

THE
DASARATHA-JĀTAKA,

BEING THE BUDDHIST STORY OF

KING RĀMA.

THE ORIGINAL PĀLI TEXT

WITH

A TRANSLATION

AND

NOTES

BY

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The Dararatha Jataka was composed before the Valmiki Ramayana (400 BCE). It had no Hanuman or Ravana. Sita was not abducted. She went home escorted by Bharata. Rama lived in Banaras not Ayodhya. It is obvious that the Valmiki and Dasaratha Jataka were borrowed from a common source.

THE DASARATHA-BIRTH.

„Come Lakkhaṇa and Sitā.“ This the Master related, (while) living at Jetavana, concerning a householder whose father had died. For he, when (his) father was dead, overcome with grief, abandoned all work and became a slave to grief. The Master, at the time of dawn, surveying the world and seeing his (the householder's) happiness in (the possession of) the fruits of the state of a sotāpanna, after walking about in Sāvatti on the following day, and after holding (his) repast, sent away the bhikkhus, and taking (with him only) one samaṇa as an attendant, went to his (the householder's) house. Accosting in a mild voice him who had sat down after bowing (to the Master), he said: „dost thou grieve, O upāsaka?“ and having been answered: „yes, Lord, grief for (my) father oppresses me,“ he rejoined: „O upāsaka, the sages of old knowing thoroughly the eight realities (of life), when the father (of any of them) had died, did not in the least grieve,“ and (when) called on by him he told a story:

In (times) past (there lived) in Bārāṇasī a great king. Dasaratha by name, (who) after abandoning a reckless life reigned with justice. His queen (who was) the head-wife of 16000 women bore (unto him) two sons and one daughter. The elder son was the sage Rāma by name, the second the prince Lakkhaṇa, the daughter the princess Sitā by name. Afterwards the queen died. The king, when she was dead,

after having for a long time given way to the sway of sorrow (was at length) brought to reason by (his) ministers, (and) when he had performed the necessary funeral ceremonies he set another in the place of queen. She became dear (and) pleasing to the king. She afterwards having conceived and having gone through the ceremonies (on occasion) of her conception, bore a son. They named him prince Bharata. From love to (this) son the king said: „(my) dear, I grant thee a boon, accept it.“ She having accepted (it, but) leaving it in abeyance (for a while), at the time, when the prince was (about) seven (or) eight years (old) went to the king and said: „Lord, a boon was conferred by you upon my son, now grant it him.“ „Take (it, my) dear.“ „Lord, give the kingdom to my son.“ The king snapping his fingers (angrily at her) reprimanded (her saying): „wretched outcast, my two sons shine like masses of fire, thou askest (me to give) the kingdom to thy son after having put them both to death.“ She (was at first) terrified (and) entered the inner apartment, (but) on subsequent days she again and again asked the king for the kingdom. The king, however, not granting her that boon, thought: „women, as (well) known, are ungrateful (and) treacherous, this one either by writing false letters or by resorting to mean bribery will have my sons killed,“ (and) so having summoned (his) sons (and) told them the matter (he said): „(my) dears, if you (continue to) live here, there may be obstacles (in your way), go (therefore) to a neighbouring kingdom or to the forest, come back at time of my funeral pyre and seize upon the paternal kingdom,“ (and) so having said, after again calling the astrologers and asking (them) the limit of his life, and hearing that another twelve years would pass (before his death) he said: „(my) dears, after the lapse of twelve years (hence) return and raise the (royal) um-

brella.“ They said „well,“ bowed to (their) father and descended from the palace weeping. The princess Sītā (saying): „I too will go away with my dear brothers,“ bowed to her father and went out weeping. These three having gone out surrounded by a multitude (of people), and having, after sending back the multitude, gradually entered the Himavanta, built a hermitage in a region abounding with water (and) where various kinds of fruits were easily to be had, and resided (there) subsisting on fruits. The sage Lakkhaṇa, however, and Sītā, demanding of the sage Rāma (said): „you stand in our father’s place, therefore do you stay at the hermitage, we will bring fruits and nourish you,“ and so they took (his) promise. From that (moment) the sage Rāma remains there. The others brought fruits and watched over him. (While) they were residing (there), living on fruits, the great king Dasaratha ended his days from sorrow for his sons in the ninth year (after their departure). Having finished the funeral rites over him the queen said: „Raise the umbrella for my son, prince Bharata.“ But the ministers (said): „the masters of the umbrella live in the forest, (and) so (they) did not allow it. The prince Bharata (saying to himself): „I will bring my brother the sage Rāma from the forest and raise the umbrella (for him),“ took the five royal insignia, reached with a four-fold army his dwelling-place, and after halting the army at a short distance entered the hermitage with a few attendants at a time, when the sage Lakkhaṇa and Sītā had gone to the forest. Having approached the sage Rāma, who was sitting at ease and without desires at the door of the hermitage like a fixed golden statue, and having bowed (to him) and, while standing apart, told the tidings of the king’s death), he fell down at (his) feet together with the attendants and wept. The sage

Rāma neither grieved nor wept, there was not even the slightest commotion of his senses. While Bharata was thus sitting weeping, the other two at the evening-time came back bringing (with them) various kinds of fruits. (Then) the sage Rāma thought: „These are young, they have no discriminative understanding, as I have; if on a sudden they are told: ‘your father is dead,’ they will not be able to bear the sorrow, (but) their hearts will break; by some means I will get them to go down into the water and (then) I will tell (them) these tidings.“ Then showing them a pool in front of them (he said): „At length you have come, this be your punishment, go down into this water and stay (there,“ and) so (having said) he at the same time pronounced the (first) half-stanza:

1 a. „Come Lakkhaṇa and Sītā,
both go down into the water.“

They, at (his) mere call, went down and stayed (there). Then telling them those tidings, he pronounced the (other) half-stanza:

1 b. „Thus says this Bharata:
‘The king Dasaratha is dead’.“

Hearing the tidings of (their) father’s death, they became insensible. He again told them, (and) they again became insensible. Thus for the third time having become insensible, the attendants raised them up, took (them) out of the water and comforted (them). They all sat mutually crying and lamenting. Then prince Bharata thought: „my brother prince Lakkhaṇa and (my) sister princess Sītā, having heard the tidings of (their) father’s death, are not able to restrain their sorrow, but the sage Rāma mourns not (and) laments not, what can be the reason of his not mourning, I will ask him,“ (and) so asking him he pronounced the second stanza:

2. „By what strength (of mind), o Rāma,
dost thou not mourn what is to be mourned;
having heard (that thy) father (is) dead
pain does not overwhelm thee.“

Then the sage Rāma, telling him the reason of his not mourning, (said):

3. „What cannot be preserved
by man, even if much bewailed,
for such a thing's sake why should the intelligent (and)
distress himself. [wise (man)]

4. For both the young and the old,
(those) who (are) foolish and (those) who (are) wise,
both the rich and the poor,
all (are) tending to death.

5. As ripe fruits
always are in danger of falling,
so born mortals
always are in danger of death.

6. In the evening some are not seen (any more)
(although) in the morning many were seen;
(and) in the morning some are not seen,
(although) in the evening many were seen.

7. If by lamenting
the fool who (only) injures himself,
gains anything, —
let the wise (man) do the same, too.

8. (But) he (only) becomes lean (and) sallow,
 (while) injuring his own self,
 (and) the dead are not saved,
 lamentation (therefore) is of no avail.
9. As a house on fire
 is extinguished by water,
 so also the pensive, well informed,
 intelligent, wise man
 rapidly drives away arisen sorrow
 as the wind a tuft of cotton.
10. Alone a mortal passes away,
 alone he is born in a family;
 but the enjoyment of all beings
 has association for its highest (aim).
11. Therefore sorrows, even if they be great, do not rack
 the heart and mind of the wise (and) learned (man),
 of him, who sees through this world and the next
 after having known the law.
12. I however will give and enjoy,
 and I will maintain (my) relations,
 the rest I will protect;
 such is a wise (man's) vocation;“

(and) thus by these stanzas he elucidated the uncertainty (of all things). The assembly having heard this religious discourse of the sage Rāma, elucidating the uncertainty (of all things), became free from sorrow. Then prince Bharata bowing to the sage Rāma, said: „accept the kingdom of Bārāṇasī.“ „(My) dear, take Lakkhaṇa and the princess Sītā

and go and rule the kingdom.“ „But you, Lord?“ „(My) dear, my father said to me, ‘after the lapse of twelve years then come and rule’, if I go now I shall not fulfil his words, but having passed three years more (here) I will come.“ „Who shall reign during that time?“ „Do you reign.“ „We shall not.“ „Well then, until my return these shoes shall reign,“ so (saying) he took off his straw-shoes and gave (them to Bharata). Those three persons, having taken the shoes and bowed to the sage Rāma, went to Bārāṇasī, surrounded by a multitude (of people). For three years the shoes reigned. The ministers, after placing the straw-shoes on the royal couch, consider the case. If it be badly considered, the shoes strike against each other. (Taking warning) by this sign they again consider (the case). At the time when the case is duly considered the shoes sit together noiselessly. The sage Rāma at the end of three years went out of the forest, and on reaching the city of Bārāṇasī entered the Park. Having learned his arrival the princes, surrounded by the ministers, went to the Park, and after making Sitā queen they anointed them both. Thus having received the (royal) unction, Mahāsatta standing on an adorned chariot, entered the city with a large retinue, and after a reverential salutation having ascended the upper story of the magnificent palace Sucandaka, he from that time reigned with justice during 16000 years, and (then) went to heaven.

„During ten thousand years
and sixty centuries
the fine-necked and great-armed
Rāma reigned.“

This stanza by him who possessed universal knowledge illustrates the matter.

The Master having given this instruction, summed up the jātaka thus: — at the end of the (exposition of the four) truths the householder remained in (possession of) the fruits of a sotāpanna — At that time the great king Dasaratha was the great king Suddhodana, the mother (of Rāma) Mahāmāyā, Sītā the mother of Rāhula, Bharata Ānanda, Lakkhaṇa Sāriputta, the assembly the assembly of Buddha, (and) the sage Rāma myself. The Dasaratha-Birth.

NOTES.

To constitute the text of this Jātaka I have had two Singhalese MSS., viz. that of Copenhagen described in Westergaard's Codd. Orient. p. 36 (C), and a Paper Transcript which Mr. Childers has kindly procured for me from Ceylon (C^a). The text of the former being evidently the older, I have founded my edition on that, and I have not ventured to introduce the ameliorations of the latter into the text, excepting only double-nasals instead of anusvāra and a nasal.

Matapitika, so both MSS.; it ought, I suppose, to be written with a short i, but as the Burmese MS. of Jātaka 346 which I give below, reads matapittika I have not dared to alter it. Kuṭumbika (S. kuṭumbin) is in Pāli sometimes written kuṭimbika. Kālakata is sometimes written kālānkata which I suppose to be an innovation. Upanissaya, in my translation of this word I have followed Clough who in his Singhalese Dictionary (see upaniṣaya) renders it by „happiness, fortune.“ By Turnour (Mahāwanso p. 36,4) it is translated „perfection in piety“, otherwise pp. 24. 34. Alwis (Attanagalu-Vansa p. 175) renders the passage: „perceived that this person was predestined to attain the paths.“ But should not the word