# Ja 443 — Culla-Bodhi Jātaka

English translation by W. H. D. Rouse.

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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

“If one seize,” etc.—This story the Master told in Jetavana, about a passionate man. This man, alter having become an ascetic, following the doctrine which leads to salvation with all its blessings, was unable to control his passion: passionate he was, full of resentment; but little said, and he grew angry, flew in a passion, was bitter and obstinate. The Master, hearing of his passionate behaviour, sent for him and asked, was it true that he was passionate, as rumour had it. “Yes, Sir,” replied the man. “Brother,” the Master said, “passion must be restrained; such an ill-doer has no place either in this world or the next. Why dost thou, after embracing the salvation of the Supreme Buddha, who knows not passion, why dost thou show thyself passionate? Wise men of old, even those who embraced a religion other than ours, have refrained from anger.” And he told him an old-world tale.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta was king of Benares, there was in a certain town of Kasi a brahmin rich, wealthy, and of great possessions, but he was childless; and his wife longed for a son. At that time the Bodhisatta, descending from Brahma’s world, was conceived in the womb of that lady; and on his name-day they gave him the name of Bodhi-kumara, or Wiseman. When he came of age he repaired to Takkasila, where he studied all sciences; and after his home-coming, much against his will, his parents found him a damsel to wife from a family of the same caste. She too had descended to this world from the world of Brahma, and was of surpassing beauty, like a nymph. These two were married together, though they neither of them desired it. Never had either done any sin, and in the way of passion neither so much as cast a look at the other; never even in sleep had they done the deed of kind, so pure were they.

Now it happened that after a while, when his parents were dead, and he had decently disposed of their bodies, the Great Being calling his wife, said to her, “Now, lady, you take this fortune of eighty crores, and live in happiness.”—“Not so, but you, noble Sir.” Said he, “Wealth I want none; I shall go to the region of Himalaya, and become a recluse, and there

find a refuge."—"Well, noble Sir, is it men only that should live the ascetic life?" "No," said he, "but women also." "Then I will not take that which you spew out of your mouth; for wealth I care no more than you, and I, like you, will live a recluse."

"Very good, lady," said he. And they both distributed a great quantity of alms; and setting forth, in a pleasant spot they made a hermitage. There living upon any wild fruits which they could glean, they dwelt for ten whole years, yet did not attain to holy ecstasy.

And after living there in the happiness of the ascetic life for ten years, they traversed the country side to get salt and seasoning, and in due course came to Benares, where they abode in the royal park.

Now one day the king, espying the park-keeper who came with a present in his hand, said, "We will make merry in our park, therefore set it in order"; and when the park was cleansed and made ready, he entered it along with a great retinue. At that time these two were also sitting in a certain part of the park, spending their time in the bliss of the religious life. And the king in passing through the park, perceived them both sitting there; and as his eye fell on this amiable and very beautiful lady, he fell in love. Trembling with desire, he determined to ask what she was to the ascetic; so approaching the Bodhisatta, he put the question to him. "Great king," he said, "she is nothing to me; she only shares my ascetic life, but when I lived in the world she was my wife." On hearing this the king thought within him, "So he says she is nothing to him. but in his worldly life she was his wife. Well, if I seize her by my sovereign power what will he do? I will take her, then." And so coming near he repeated the first stanza:

"If one seize the large-eyed lady, and carry her off from you,

The dear one that sits there smiling, brahmin, what would you do?"

In answer to this question, the Great Being repeated the second stanza:

"Once risen, it never would leave me my life long, no, never at all:

As a storm of rain lays the dust again, quench it while yet it be small."

Thus did the Great Being make answer, loud as a lion's roar. But the king, though he heard it, was yet unable for blind folly to master his enamoured heart, and gave orders to one of his suite, "that he should take the lady into the palace." The courtier, obedient, led her away, in spite of her complaints and cries that lawlessness and wrong were the world's way. The Bodhisatta, who heard her cries, looked once but looked no more. So weeping and wailing she was conveyed to the palace.

And the King of Benares made no delay in his park, but quickly returned indoors, and sending for the woman, showed her great honour. And she spoke of the worthlessness of such honour, and the sole worth of the solitary life. The king, finding that by no means could he win her mind over, caused her to be placed in a room apart, and began to think,

“Here is an ascetic woman who cares not for all this honour, and yon hermit never cast an angry look even when the man led away so beauteous a dame! Deep are the wiles of anchorites; he will lay a plot doubtless and work me some harm. Well, I will return to him, and find out why he sits there.” And so unable to keep still, he went into the park.

The Bodhisatta sat stitching his cloak. The king, almost alone, came up without sound of footfall, softly. Without one look at the king, the other went on with his sewing. “This fellow,” thought the king, “will not speak to me because he is angry. This ascetic, humbug that he is, first roars out, “I will not let anger arise at all, but if it does, I will crush it while it is small,” and then is so obstinate in wrath that he won’t speak to me!” With this idea the king repeated the third stanza:

You that were loud in boasting only awhile ago,

Now dumb for very anger there you sit and sew!”

When the Great Being heard this, he perceived that the king thought him silent from anger; and desirous to show that he was not influenced by anger, repeated the fourth stanza:

“Once risen, it never had left me, it never would leave me at all:

As a storm of rain lays the dust again, I quenched it while it was small.”

On hearing these words, the king thought, “Is it anger of which he speaks, or some other thing? I will ask him.” And he asked the question, repeating the fifth stanza:

“What is it that never has left you your life long, never at all?

As a storm of rain lays the dust again, what quenched you while it was small?”

Said the other, “Great king, thus anger brings much wretchedness, and much ruin; it just began within me, but by cherishing kindly feelings I quenched it,” and then he repeated the following stanzas to declare the misery of anger.

“That without which a man sees clearly, with which he goes blindly ahead,

Arose within me, but was not left free—anger, on foolishness fed.

“What causes our foes satisfaction, who wish to bring woes on our head,

Arose within me, but was not left free—anger, on foolishness fed.

“That which if it rises within us blinds all to our spiritual good,

Arose within me, but was not left free—anger, with folly for food.

“That which, supreme, destroys each great blessing,

Which makes its dupes forsake each worthy thing,

Mighty, destructive, with its swarm of fears,—

Anger—refused to leave me, O great king!

“The fire will rise the higher, if the fuel be stirred and turned;

And because the fire uprises, the fuel itself is burned.

“And thus in the mind of the foolish, the man who cannot discern,

From wrangling arises anger, and with it himself will burn.

“Whose anger grows like fire with fuel and grass that blaze,

As the moon in the dark fortnight, so his honour wanes and decays.

“He who quiets his anger, like a fire that fuel has none,

As the moon in the light fortnight, his honour waxes well grown.”

When the king had listened to the Great Being’s discourse, he was well pleased, and bade one of his courtiers lead the woman back; and invited the passionless recluse to stay with her in that park, in the enjoyment of their solitary life, and he promised to watch over them and defend them as he ought. Then asking pardon, he politely took leave. And they two dwelt there. By and bye the woman died, and after her death, the man returned to the Himalayas, and cultivating the Faculties and the Attainments, and causing the Excellences to spring up within him, he became destined for Brahma’s heaven.

When the Master had ended his discourse, he declared the Truths, and identified the Birth; (now at the conclusion of the Truths the passionate Brother became established in the fruit of the Third Path:)—“At that time Rahula’s mother was the ascetic lady, Ananda was the king, and I myself was the ascetic.”

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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