one versed in the Vinaya, the other in the Sutras. The latter of these one day having occasion to visit the lavatory went out leaving the surplus water for rinsing the mouth in a vessel. Afterwards the one versed in the Vinaya went in and seeing the water came out and asked his companion if the water had been left there by him. He answered, “Yes, Sir.” “What! do you not know that this is sinful?” “No, I was not aware of it.” “Well, Brother, it is sinful.” “Then I will atone for it.” “But if you did it inadvertently and heedlessly, it is not sinful.” So he became as one who saw no sin in what was sinful. The Vinaya scholar said to his pupils, “This Sutra scholar, though falling into sin, is not aware of it.” They on seeing the other Brother’s pupils said, “Your master though falling into sin does not recognize its sinfulness.” They went and told their master. He said, “This Vinaya scholar before said it was no sin, and now says it is a sin: he is a liar.” They went and told the others, “Your master is a liar.” Thus they stirred up a quarrel, one with another. Then the Vinaya scholar, finding an opportunity, went through the form of excommunication of the Brother for refusing to see his offence. Thenceforth even the laymen who provided necessaries for the priests were divided into two factions. The sisterhoods too that accept their admonitions, and tutelary gods, with their friends and intimates and deities from those that rest in space to those of the Brahma World, even all such as were unconverted, formed two parties, and the uproar reached to the abode of the Sublime gods.

Then a certain Brother drew nigh to the Tathagata, and announced the view of the excommunicating party who said, “The man is excommunicated in orthodox form,” and the view of the followers of the excommunicated one, who said, “He is illegally excommunicated,” and the practice of those who though forbidden by the excommunicating party, still gathered round in support of him. The Blessed One said,

“There is a schism, yea, a schism in the Brotherhood,” and he went to them and pointed out the misery involved in excommunication to those that excommunicated, and the misery following upon the concealment of sin to the opposite party, and so departed. Again when they were holding the Uposatha and similar services in the same place, within the boundary, and were quarrelling in the refectory and elsewhere, he laid down the rule that they were to sit down together, one by one from each side alternately. And hearing that they were still quarrelling in the monastery he went there and said, “Enough, Brothers, let us have no quarrelling.” And one of the heretical side, not wishing to annoy the Blessed One, said, “Let the Blessed Lord of Truth stay at home. Let the Blessed One dwell quietly at ease, enjoying the bliss he has already obtained in this life. We shall make ourselves notorious by this quarrelling, altercation, disputing and contention.”

But the Master said to them, “Once upon a time, Brethren, Brahmadatta reigned as king of Kasi in Benares, and he robbed Dighati, king of Kosala, of his kingdom, and put him to death, when living in disguise, and when prince Dighavu spared the life of Brahmadatta, they became thenceforth close friends. And since such must have been the long-suffering and tenderness of these sceptred and sword-bearing kings, verily, Brethren, you ought to make it clear that you too, having embraced the religious life according to so well-taught a doctrine and discipline, can be forgiving and tender-hearted.” And thus admonishing them for the third time he said, “Enough, Brothers, let there be no quarrelling.” And when he saw that they did not cease at his bidding, he went away, saying, “Verily, these foolish folk are like men possessed, they are not easy of persuasion.” Next day returning from the collection of alms he rested awhile in his perfumed chamber, and put his room in order, and then taking his bowl and robe he stood poised in the air and delivered these verses in the midst of the assembly:

Whene’er the Brotherhood in twain is rent,

The common folk to loud-mouthed cries give vent:

Each one believes that he himself is wise,

And views his neighbour with disdainful eyes.

Bewildered souls, puffed up with self-esteem,

With open mouth they foolishly blaspheme;

And as through all the range of speech they stray,

They know not whom as leader to obey.

“This man abused me, that struck me a blow,

A third o’ercame and robbed me long ago.”

All such as harbour feelings of this kind,

To mitigate their wrath are ne’er inclined.

“He did abuse and buffet me of yore

He overcame me and oppressed me sore.”

They who such thoughts refuse to entertain,

Appease their wrath and live at one again.

Not hate, but love alone makes hate to cease:

This is the everlasting law of peace.

Some men the law of self-restraint despise,

But who make up their quarrels, they are wise.

If men all scarred with wounds in deadly strife,

Reivers and robbers, taking human life,

Nay those that plunder a whole realm, may be

Friends with their foes, should Brethren not agree?

Shouldst thou a wise and honest comrade find,

A kindred soul, to dwell with thee inclined,

All dangers past, with him thou still wouldst stray,

In happy contemplation all the day.

But shouldst thou fail to meet with such a friend,

Thy life ’twere best in solitude to spend,

Like to some prince that abdicates a throne,

Or elephant that ranges all alone.

For choice adopt the solitary life,

Companionship with fools but leads to strife;

In careless innocence pursue thy way,

Like elephant in forest wild astray.

When the Master had thus spoken, as he failed to reconcile these Brethren, he went to Balakalonakaragama (the village of Balaka, the salt-maker), and discoursed to the venerable Bhagu of the blessings of solitude. Thence he repaired to the abode of three youths of gentle birth and spoke to them of the bliss to be found in the sweets of concord. Thence he journeyed to the Parileyyaka forest, and after dwelling there three months, without returning to Kosambi, he went straight to Savatthi. And the lay folk of Kosambi consulted together and said, “Surely these reverend Brothers of Kosambi have done us much harm; worried by them the Blessed One is gone away. We will neither offer salutation nor other marks of respect to them, nor give alms to them when they visit us. So they will depart, or return to the world, or will propitiate the Blessed One.” And they did so. And these Brethren overwhelmed by this form of punishment went to Savatthi and begged forgiveness of the Blessed One.

The Master thus identified the Birth: “The father was the great king Suddhodana, the mother was Mahamaya, prince Dighavu 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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