Ja 70 — Kuddala Jātaka

English translation by Robert Chalmers.

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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

“The conquest.”—This story was told by the Master while at Jetavana, about the Elder named Cittahattha-Sariputta. He is said to have been a youth of a good family in Savatthi; and one day, on his way home from ploughing, he turned in to the monastery. Here he received from the bowl of a certain Elder some dainty fare, rich and sweet, which made him think to himself,—“Day and night I am toiling away with my hands at divers tasks, yet never do I taste food so sweet. I must turn Brother myself!” So he joined the Brotherhood, but after six weeks’ zealous application to high thinking, fell under the dominion of Lusts and off he went. His belly again proving too much for him, back he came to join the Brotherhood once more, and studied the Abhidhamma. In this way, six times he left and came back again; but when for the seventh time he became a Brother, he mastered the whole seven books of the Abhidhamma, and by much chanting of the Doctrine of the Brothers won Discernment and attained to Arahatship. Now his friends among the Brethren scoffed at him, saying—“Can it be, sir, that Lusts have ceased to spring up within your heart?”

“Sirs,” was the reply, “I have now got beyond mundane life henceforth.”

He having thus won Arahatship, talk thereof arose in the Hall of Truth, as follows—“Sirs, though all the while he was destined to. all the glories of Arahatship, yet six times did Cittahattha-Sariputta renounce the Brotherhood; truly, very wrong is the unconverted state.”

Returning to the Hall, the Master asked what they were talking about. Being told, he said, “Brethren, the worldling’s heart is light and hard to curb; material things attract and hold it fast; when once it is so held fast, it cannot be released in a trice. Excellent is the mastery of such a heart; once mastered, it brings joy and happiness:

’Tis good to tame a headstrong heart and frail,

By passion swayed. Once tamed, the heart brings bliss.

It was by reason of this headstrong quality of the heart, however, that, for the sake of a pretty spade which they could not bring themselves to throw away, the wise and good of bygone days six times reverted to the world out of sheer cupidity; but on the seventh occasion they won Insight and subdued their cupidity." And so saying, he told this story of the past.

Once on a time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life again as a gardener, and grew up. 'Spade Sage' was his name. With his spade he cleared a patch of ground, and grew pot-herbs, pumpkins, gourds, cucumbers, and other vegetables, by the sale of which he made a sorry living. For, save only that one spade, he had nothing in the world! Resolving one day to forsake the world for the religious life, he hid his spade away, and became a recluse. But thoughts of that spade rose in his heart and the passion of greed overcame him, so that for the sake of his blunt spade he reverted to the world. Again and again this happened; six times did he hide the spade and become a recluse,—only to renounce his vows again. But the seventh time he bethought him how that blunt spade had caused him again and again to backslide; and he made up his mind to throw it into a great river before he became a recluse again. So he carried the spade to the river-side, and, fearing lest if he saw where it fell, he should come back and fish it out again, he whirled the spade thrice round his head by the handle and flung it with the strength of an elephant right into mid-stream, shutting his eyes tight as he-did so. Then loud rang his shout of exultation, a shout like a lion's roar,—"I have conquered! I have conquered!"

Now just at that moment the King of Benares, on his way home from quelling disorder on the border, had been bathing in that very river, and was riding along in all his splendour on the back of his elephant, when he heard the Bodhisatta's shout of triumph. "Here's a man," said the king, "who is proclaiming that he has conquered. I wonder whom he has conquered. Go, bring him before me."

So the Bodhisatta was brought before the king, who said to him, "My good man, I am a conqueror myself; I have just won a battle and am on my way home victorious. Tell me whom you have conquered." "Sire," said the Bodhisatta, "a thousand, yea, a hundred thousand, such victories as yours are vain, if you have not the victory over the Lusts within yourself. It is by conquering greed within myself that I have conquered my Lusts." And as he spoke, he gazed upon the great river, and by duly concentrating all his mind upon the idea of water, won Insight. Then by virtue of his newly-won transcendental powers, he rose in the air, and, seated there, instructed the King in the Truth in this stanza—

The conquest that by further victories

Must be upheld, or own defeat at last,

Is vain! True conquest lasts for evermore!

Even as he listened to the Truth, light shone in on the king's darkness, and the Lusts of his heart were quenched; his heart was bent on renouncing the world; then and there the lust for royal dominion passed away from him. "And where will you go now?" said the king to the Bodhisatta. "To the Himalayas, sire; there to live the anchorite's life." "Then I, too, will become an anchorite," said the king; and he departed with the Bodhisatta. And with the king there departed also the whole army, all the brahmins and householders and all the common folk,—in a word, all the host that was gathered there.

Tidings came to Benares that their king, on hearing the Truth preached by the Spade Sage, was fain to live the anchorite's life and had gone forth with all his host. "And what shall we do here?" cried the folk of Benares. And thereupon, from out that city which was twelve leagues about, all the inhabitants went forth, a train twelve leagues long, with whom the Bodhisatta passed to the Himalayas.

Then the throne of Sakka, King of Devas, became hot beneath him. Looking out, he saw that the Spade Sage was engaged upon a Great

Renunciation. Marking the numbers of his following, Indra took thought how to house them all. And he sent for Vissakamma, the architect of the Devas, and spoke thus—"The Spade Sage is engaged upon a Great Renunciation, and quarters must be found for him. Go you to the Himalayas, and there on level ground fashion by divine power a hermit's demesne thirty leagues long and fifteen broad."

"It shall be done, sire," said Vissakamma. And away he went, and did what he was bidden.

(What follows is only a summary; the full details will be given in the Hatthipala-jataka, which forms one narrative with this.) Vissakamma caused a hermitage to arise in the hermit's demesne; drove away all the noisy beasts and birds and fairies; and made in each cardinal direction a path just broad enough for one person to pass along it at a time. This done, he betook himself to his own abode. The Spade Sage with his host of people came to the Himalayas and entered the demesne which Indra had given and took possession of the house and furniture which Vissakamma had created for the hermits. First of all, he renounced the world himself, and afterwards made the people renounce it. Then he portioned out the demesne among them. They abandoned all their sovereignty, which rivalled that of Sakka himself; and the whole thirty leagues of the demesne were filled. By due performance of all the other rites that conduce to Insight, the Spade Sage developed perfect good-will within himself, and be taught the people how to meditate. Hereby they all won the Attainments, and assured their entry thereafter into the Brahma-Realm, whilst all who ministered to them qualified for entry thereafter into the Realm of Devas.

"Thus, Brethren," said the Master, "the heart, when passion holds it fast, is hard to release. When the attributes of greed spring up within it, they are hard to chase away, and even persons so wise and good as the above are thereby rendered witless." His lesson ended, he preached the Truths, at the close whereof some won the First, some the Second, and some the Third Path, whilst others again attained to Arahatship. Further, the Master shewed the connexion and identified the Birth by saying, "Ananda was the king of those days, the

Buddha’s followers were the followers, and I myself the Spade Sage.”

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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