



**Tales of the
Buddha's Former Lives**
Stories 51 – 100

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Preface

The book, **Tales of the Buddha's Former Lives** originates from a collection of stories known as the Jataka Tales. The Buddha Himself used the Jataka stories to explain concepts like karma and rebirth and to emphasise the importance of certain moral values.

Though meant for readers of all ages, these simple stories, written along the line of Aesop's Fables, are made even more relevant in the fragmented societies of today, where young children, especially those in their formative years, seek guidance and are moulded in their value system.

All Jataka stories have a moral at the end on how to correct our ways and in developing virtuous conduct and good behaviour. They promote and highlight those human values which contribute to harmony, pleasure and progress.

They played and continue to play in some societies an enormous role in the cultivation of peace and generosity. For instance, in India, these and other similar stories were a principal instrument in the socialisation of children, discouraging them from selfishness and laying the foundations for the solidarity of the family and community.

One story teaches respect for elders, and the need to gain control over conceit, which is a minor defilement. Another teaches the value of gratitude. And yet another teaches about the detrimental effects of associating with unwholesome people.

Others help cultivate the mind in many ways, advocating values like generosity, the use of gentle language, the nobility of the ways of wise people, the value of morality and the evils of unwholesome associations. In this and many other aspects, the Jataka stories contributed to the happiness and development of the minds of impressionable ones.

The happiness that they engendered went well beyond the mundane to reach the supra mundane. They led mankind to all that is good in this world and to the ultimate happiness taught by the Buddha.

These stories are edited based on the collection published in:

Buddhist Tales For Young & Old Volume 2, stories 51-100, King Fruitful (New York: Buddhist Literature Society Inc, 1997)
– Interpretation of Pali Jataka stories by Kurunegoda Piyatissa Maha Thera, as told by Todd Anderson.

The sources used to counter-check when producing this book include:

1. *The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Lives*, ed. E.B. Cowell (London: Pali Text Society, 1981), 6 vols., index – English translation of Pali Jataka stories.
2. *The Ten Perfections*, Ven. Narada Thera (Singapore: Evergreen Buddhist Culture Service, 2002)

The sequence numbers used for the stories are in the same order as *The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Lives*.

May all beings be well and happy.

May the blessings of the Triple Gem be with you always.

And may all progress well on the path of the Dharma!

Yours in the Dharma,

Sister Esther Thien

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From the Storyteller to the Reader

When you read or listen to these very old stories, and wonder how much is really true, the Buddha gave some advice that might help. He said that when you listen to what a monk says you should test the meaning, weigh or consider it, and after observation and analysis when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.

**Let us praise the Exalted,
Worthy, Fully Self-Enlightened One
and follow the Truth.**
