Ja 472 — Maha-Paduma Jātaka

English translation by W. H. D. Rouse.

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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

“No king should,” etc. This story the Master told while dwelling in Jetavana, about Cincamanavika.

When the Dasabala first attained supreme wisdom, after disciples had multiplied, and innumerable gods and men had been born into heavenly states, and the seeds of goodness had been cast abroad, great honour was shown him, and great gifts given. The heretics were like fireflies after sunrise; no honours and no gifts had they; in the street they stood, and cried out to the people, “What, is the ascetic Gotama the Buddha? We are Buddhas also! Does that gift only bring great fruit, which is given to him? That which is given to us also has great fruit for you! Give to us also, work for us!” But cry as they would, no honour nor gifts they got. Then they came together in secret, and consulted: “How can we cast a stain upon Gotama the ascetic in the face of men, and put an end to his honour and his gifts?”

Now there was at that time in Savatthi a certain Sister, named Cincamanavika; passing fair she was, full of all grace, a very sylph; rays of brilliancy shone forth from her body. Some one uttered a counsel of cruelty thus: “By the help of Cincamanavika we will cast a stain upon the ascetic Gotama, and put an end to his honour and the gifts he receives.” “Yes,” they all agreed, “that is the way to do it.”

She came to the monastery of the heretics, and greeted them, and stood still. The heretics said nothing to her. She said, “What blemish is there in me? Three times I have greeted you!” She said again, “Sirs, what blemish is in me? why do you not speak to me?” They replied, “Know you not, Sister, that Gotama the ascetic is going about and doing us harm, cutting off all the honour and liberality that was shown us?”—“I did not know it, Sirs; but what can I do?”—“If you wish us well, Sister by your own doing bring a stain upon the ascetic Gotama, and put an end to his honour and the gifts he receives.” She replied, “Very good, Sirs, leave that to me; do not trouble about it.” With these words she departed.

After that, she used all a woman's skill in deceit. When the people of Savatthi had heard the Law, and were coming away from Jetavana, she used to go towards Jetavana, clad in a robe dyed with cochineal, and with fragrant garlands in her hands. When any one asked her, "Whither away at this hour?" she would reply "What have you to do with my goings and comings?" She spent the night in the heretics' monastery, which was close by Jetavana: and when early in the morning, the lay associates of the order came forth from the city to pay their morning salutation, she would meet them as though she had spent the night in Jetavana, going towards the city. If any one asked where she had stayed, she would answer, "What are my stayings and lodgings to you?" But after some six weeks, she replied, "I spent the night in Jetavana, with Gotama the ascetic, in one fragrant cell." Then the unconverted began to wonder, could this be true, or not. After three or four months, she bound bandages about her belly, and made it appear as though she were with child, and wrapt a red robe around her. Then she declared that she was with child by the ascetic Gotama, and made blind fools believe. After eight or nine months, she fastened about her pieces of wood in a bundle, and over all her red robe; hands, feet, and back she caused to be beaten with the jawbone of an ox, so as to produce swellings; and made as though all her senses were wearied. One evening, when the Tathagata was sitting on the splendid seat of preaching, and was preaching the Law, she went among the congregation, and standing in front of the Tathagata, said—"O great ascetic! You preach indeed to great multitudes; sweet is your voice, and soft is the lip that covers your teeth; but you have got me with child, and my time is near; yet you assign me no chamber for the childbirth, you give me no ghee nor oil; what you will not do yourself, you do not ask another of the lay associates to do, the king of Kosala, or Anathapindika, or Visakha the great lay Sister. Why do you not tell one of them to do what is to be done for me? You know how to take your pleasure, but you do not know how to care for that which shall be born!" So she reviled the Tathagata in the midst of the congregation, as one might try to besmirch the moon's face with a handful of filth. The Tathagata stopt his discourse, and crying like a lion in clarion tones, he said, "Sister, whether that which you have said be true or false, you know and I know only." "Yes, truly," said she, "this happened through something that you and I only know of."

Just at that moment, Sakka's throne became hot. Reflecting, he perceived the reason: "Cincamanavika is accusing the Tathagata of what is not true." Determined to clear up this matter, he came thither with four gods in his company. The gods took on them the shape of mice, and all at once gnawed through the cords that bound the bundle of wood: a wind-puff blew up the robe she wore, and the bundle of wood was disclosed and fell at her feet: the toes of both her feet were cut off. The people cried out—"A witch is accusing the Supreme Buddha!" They spat on her head, and drove her forth from Jetavana with staves and clods in their hands. And as she passed beyond the range of the Tathagata's vision, the great earth yawned and showed a huge cleft, flames came up from the lowest hell, and she, enveloped in it as it were with a garment which her friends should wrap about her, fell to the lowest hell and there was born again. The honour and receipts of the other heretics ceased, those of the Dasabala grew more abundantly.

Next day they were conversing in the Hall of Truth: “Brother, Cincamanavika falsely accused the Supreme Buddha, great in virtue, worthy of all gifts! and she came to dire destruction.” The Master entered, and asked what they talked of, sitting there together. They told him. Said he, “Not now only, Brethren, has this woman falsely accused me, and come to dire destruction, but it was the same before.” So saying, he told a story of the past.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta was king of Benares, the Bodhisatta was born as the son of his chief queen; and for that his all-blessed countenance was like to a lotus full-blown, Paduma-Kumara they named him, which is to say, the Lotus Prince. When he grew up he was educated in all arts and accomplishments. Then his mother departed this life; the king took another consort, and appointed his son viceroy.

After this the king, being about to set forth to quell a rising on the frontier, said to his consort, “Do you, lady, stay here, while I go forth to quell the frontier insurrection.” But she replied, “No, my lord, here I will not remain, but I will go with you.” Then he showed her the danger which lay on the field of battle, adding to it this: “Stay then here without vexation until my return, and I will give charge to Prince Paduma, that he be careful in all that should be done for you, and then I will go.” So thus he did, and departed.

When he had scattered his enemies, and pacified the country, he returned, and pitched his camp without the city. The Bodhisatta learning of his father’s return, adorned the city, and setting a watch over the royal palace, went forth alone to meet his father. The Queen observing the beauty of his appearance, became enamoured of him. In taking leave of her, the Bodhisatta said, “Can I do anything for you, mother?” “Mother, do you call me?” quoth she. She rose up and seized his hands, saying, “Lie on my couch!” “Why?” he asked. “Just until the king comes,” she said, “let us both enjoy the bliss of love!” “Mother, my mother you are, and you have a husband living. Such a thing was never before heard of, that a woman, a matron, should break the moral law in the way of fleshly lust. How can I do such a deed of pollution with you?” Twice and thrice she besought him, and when he would not, said she, “Then you refuse to do as I ask?”—“Indeed I do refuse.”—“Then I will speak to the king, and cause you to be beheaded.” “Do as you will,” answered the Great Being; and he left her ashamed. Then in great terror she thought: “If he tell the king first, there is no life for me! I must get speech of him first myself.” Accordingly leaving her food untouched she donned a soiled robe, and made nail-scratches upon her body; giving orders to her attendants, that what time the king should ask of the queen’s whereabouts, he should be told she was ill, she lay down making a pretence of illness.

Now the king made solemn procession about the city right-wise, and went up into his dwelling. When he saw her not, he asked, “Where is the queen?” “She is ill,” they said. He entered the state chamber, and asked her, “What is amiss with you, lady?” She made as though she heard nothing. Twice and yet thrice he asked, and then she answered, “O great king, why do you ask? Be silent: women that have a husband must be even as I am.” “Who has annoyed you?” said he. “Tell me quickly, and I will have him beheaded.”—“Whom did you leave behind you in this city, when you went away?”—“Prince Paduma.” “And he,” she went on, “came into my room, and I said, My son, do not so, I am your mother: but say what I would, he cried, None is king here but I, and I will take you to my dwelling, and

enjoy your love; then he seized me by the hair of my head, and plucked it out again and again, and as I would not yield to his will, he wounded and beat me, and departed." The king made no investigation, but furious as a serpent, commanded his men, "Go and bind Prince Paduma, and bring him to me!" They went to his house, swarming as it were through the city, and bound him and beat him, bound his hands fast behind his back, put about his neck the garland of red flowers, making him a condemned criminal, and led him thither, beating him the while. It was clear to him that this was the queen's doing, and as he went along he cried out, "Ho fellows, I am not one that has offended against the king! I am innocent." All the city was a-bubble with the news: "They say the king is going to execute Prince Paduma at the bidding of a woman!" They flocked together, they fell at the prince's feet, lamenting with a great noise, "You have not deserved this, my lord!"

At last they brought him before the king. At sight of him, the king could not restrain what was in his heart, and cried out, "This fellow is no king, but he plays the king finely! My son he is, yet he has insulted the queen. Away with him, down with him over the thieves' cliff, make an end of him!" But the prince said to his father, "No such crime lies at my door, father. Do not kill me on a woman's word." The king would not listen to him. Then all those of the royal seraglio, in number sixteen thousand, raised a great lamentation, saying, "Dear Paduma, mighty Prince, this dealing you have never deserved!" And all the warrior chiefs and great magnates of the land, and all the attendant courtiers cried, "My lord! the prince is a man of goodness and virtuous life, observes the traditions of his race, heir to the kingdom! Do not slay him at a woman's word, without a hearing! A king's duty it is to act with all circumspection." So saying, they repeated seven stanzas:

"No king should punish an offence, and hear no pleas at all,

Not throughly sifting it himself in all points, great and small.

"The warrior chief who punishes a fault before he tries,

Is like a man born blind, who eats his food all bones and flies.

"Who punishes the guiltless, and lets go the guilty, knows

No more than one who blind upon a rugged highway goes.

"He who all this examines well, in things both great and small,

And so administers, deserves to be the head of all.

"He that would set himself on high must not all-gentle be

Nor all-severe: but both these things practise in company.

"Contempt the all-gentle wins, and he that's all-severe, has wrath:

So of the pair be well aware, and keep a middle path.

“Much can the angry man, O king, and much the knave can say:

And therefore for a woman’s sake thy son thou must not slay.”

But for all they could say in many ways the courtiers could not win him to do their bidding. The Bodhisatta also, for all his beseeching, could not persuade him to listen: nay, the king said, blind fool—“Away! down with him over the thieves’ cliff!” repeating the eighth stanza:

“One side the whole world stands, my queen on the other all alone;

Yet her I cleave to: cast him down the cliff, and get you gone!”

At these words, not one among the sixteen thousand women could remain unmoved, while all the populace stretched out their hands, and tore their hair, with lamentations. The king said, “Let these but try to prevent the throwing of this fellow over the cliff!” and amidst his followers, though the crowd wailed around, he caused the prince to be seized, and cast down the precipice over heels head-first.

Then the deity that dwelt in the hill, by power of his own kindliness, comforted the prince, saying, “Fear not, Paduma!” and in both hands he caught him, pressed him to his heart, sent a divine thrill through him, set him in the abode of the serpents of the eight ranges, within the hood of the king of the serpents. The serpent king received the Bodhisatta into the abode of the serpents, and gave him the half of his own glory and state. There for one year he dwelt. Then he said, “I would go back to the ways of men.” “Whither?” they asked. “To Himalaya, where I will live a religious life.” The serpent king gave his consent; taking him, he conveyed him to the place where men go to and fro, and gave him the requisites of the religious, and went back to his own place.

So he proceeded to Himalaya, and embraced the religious life, and cultivated the faculty of ecstatic bliss; there he abode, feeding upon fruits and roots of the woodland.

Now a certain wood-ranger, who dwelt in Benares, came to that place, and recognised the Great Being. “Are you not,” he asked, “the great Prince Paduma, my lord?” “Yes, Sir,” he replied. The other saluted him, and there for some days he remained. Then he returned to Benares, and said to the king; “Your son, my lord, has embraced the religious life in the region of Himalaya, and lives, in a hut of leaves. I have been staying with him, and thence I come.” “Have you seen him with your own eyes?” asked the king. “Yes, my lord.” The king with a great host went thither, and on the outskirts of the forest he pitched his camp; then with his courtiers around him, went to salute the Great Being, who sat at the door of his hut of leaves, in all the glory of his golden form, and sat on one side; the courtiers also greeted him, and spoke pleasantly to him, and sat on one side. The Bodhisatta on his part invited the king to share his wild fruits, and talked pleasantly with him. Then said the king, “My son, by me you were cast down a deep precipice, and how is it you are yet alive?” Asking which, he repeated the ninth stanza:

“As into hell-mouth, you were cast over a beetling hill,

No succour—many palm-trees deep: how are you living still?”

These are the remaining stanzas, and of the five, taken alternately, three were spoken by the Bodhisatta, and two by the king.

“A Serpent mighty, full of force, born on that mountain land,

Caught me within his coils; and so here safe from death I stand.”

“Lo! I will take you back, O prince, to my own home again:

And there—what is the wood to you?—with blessing you shall reign.”

“As who a hook has swallowed, and draws it forth all blood,

Drawn forth, is happy: so I see in me this bliss and good.”

“Why speak you thus about a hook, why speak you thus of gore,

Why speak about the drawing out? come tell me, I implore.”

“Lust is the hook: fine elephants and horse by blood I show;

These by renouncing I have drawn; this, chieftain, you must know.”

“Thus, O great king, to be king is nothing to me; but do you see to it, that you break not the Ten Royal Virtues, but forsake evildoing, and rule in righteousness.” In those words the Great Being admonished the king. He with weeping and wailing departed, and on the way to his city he asked his courtiers: “On whose account was it that I made a breach with a son so virtuous?” they replied, “The queen’s.” Her the king caused to be seized, and cast headlong over the thieves’ cliff, and entering his city ruled in righteousness.

When the Master had ended this discourse, he said, “Thus, Brethren, this woman maligned me in days of yore, and came to dire destruction;” and then identified the Birth by repeating the last stanza:

“Lady Cinca was my mother,

Devadatta was my father,

I was then the Prince their son:

Sariputta was the spirit,

And the good snake, I declare it,

Was Ananda. I have done.”

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