TWO BAS-RELIEFS
OF THE
STUPA OF BHARHUT.
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EXPLAINED BY

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TWO BAS-RELIEFS OF THE STUPA OF BHARHUT.

Among the numerous sculptures on the railings and pillars of the Bharhut stupa, that magnificent Buddhist monument of which General Cunningham has given in his precious work 1) a minute description and beautiful photographs, many bas-reliefs are illustrations of scenes taken from the Jatakas, stories from previous existences of the Buddha Gautama. Most of those bas-reliefs have inscriptions and as, moreover, the scenes they represent are on the whole very characteristic, the Jataka illustrations have been, for the greater part, identified by Cunningham himself, and, after him, by Rhys Davids 2), with the Jataka story in the Pali collection which they illustrate. Since 1880, the date of Rhys David’s book, Vol. III and IV of Prof. Fausbøll’s edition of the Jatakas 3), have appeared, containing 210 stories, by which it is possible to give a text to others of those sculptured illustrations of the tales that have flowed more than twenty centuries ago from the mouth of the great Master.

On the following pages I have endeavoured to explain two of those bas-reliefs.

The first bears the inscription: *Kinara Jātaka*. General Cunningham gives the following notice, page 69:


"This small bas-relief is unfortunately broken, so that the lower halves of the three figures are wanting; but there can be no doubt that the two standing figures are intended for Kinnaras, male and female, in accordance with the title of the Jātaka.

The Kinnara was a fabulous being 1), the upper half of whose body was human, and lower half that of a bird, and the big leaves or feathers which go round the bodies of the two standing figures, must have separated their human bodies from their bird legs.

"In a list of the 550 Jātakas of Ceylon, kindly furnished to me by Subhūti, there is only one in which the name of Kinnara occurs. This is the Chandra Kinnara Jātaka, which agrees with the Bharhut bas-relief in limiting its actors to a Raja and a pair of Kinnaras, male and female. The following is a brief summary of the story made from Subhūti’s translation of the Jātaka."

This story is now published in Vol. IV of Fausböll’s edition. It is No. 485, and may be condensed thus: A hunting raja sees, himself unseen, a pair of Kinnaras; he shoots the Kinnara and endeavours to seduce the Kinnari. She escapes; he goes away and Saka revives the Kinnara.

Cunningham ends his notice with these words:

"If this is the same as is represented in the Bharhut bas-relief, then the sculptured version differs from the Pali legend of Ceylon in making the pair of Kinnaras dance before the Raja of Benares while he is seated on a chair or throne."

1) *Tiracchānagatā* i.e. animals, they are called Jātaka IV, 442.
It is clear that the Candakinnarajātaka can not be connected with this sculpture. There is in the whole story no scene corresponding to the illustration.

I take the bas-relief to be an illustration of the Bhallatīya Jātaka, n°. 504 of Fausböll's edition, told by the Lord to their royal highnesses Pasenadi (Prasenajit), King of Kosala, and his queen-consort (aggamahesi) Mallika.

This Mallika was the only daughter of a garland seller in Savatthi, the residence of Pasenadi; she was young, fair and pious. In consequence of a gift to the Buddha she had been exalted to the high position of queen-consort 1).

That she is thus suddenly raised in rank causes in her fits of pride and now and then a quarrel with the King; but otherwise she is an amiable, modest and faithful wife. Therefore the Lord Buddha loves her and does take to heart the quarrels between the royal couple and tells many charming tales in order to reconcile or to amuse them.

Thus he has told Mallikam devin arabbha, concerning the queen Mallika, the Sujatajātaka (306), the Kummasapiṇḍajātaka (415) and the Bhallatīyajātaka (504). Of the lastnamed a faithful translation is given here.

The introduction is almost the same as in 306:

This story was told by the Lord in Jetavana concerning Mallika devi.

Once she had a quarrel with the king, a soyanakalaho or sirivivado, that is a bedchamber quarrel.

Annoyed the king took no notice of her any more.

She thought »Surely our Master the Buddha doesn't know that the king is angry with me.«

The Lord heard of the event. Next day he went with his monks a begging his food in the city and came to the palace. The king, coming to meet him, took his bowl from

1) This event is very romantically related in the pacuppampannavatthu of Jātaka 415.
him, begged him to enter the palace and let the monks seat themselves. After having served them with sweet and savoury food he sat down near to them.

Said the Lord: "Why doesn’t the queen appear?" The king answered: "She is maddened by the pride of her prosperity." Quoth the Lord: "In a former time, o king, when you were born as a kinnara and were separated from your kinnari one night you have repented it seven hundred years." At the request of the king he now tells what happened during a former life.

The introduction to 306 relates the same story in terms somewhat different from those used above. The king is so angry on account of the same cause that he even ignores the existence of the queen. The Lord, hearing the royal pair does not live on friendly terms, thinks: "I will reconcile them with each other"; goes to the palace, but, before accepting any food, asks where the queen is. "Don’t mind her (says the king); her success has made her presumptuous." "Sire, says the Lord, you have raised her so high your self; having raised a woman so high, you must also bear with her faults." The king sends for her and the Lord exhorts them to peace and concord, by telling the Sujatajataka, which, however by no means so pretty, has the same effect as the Bhalatiyajataka, the translation of which is as follows:

One day the king of Benares, Bhallatiya by name, thought: "I should like to eat meat of deer roasted on coals." After having entrusted the affairs of government to his ministers, he left the city, armed with five sorts of weapons, and followed by a pack of excellently trained dogs. Thus going along the Ganges, he went up the Himavat mountains. When he could not ascend higher there, he followed a rivulet, that flowed into the Ganges, killed many antelopes, bears etc., and having eaten meat, roasted on coals, he climbed up a
hill. At the foot of the hill flowed a beautiful rivulet, of which the water, when swollen, reached to the breast, when shallow, to the knees. A multitude of various fishes and tortoises swam in it; the sand along the banks glittered like silver; on either shore stood, bent by the burden of flowers and fruits, various trees, full of birds and bees, intoxicated by the fragrance and the juice of the flowers and fruits, while various beasts, antelopes etc., sought a shelter in the shade of the trees. On the banks of that delicious stream the king saw two kinnaras, who, embracing and kissing each other, wailed and wept. He thought: "I will ask those kinnaras why they weep," and looking at his dogs, he snapped his fingers, at which the well trained noble animals crept into the bushes, and crouched down on the ground. When he had seen that they were gone, he deposed his bow and quiver and other weapons near a tree on the earth, and, having stolen softly up to the kinnaras, he asked "Why are both of you crying?"

The kinnara said nothing, but the kinnari, conversing with the king, spoke the following stanza;

Kinnari. Mallagiri, Pandarakša, and Tikuta, along those cool rivers do we sojourn. Animals and men, o hunter, know us as kimpurishas.

King. Most piteously are ye wailing, although the beloved is embraced by his beloved. I ask thee, that art endowed with a human body, why are ye weeping here so sadly in the wood?

(This stanza is twice repeated with the only change from weeping to lamenting and mourning).

Kinnari. Against our will we passed a single night separated from each other, o hunter, thinking of each other; remorseful we mourn for that single night: that night can not return.
King. That single night for which you mourn as for lost money or a dead father — I ask thee, fair creature, how did it happen that you passed that night separated?

Kinnari. The rapid stream, you see, whose rocky shores are covered with various trees, my beloved once crossed in the rainy season, believing that I followed him.

And I myself gather ankolakas, and atimuttas, and sattra- lis ¹): my lover shall wear a wreath of flowers and I, myself covered with flowers, I will go to him.

And gathering flowers from blossoming riceplants, I make a garland: my lover shall wear etc.

And gathering flowers from a flowering sal tree, I make a heap; this shall be a couch for us, on which to lie down to night.

And careless I crush with a stone aloe and sandelwood; my beloved's body shall be perfumed, and, with a perfumed body I shall go to him.

But the water came quickly, carrying along my flowers and garlands; the river was filled and could not be crossed ²).

Thus we stood each on a bank, seeing each other; and now we wept, then we laughed and slowly that night crept.

And early in the morning, as soon as the sun had risen, we crossed the shallow river, huntsman, and, embracing each other, we, both of us, wept and laughed.

Within three years 700 years have elapsed since we spent here a night, separated from each other, huntsman; your life lasts but a hundred years; how can you dwell here without your beloved?

King. And your life, how long does it last? If you know,

¹) The original has many other names of flowers.
²) There is a very fine poem by J. Ingelow, translated by our great poet Potgieter: „Gescheiden“ in which also two lovers are separated by a river. But the conception of the modern poet is loftier, and moreover symbolical.
by tradition or by the report of the ancients, tell me the
time of your life].

Kinnar̲i. Our life lasts a thousand years, and during it we
know no hideous sickness; few are the sufferings, more nu-
merous the joys; ever loving, we leave life.

Having heard this the king thought: »These beings, which
are but animals, mourn seven hundred years for the separa-
tion of a single night, while I dwell in the woods, having
left the delightful pleasures of my great kingdom of 300
yojanas. Alas! I am a fool!» And he returned to Benares, told
his ministers what had happened to him, and passed his life
in giving gifts and enjoying pleasures.

Then thee Lord spoke two stanzas:

»Having heard this from not human beings, rejoice and
quarrel no more, lest remorse torment you, like the kinna-
r̲as that single night.»

And the queen Mallika, having heard the Lord’s exhorta-
tion, arose from her seat, and raising her joined hands to
her forehead, she praised the Lord, and spoke the last
stanza:

»With a believing mind, I hear thee, pouring forth many
blessful words; speaking, o Lord, thou dispels my pain.
O happiness bringing samaya. live long for us!»

And the king of Kosala lived thenceforth in peace with
his queen.

Jataka 306 has also been told by the Lord, with the same
intention and the same effect, whence it may be perhaps
inferred, that, by the editors themselves of the Jatakasbook,
the pious fiction, that the Lord Buddha should have told all
those tales on particular occasions, was itself considered a
fiction and treated as such.

1) I am not quite sure about the meaning of the text.
It is clear that this Bhallaṭiyajātaka is a tale, better fitting to the bas-relief, than the Kinnarajātaka (485), in which the king kills the Kinnara unawares, and the Kinnari escapes, so that, in not any part of the tale, the Kinnara couple stands quietly before the calmly seated Raja. The only difficulty is the title, but it is not paramount, as the titles, engraved on the sculptures, often differ from those of the corresponding Pali stories. The Naga jātaka, for example (Cunningham, Plate XXV), is the same as the Kakkaṭa (267) of the Pali collection; Hamsaj. (Plate XXVII) is called in the Palibook Naccajātaka (32).

Even the Kinnarajātaka in question is there called Canda-kinnaraj. The Bhishaharanīyaj. (Plate XLVIII), not identified by Cunningham, has in the Ceylonese collection the title of Bhisajātaka (488).

The second bas-relief also, which I will now explain, bears a quite different title from the corresponding Jātaka story.

The photograph is given by General Cunningham on plate XLVI and is very fine, very clear and characteristic. Cunningham gives the following description:

"The actors in this scene are a holy Rishi, with a pair of dogs and a pair of cats. The simple title of Uda Jātaka does not occur in the long list of the 550 Jātakas of Ceylon; but there is an Udasā or Udacani J. and an Uddala J., one of which may possibly be the subject of the Bharhut sculpture. The Rishi is seated on the ground with his waterbowl and a basket of food near him. Before him is a pool of water, stocked with fish. On the bank a pair of cats are quarrelling over the head and tail of a fish, and beyond them are two dogs, one trotting joyfully off with a bone, and the other sitting down disappointed, with his back turned to his luckier rival. — This story ought to be identified at once by any one possessing a complete copy of the 550 Ja-
takas. The title of *Uda Jataka* means simply the "Water Birth", but I suspect that the name has been unintentionally shortened by the sculptor."

It is quite true what Cunningham says that "any one possessing a complete copy ought to identify at once the story"; so striking is the illustration, that I recognised it at first sight.

The tale is called, in the Pali collection, the *Dabbhapup-phajataka* (400). Here follows the translation.

In olden times, when Brahmadatta reigned at Benares, the Bodhisat was a treegod, on the bank of a river. Then a jackal, Deceitful was his name, dwelt there on that bank. Now one day his wife said to him: »Dear Sir, a *dohalo* 1) has taken hold of me: I long to eat a fresh goldfish." Quoth the jackal: »Be easy, my dear, I will bring thee a goldfish." Having spoken these words, he strolled along the bank of the river, through the creeping plants. Just at that moment, Deepgoing and Riverbankgoing, two otters (*udda* 2) Skrt. उद्रा, were standing on the bank, prying for fish. And Deepgoing saw a big goldfish; quickly he sprung into the flood and seized the fish by the tail. But the big fish dragged him along.

Therefore he called his friend to the rescue, crying:
»Riverbankgoing, my dear friend, rescue me!
I have taken a big fish, but he drags me along with force."

On hearing this the other spoke the second stanza:
»Deepgoing, my dear, take hold of him strongly;
I shall draw him out of the water, as a *garudabird* a serpent."

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1) *Dohalo* is the craving desire of a pregnant woman. The *dohalas* play a great part in the tales. In Jataka 501 a queen sees in a dream a goldcoloured deer. Awaked she thinks: "If I say to the king that I have seen it in a dream, he will take no heed of it; but when I say it is a dohala he will do his uttermost to procure it," and she acts accordingly with the best effect.

2) The title on the bas-relief is *Uda*, as consonants are not doubled.
And together they drew the fish on shore and killed him.

But as they were about to divide their prey, they quarrelled and so they sat there, not knowing how to divide it rightly. Just at that moment the jackal appeared on the bank. Seeing him, both turned to him and spoke the third stanza:

»Strife has arisen betwixt us, o Kuçagrasscoloured, listen to me; Appetise our strife, Sir, let our quarrel be ended!'.

Having heard those words the jackal said:

»I have always been just, many cases have been decided by me; I will appease your strife; this quarrel shall be ended."

And dividing the fish, he said:

»The tail is for Deepgoing, the head for Riverbankgoing, the middle part shall be for me, the just."

Having thus divided the prey, he said: »Don't quarrel any more, but eat the head and the tail," and, having seized the middle part with his teeth, he ran away. Sadfaced they sat there, as if they had lost a thousand coins and spoke the sixth stanza:

»For many a time there would have been food, if we had not quarrelled; Now the jackal robs us of the fish without head and tail."

The jackal was very glad in his mind, as he thought:

»To-day my wife shall eat a goldfish," and he ran to her. Seeing him she said, rejoicing:

»As a noble king would rejoice, having taken a kingdom, So I to-day rejoice, seeing my lord fullmouthed."

And asking him in what way he had got hold of his prey:

»How hast thou, that art landborn, taken a fish in the water? Answer my question, sir, how hast thou seized it?"

And the jackal, telling her in what way he had gotten hold of the fish, said thereupon:

»By quarrelling they grow poor, by quarrelling they lose
their wealth; The otters have lost their prey by strife, eat thou, Deceitful, this fish."

I think, it can’t rationally be disputed that the bas-relief is an illustration of this tale, and that the cats and dogs of General Cunningham are otters and jackals. I must confess I can’t see disappointment on the face of one of the jackals. As he is the bigger of the two, I think he is the he-jackal, that, having given the fish to his wife, casts a departing glance at the deceived otters. The human figure on the bas-relief is, beyond doubt, a Rishi, and not a devata; but that difference is of no importance because the Bodhisat, as in more Jatakas, where he is a treegod, takes no part in the action, but is only a figurant, a καθότι πρίβων.

I have nowhere met with a downright imitation of this Jataka story. Only the well-known fable of La Fontaine, L’huître et les plaideurs (X, 9), seems to be a far-off echo of it 1). La Fontaine has taken it from Boileau, who has versified it in his second Epître. Unfortunately I have not been able to discover whence Boileau has taken it. He himself says: "Un jour, dit un auteur, n’importe en quel chapitre", and the only annotator, I have been able to consult, says, with the same nonchalance, that "elle est tirée d’une ancienne comédie Italienne". Likewise Eugène Lèvèque, in his uncritical work: "Les mythes et les légendes de l’Inde et la Perse dans Aristophane etc.", speaking of this fable and comparing it injudiciously with a buddhist Avadana 2), translated from the Chinese by St. Julien (Avadana LXXIV), says flippantly:

1) Imitations of this fable are to be found in French reading-books.

2) This Avadana, "La dispute des deux démons", is quite the same story as that of king Putraka and the two men with the magic cup, staff, and pair of slippers, of Somadeva’s first book, and bears but a remote likeness to the Jata-told by Somadeva in his first book, and bears but a remote likeness to the Jata, -told by Somadeva in his first book, and bears but a remote likeness to the Jata-

"n vechten om een beem, Een derde loopt er ras mee heen."

"Twee hond-
“Pour arriver à La Fontaine, la Dispute des deux Démones a été transformée dans un fabliau français ou italien”.

Of the same origin as La Fontaine’s fable is perhaps the story of the two cats, which, having stolen some cheese, quarrel about the division of their prize, refer the matter to a monkey to act as arbitrator and are cheated by their judge.

This Jataka contains nine stanzas; moreover, in the epilogue the Lord himself, as Abhisambuddha, speaks a tenth stanza; nevertheless it is classed in the seventh section (sattanipāta).

It is also worth remarking that the moral, pointed out by the Lord in the last stanza, does not agree with the moral of the introductory story.

The stanza says: “So, where strife arises between men, they run to a just man: he teaches them what is right; then they lose their wealth; and the king’s treasure increases.”

In the introductory story a tale is told of the greedy priest Upananda. It is a fictitious tale, partly composed of a story told in the Mahavagga (VIII, 25 p. 300), where Upananda three times accepts a lot of clothes from some monks who are dividing clothes, presented to them at the end of the vassa. The Buddha, on hearing of the bad conduct of Upananda, disapproves of it, and reproves him, ending with the solemn formula: apatti dukkatassa.

Out of this Mahavagga chapter and the Jataka story itself the Introductory story (pacuppannaçāthu) is composed, not very artistically indeed. In it Upananda is represented as a monk, who, exhorting his fellowmonks to simplicity

1) I have met with this fable in Chambers’s National Reading book, III part, where it is given without the name of the author.

2) E.g.: An in the Jataka story occurring expression (vallīyā pañce pañibuddhita) is somewhat clumsily adopted in the Introduction.
and modesty, so that his hearers throw away their fine
clothes and wear tattered garments (as monks ought to do),
procures for himself a good many fine robes and finally cheats
two old priests, who have invoked his aid, as the otters
that of the jackal. The Lord, hearing of his hypocrisy and
robbery, says: "Upananda has not, o monks, acted accor-
ding to moral duty; a monk, who preaches about their du-
ties to others, ought in the first place to act up to his
principles, and then admonish others.

"Let each man apply himself first to what is proper;
Then let him teach others; thus a wise man will not suffer."

(Dhammapada vs. 158)

Not now for the first time, o monks, in a previous exis-
tence also has Upananda been covetous and greedy; neither
does he rob only now these monks of their property; for-
merly also did he do so."

Then he tells the Birth Story, in concluding which he
identifies Upananda with the jackal, the two old monks
with the otters and himself with the tree deity.

The two Jataka stories, spoken of above, are very old
stories, as is testified by their being cut in stone on the
Bharhut monument, the age of which is assigned by General
Cunningham to the Asoka period, somewhere between
250 and 200 B.C. There are many stories in the Pali col-
lection, which, though not sculptured on that monument,
date also at least from the third or fourth century B.C., as
they are already found (not yet in the form of Jatakas) in
the older texts, e.g. the Dighitikosulaj. (371) in Mahavagga
X, 2, the Tittirij. (37) in Cullavagga VI, 6. As in the case
of the Uda- or Dabbhapupphaj, the introduction of many
other stories has been taken from the Mahavagga or other
old textbooks, e.g. that of the Kamaj. (467) is a fine para-
phrase of two suttas from the Suttanipata, viz. Dhaniyasutta
and Kāmasutta. It seems, indeed, that the authors of the Introductory stories had embraced the doctrine of "Je prends mon bien où je le trouve", even from profane texts. Thus the introduction of the 118th Jataka is an imitation of the plot of the drama in which the love of Carudatta and Vasantasena is exhibited with great poetical force. It is true, one of the *dramatis personae* is a Buddhist monk: our Buddhist authors were thus in good company.