Ja 513 — Jayaddisa Jātaka

English translation by H. T. Francis.

Source: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/suttacentral/sc-data/2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b/html_text/en/pli/sutta/kn/ja/vol5/ja513.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

“Lo! after,” etc.—This story the Master told of a Brother who supported his mother. The introductory story is like that told in the Sama Birth. But on this occasion the Master said, “Sages of old gave up the white umbrella with its golden wreath to support their parents,” and with these words he told a story of the past.

Once upon a time there lived a king in a city of the Northern Pancalas, in the kingdom of Kampilla, named Pancala. His queen consort conceived and bare a son. In a former existence her rival in the harem, being in a rage, said, “Some day I shall be able to devour your offspring,” and putting up a prayer to this effect she was turned into an ogress. Then she found her opportunity and, seizing the child before the very eyes of the queen and crunching and devouring it as if it were a piece of raw flesh, she made off. A second time she did exactly the same thing, but on the third occasion, when the queen had entered into her lying-in chamber, a guard surrounded the palace and kept a strict watch. On the day when she brought forth, the ogress again appeared and seized the child. The queen uttered a loud cry of “Ogress,” and armed soldiers, running up when the alarm was given by the queen, went in pursuit of the ogress. Not having time to devour the child, she fled and hid herself in a sewer. The child, taking the ogress for its mother, put its lips to her breast, and she conceived a mother’s love for the infant, and repairing to a cemetery she hid him in a rock-cave and watched over him. And as he gradually grew up, she brought and gave him human flesh, and they both lived on this food. The boy did not know that he was a human being; but, though he believed himself to be the son of the ogress, he could not get rid of or conceal his bodily form. So to bring this about she gave him a certain root. And by virtue of this root he concealed his form and continued to live on human flesh. Now the ogress went away to do service to the great king Vessavana, and died then and there. But the queen for the fourth time gave birth to a boy, and because the ogress was now dead, he was safe, and from the fact of his being born victorious over his enemy the ogress, he was called Jayaddisa (prince Victor). As soon as he was grown up and thoroughly educated in all learning, he assumed the sovereignty by raising the umbrella,

and ruled over the kingdom. At that time his queen consort gave birth to the Bodhisatta, and they called him prince Alinasattu. When he grew up and was fully instructed in all learning, he became viceroy. But the son of the ogress by carelessly destroying the root was unable to hide himself, but living in the cemetery he devoured human flesh in a visible form. People on seeing him were alarmed, and came and complained to the king: “Sire, an ogre in a visible shape is eating human flesh in the cemetery. In course of time he will find his way into the city and kill and eat the people. You ought to have him caught.” The king readily assented, and gave orders for his seizure. An armed force was stationed all round the city. The son of the ogress, naked and horrible to look upon, with the fear of death upon him, cried aloud and sprang into the midst of the soldiers. They, with a cry of “Here’s the ogre,” alarmed for their very lives, broke into two divisions and fled. And the ogre, escaping from thence, hid himself in the forest and no longer approached the haunts of men. And he took up his abode at the foot of a banyan tree near a high-road through the forest, and as people travelled by it, he would seize them one by one, and entering the wood killed and ate them. Now a brahmin, at the head of a caravan, gave a thousand pieces of money to the warders of the forest, and was journeying along the road with five hundred waggons. The ogre in human shape leaped upon them with a roar. The men fled in terror and lay grovelling on the ground. He seized the brahmin, And being wounded by a splinter of wood as he was fleeing, and being hotly pursued by the forest rangers, he dropped the brahmin and went and lay down at the foot of the tree where he dwelt. On the seventh day after this, king Jayaddisa proclaimed a hunt and set out from the city. Just as he was starting, a native of Takkasila, a brahmin named Nanda, who supported his parents, came into the king’s presence, bringing four stanzas, each worth a hundred pieces of money. The king stopped to listen to them, and ordered a dwelling-place to be assigned to him. Then going to the chase, he said, “That man on whose side the deer escapes shall pay the brahmin for his verses.” Then a spotted antelope was started, and making straight for the king escaped. The courtiers all laughed heartily. The king grasped his sword, and pursuing the animal came up with it after a distance of three leagues, and with a blow from his sword he severed it in two and hung the carcase on his carrying-pole. Then, as he returned, he came to the spot where the man-ogre was sitting, and after resting for a while on the kuca grass, he essayed to go on. Then the ogre rose up and cried “Halt! where are you going? You are my prey,” and seizing him by the hand, he spoke the first stanza:

Lo! after my long seven days’ fast

A mighty prey appears at last!

Pray tell me, art thou known to fame?

I fain would hear thy race and name.

The king was terrified at the sight of the ogre, and, becoming as rigid as a pillar, was unable to flee; but, recovering his presence of mind, he spoke the second stanza:

Jayaddisa, if known to thee,

Pancala’s king I claim to be:

Hunting thro’ fen and wood I stray:

Eat thou this deer; free me, I pray.

The ogre, on hearing this, repeated the third stanza:

To save thy skin, thou offerest me for food

This quarry, king, to which my claim is good:

Know I will eat thee first, and yet not balk

My taste for venison: cease from idle talk.

The king, on hearing this, called to mind the brahmin Nanda, and spoke the fourth stanza:

Should I not purchase the release I crave,

Yet let me keep the promise that I gave

A brahmin friend. To-morrow’s dawn shall see

My honour saved, and my return to thee.

The ogre, on hearing this, spoke the fifth stanza:

Standing so near to death, what is the thing

That thus doth sorely trouble thee, O king?

Tell me the truth, that so perhaps we may

Consent to let thee go for one brief day.

The king, explaining the matter, spoke the sixth stanza:

A promise once I to a brahmin made;

That promise still is due, that debt unpaid:

The vow fulfilled, to-morrow’s dawn shall see

My honour saved, and my return to thee.

On hearing this, the ogre spoke the seventh stanza:

A promise to a brahmin thou hast made;

That promise still is due, that vow unpaid.

Fulfil thy vow, and let to-morrow see

Thy honour saved and thy return to me.

And having thus spoken, he let the king go. And he, being allowed to depart, said, “Do not be troubled about me; I will return at daybreak,” and, taking note of certain landmarks by the way, he returned to his army, and with this escort made his entrance into the city. Then he summoned the brahmin Nanda, seated him on a splendid throne, and, after hearing his verses, presented him with four thousand pieces of money. And he made the brahmin mount a chariot and sent him away, bidding his servants conduct him straight to Takkasila. On the next day, being anxious to return, he called his son, and thus instructed him.

The Master, to explain the matter, spoke two stanzas:

Escaped from cruel goblin he did come

Full of sweet longings to his lovely home:

His word to brahmin friend he never broke,

But thus to dear Alinasattu spoke.

“My son, reign thou anointed king to-day

Ruling o’er friend and foe with righteous sway;

Let no injustice mar thy happy state;

I now from cruel goblin seek my fate.”

The prince, on hearing this, spoke the tenth stanza:

Fain would I learn what act or word

Lost me the favour of my lord,

That thou shouldst raise me to the throne

Which, losing thee, I would not own.

The king, on hearing this, spoke the next stanza:

Dear son, I fail to call to mind

A single word or act unkind,

But now that honour's debt is paid,

I'll keep the vow to ogre made.

The prince, on hearing this, spoke a stanza:

Nay, I will go and thou stay here;

No hope of safe return, I fear.

But shouldst thou go, I'll follow thee

And both alike will cease to be.

On hearing this, the king spoke a stanza:

With thee doth moral law agree,

But life would lose all charm for me,

If on wood-spit this ogre grim

Should roast and eat thee, limb by limb.

Hearing this, the prince spoke a stanza:

If from this ogre thou wilt fly,

For thee I am prepared to die:

Yea, gladly would I die, O king,

If only life to thee I bring.

On hearing this the king, recognizing his son's virtue, accepted his offer, saying, "Well, go, dear son." And so he bade his parents farewell and left the city.

The Master, to make the matter clear, spoke half a stanza:

Then the brave prince to his dear parents bade

A last farewell, with low obeisance made.

Then his parents and his sister and wife and the courtiers went forth from the city with him. And the prince here inquired of his father as to the way, and, after making careful arrangements and having admonished the others, he ascended the road and made for the abode of the ogre, as fearless as a maned lion. His mother, seeing him depart, could not restrain herself and fell fainting on the earth. His father, stretching out his arms, wept aloud.

The Master, making the matter clear, spoke the other half stanza:

His sire with outstretched arms, his son to stay,

Wept sore. His mother, grieving, swooned away.

And, thus making clear the prayer uttered by the father and the Act of Truth repeated by the mother and sister and wife, he uttered yet four more stanzas:

But when his son had vanished quite

From his despairing father’s sight,

With hands upraised the gods he praised

Kings Varuna and Soma hight,

Brahma and lords of Day and Night.

By these kept safe and sound of limb,

Escape, dear son, from ogre grim.”

“As Rama’s fair-limbed mother won

Salvation for her absent son,

When woods of Dandaka he sought,

So for my child is freedom wrought;

And by this Act of Truth I’ve charmed

The gods to bring thee home unharmed.”

“Brother, in thee no fault at all

Open or secret I recall;

And by this Act of Truth I’ve charmed

The gods to bring thee home unharmed."

"Void of offence art thou to me,

I too, my lord, bear love to thee;

And by this Act of Truth I've charmed

The gods to bring thee home unharmed."

And the prince, following his father's directions, set out on the road to the dwelling of the ogre. But the ogre thought, "Kshatriyas have many wiles: who knows what will happen?" and climbing the tree he sat looking out for the coming of the king. On seeing the prince, he thought, "The son has stopped his father and is coming himself. There's no fear about him." And descending from the tree he sat with his back to him. On coming up the youth stood in front of the ogre, who then spoke this stanza:

Whence art thou, youth so fair and fine?

Knowest thou this forest realm is mine?

They hold their lives but cheap who come

Where savage ogres find a home.

Hearing this, the youth spoke this stanza:

I know thee, cruel ogre, well;

Within this forest thou dost dwell.

Jayaddisa's true son stands here:

Eat me and free my father dear.

Then the ogre spoke this stanza:

Jayaddisa's true son I know;

Thy looks confess that it is so.

A hardship surely 'Tis for thee

To die, to set thy father free.

Then the youth spoke this stanza:

No mighty deed is this, I feel,

To die, and for a father's weal

And mother's love to pass away

And win the bliss of heaven for aye.

On hearing this, the ogre said, "There is no creature, prince, that is not afraid of death. Why are not you afraid?" And he told him the reason and recited two stanzas:

No evil deed of mine at all,

Open or secret, I recall:

Well weighed are birth and death by me,

As here, so 'Tis in worlds to be.

Eat me to-day, O mighty one,

And do the deed that must be done.

I'll fall down dead from some high tree,

Then eat my flesh, as pleaseth thee.

The ogre, on hearing his words, was terrified and said, "One cannot eat this man's flesh"; and, thinking by some stratagem to make him run away, he said:

If 'Tis thy will to sacrifice

Thy life, young prince, to free thy sire,

Then go in haste is my advice

And gather sticks to light a fire.

Having so done, the youth returned to him.

The Master, to make the matter clear, spoke another stanza:

Then the brave prince did gather wood

And, rearing high a mighty pyre,

Cried, lighting it, "prepare thy food;

See! I have made a goodly fire."

The ogre, when he saw the prince had returned and made a fire, said, "This is a lion-hearted fellow. Death has no terrors for him. Up to this time I have never seen so fearless a man." And he sat there, astounded, from time to time looking at the youth. And he, seeing what the ogre was about, spoke this stanza:

Stand not and gaze in dumb amaze,

Take me and slay, and eat, I pray,

While still alive, I will contrive

To make thee fain to eat to-day.

Then the ogre, hearing his words, spoke this stanza:

One so truthful, kindly, just,

Surely never may be eaten,

Or his head, who eats thee, must

Be to sevenfold pieces beaten.

The prince, on hearing this, said, "If you do not want to eat me, why did you bid me break sticks and make a fire?" and when the ogre replied, "It was to test you; for I thought you would run away," the prince said, "How now will you test me, seeing that, when in an animal form, I allowed Sakka, king of heaven, to put my virtue to the test?" And with these words he spoke this stanza—

To Indra once like some poor brahmin drest

The hare did offer its own flesh to eat;

Thenceforth its form was on the moon imprest;

That gracious orb as Yakkha now we greet.

The ogre, on hearing this, let the prince go and said,

As the clear moon from Rahu's grip set free

Shines at midmonth with wonted brilliancy,

So too do thou, Kampilla's lord of might,

Escaped from ogre, shed the joyous light

Of thy bright presence, sorrowing friends to cheer,

And bring back gladness to thy parents dear.

And saying, “Go, heroic soul,” he let the Great Being depart. And having made the ogre humble, he taught him the five moral laws, and, wishing to put it to the test whether or not he was an ogre, he thought, “The eyes of ogres are red and do not wink. They cast no shadow and are free from all fear. This is no ogre; it is a man. They say my father had three brothers carried off by an ogress; two of them must have been devoured by her, and one will have been cherished by her with the love of a mother for her child: this must be he. I will take him with me and tell my father, and have him established on the throne.” And so thinking he cried, “Ho! Sir, you are no ogre; you are my father’s elder brother. Well, come with me and raise your umbrella as emblem of sovereignty in your ancestral kingdom.” And when he replied, “I am not a man,” the prince said, “You do not believe me. Is there any one you will believe?” “Yes,” he said, “there is in such and such a place an ascetic gifted with supernatural vision.” So he took the ogre with him and went there. The ascetic no sooner caught sight of them than he said, “With what object are you two descendants from a common ancestor walking here?” And with these words he told them how they were related. The man-eater believed and said, “Dear friend, do you go home: as for me, I am born with two natures in one form. I have no wish to be a king. I’ll become an ascetic.” So he was ordained to the religious life by the ascetic. Then the prince saluted him and returned to the city.

The Master, to make the matter clear, spoke this stanza:

Then did bold prince Alinasattu pay

All due obeisance to that ogre grim,

And free once more did wend his happy way

Back to Kampilla, safe and sound of limb.

And when the youth reached the city, the Master explained to the townsfolk and the rest what the prince had done, and spoke the last stanza:

Thus faring forth afoot from town and country side,

Lo! eager throngs proclaim

The doughty hero’s name,

Or as aloft on car or elephant they ride

With homage due they come

To lead the victor home.

The king heard that the prince had returned and set out to meet him, and the prince, escorted by a great multitude, came and saluted the king. And he asked him, saying, “Dear son, how have you escaped from so terrible an ogre?” And he said, “Dear father, he is no ogre; he is your elder brother and my uncle.” And he told him all about it and said, “You must go and see my uncle.” The king at once ordered a drum to be beaten, and set out with a great retinue to visit the ascetics. The chief ascetic told them the whole story in full; how the child had been carried off by an ogress, and how instead of eating him she had brought him up as an ogre, and how they were related one to another. The king said, “Come, brother, do you reign as king.” “No, thank you, Sire,” he replied. “Then come and take up your abode in our park and I will supply you with the four requisites.” He refused to come. Then the king made a settlement on a certain mountain, not far from their hermitage, and, forming a lake, prepared cultivated fields and, bringing a thousand families with much treasure, he founded a big village and instituted a system of almsgiving for the ascetics. This village grew into the town Cullakammasadamma.

The region where the ogre was tamed by the Great Being Sutasoma was to be known as the town of Mahakammasadamma.

The Master, having ended his lesson, revealed the Truths and identified the Birth—At the conclusion of the Truths the elder who supported his mother was established in the fruition of the First Path—“At that time the father and mother were members of the king’s household, the ascetic was Sariputta, the man-eater was Angulimala, the young sister was Uppalavanna, the queen consort was Rahula’s mother, prince Alinasattu 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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