Jataka Tales

(Stories of the Buddha's Past Lives)

Apannaka Jataka (#1)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant who led large oxcart caravans to trade with distant lands. As he prepared to leave on a long, dangerous journey through a vast desert, he heard that another merchant, a young and stupid man, was going to make the same journey. If they traveled at the same time they would tear up the road and it would be difficult to find enough water, grass (for the oxen to eat), and firewood. So the Bodhisatta went to discuss the situation with the young merchant, and given a choice, he decided to go first and the Bodhisatta would leave later.

As the foolish young man's caravan reached the middle of the wilderness, a goblin who lived there devised a plan to make the travelers discard their drinking water so he and his small gang could easily attack and eat the weary men. Using his magic powers, he conjured up a majestic carriage, and the goblins, disguised as humans and soaking wet, with lotuses and water lilies on their heads, rode toward the approaching caravan. The young merchant stopped to talk with the goblin, who told him the difficult part of the journey was over and there was plenty of rain and many lakes up ahead. The goblin suggested that the merchant lighten his load and ease the journey by dumping his water. Not doubting the goblin's story, the young man ordered his men to smash their heavy water jars. But, of course, they found no water the rest of the day and went to sleep weak and hungry because they had

nothing to drink and couldn't cook their rice. The goblins came during the night and devoured all the men and oxen, leaving nothing but bare bones behind.

Six weeks later, the Bodhisatta began his journey with five hundred carts, and halfway through, the goblins approached him with the same story. His men believed the lie and wanted to ditch their water so they could travel faster. But the Bodhisatta recognized the ruse and refused, explaining to his men that if there really was rain ahead, they would hear thunder, see storm clouds and lightning, and feel wind. When they came to the place where the foolish young merchant's group had been massacred, they circled their wagons for the night to make a fortified camp and kept watch, swords in hand, until morning. When they left, they swapped their weakest carts for some of the abandoned ones that were stronger and took the most valuable merchandise. All the men made a great profit and returned home safely.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, brought five hundred of his friends, all followers of other sects, to hear the Buddha preach. After listening to his lesson, they all became dedicated followers of the Buddha, keeping the precepts and showing charity. But later, when the Buddha went away for many months, these men reverted to their former faiths.

When the Buddha returned, these fickle men came to see him again, and the Buddha reminded them that his teachings were the only complete, indisputable truth, and nobody who followed his path would suffer in hell. Then he told them this story to emphasize his point.

Vannupatha Jataka (#2)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant who led large oxcart caravans to trade with distant lands. On one trip, he had to pass through a desert so extreme that travel was only possible in the cool of the night and all necessities needed to be brought along from home. There was no track; the “desert pilot” needed to navigate by the stars like ship captains do.

On the final night of the journey, with the end of the desert up ahead, the Bodhisatta ordered the water and firewood discarded to lighten the load and speed their travel. But during the night, the pilot fell deep asleep and the oxen went off course. When morning arrived, the caravan was back where it had been the day before. The men set up camp in despair due to the lack of water.

The Bodhisatta, fearing they would all perish, walked around looking for water and found a clump of kusha grass. Assuming it could only grow if there was water underneath, he directed his men to dig a hole. After thirty meters they struck rock, and the men lost hope. But the Bodhisatta climbed down and placed his ear on the rock and heard water running beneath it.

A young serving boy was the only one who had not given up. The Bodhisatta ordered him to go down and break the rock with a sledgehammer, telling him that if he lacked courage and refused, they would all die. The boy did as he was told

and his blow broke the rock that had dammed the spring's rise. Water shot up out of the hole as high as a palm tree. Everybody drank and bathed; then, using spare axles and other gear, they cooked rice. That night they completed their journey, and after making a great profit, they returned home safely.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The boy who broke the rock was an earlier birth of a disciple of the Buddha who was unable to attain insight after intense meditation in the wilderness. When he decided to give up, the Buddha told him this story of his past life to motivate him to continue trying.

The other men in the caravan were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Serivanija Jataka (#3)

The Bodhisatta was once a traveling pot and pan salesman. He and another salesman came to a new city at the same time and they each took half of it to do their business. The other salesman called at the home of a destitute family, just a girl and her grandmother, whose ancestors had been wealthy merchants. They had no money, but asked if he would take their grimy old dining bowl in trade for a small trinket. The greedy salesman suspected their bowl was made of gold, and a sly pin scratch through the tarnish confirmed it. In a ruse to get the bowl as cheaply as possible, he tossed it on the ground and declared it worthless.

Later, the Bodhisatta passed the same house and got the same request. Examining the bowl, he also saw it was made of gold, but he told the family the truth: it was worth one hundred thousand coins. But he couldn't buy it as he did not have nearly that much money. Believing the bowl must have turned to gold due to the innate goodness of the Bodhisatta, the grandmother agreed to accept whatever he wanted to pay. He gave her five hundred coins and all his stock (which was also worth about five hundred), keeping only his scale, his bag, and enough money to pay for a boat ride across the river.

Soon after, the greedy salesman returned to the house, intending to buy their bowl for a pittance. But, when told what had happened, he lost his mind. Believing the bowl was

rightfully his, he threw everything he had on the ground except the beam of his scale, which he intended to use as a club, and rushed to find the Bodhisatta. But the greedy salesman found him too late; the Bodhisatta was already halfway across the river. Full of rage, with blood gushing from his lips, the greedy salesman had a heart attack and died on the spot.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The greedy salesman was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and this was the first time he felt anger toward the Buddha. The Buddha told this story to one of his disciples, who had stopped working toward reaching enlightenment, so he would know that he should not quit because the reward for his efforts was great; if he stopped, he would forever regret it.

Cullaka-Setthi Jataka (#4)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. He had an innate understanding of signs and omens. One day, when he saw a dead mouse along the road during a special position of the stars, he remarked out loud, to no one in particular, that anyone who took the mouse would have good luck starting a business and finding a wife. A poor young man with a good heart overheard these words and, knowing that the Bodhisatta was a wise man, picked it up and promptly sold it for one farthing to a tavernkeeper as cat food. And this set up a series of events that would prove the Bodhisatta's prediction.

The young man used his farthing to buy molasses that he gave, along with drinking water, to some flower gatherers in exchange for some of their flowers. He sold these flowers and the next day bought a larger batch of molasses. This time, the same people gave him flowering plants, which he quickly turned into eight pennies profit.

Later on, a storm blew down leaves and rotten branches all around the king's palace. It was far too much work for the gardener to manage by himself, but the young man agreed to remove it all if he could keep everything, and the gardener happily agreed. The young man got children from a playground to help him gather the debris by offering them molasses. When it was all piled up in front of the palace, the

royal potter, in need of fuel for his kiln, passed by and bought it for sixteen pennies plus some pottery.

Then the young man took a jar of drinking water to serve five hundred grass cutters working near the city gate. Appreciative of his deed, they asked the young man how to repay him and he said he would return soon to ask a favor from them. He had also become acquainted with a wealthy merchant in the town, and this man informed him that a horse dealer would arrive tomorrow with five hundred horses to sell. The young man went back to call in his favor with the cutters and they gave him a bundle of grass and agreed to delay selling any of theirs until he had sold his first. When the horse dealer arrived, he had no choice but to buy grass from the young man at the premium price of one thousand coins.

A few days later, his merchant friend informed him about a large ship arriving in port, and the young man made another plan. He hired a fancy carriage to make a grand entrance at the port, where he convinced the ship's owner to sell him all its cargo on credit. Other merchants arriving later to buy from the ship were told the goods were no longer for sale. But the young man, presenting a facade of power, had them escorted into his pavilion by three successive ushers to meet with him. There, each of them agreed to buy a share in the ship, and the young man earned a fast two hundred thousand coins.

Now a very wealthy man, just four months after picking up a dead mouse, he went to see the Bodhisatta and expressed his

gratitude by giving him one hundred thousand coins. After hearing the entire story, the Bodhisatta was so impressed by the young man that he took him into the family by marrying him to his daughter. And after the Bodhisatta died, the young man replaced him as royal treasurer.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The young man was an earlier birth of a disciple of the Buddha named Little Wayman. Little Wayman's mother was the daughter of a wealthy merchant, and when she fell in love with a slave, the couple had to run away to another city because their relationship was unacceptable. When she got pregnant, she decided to return to her parents' home and hope for forgiveness. Her husband reluctantly agreed to go with her, but kept putting off their departure until she was nearly ready to give birth. Finally, she left on her own.

When the husband returned home and found that his wife had departed, he hurried down the road after her. And just as he reached her, she went into labor. A son was born and they named him Wayman since he was born along the way. They returned home rather than go see her parents. Soon after, she got pregnant again and everything happened exactly the same; the second son even got the same name.

As the children, called Great Wayman and Little Wayman, grew up, they heard their friends talk about their relatives, so they asked their parents about their own. They began to beg to meet them and their parents agreed to take them. When

they reached the city, they sent a message announcing their arrival. The woman's parents replied that they would never forgive her or her husband. But since the children were innocent, they were invited to come live a better life with them. The children's parents were given some money and sent away back to their home.

When Great Wayman was old enough, he became a disciple of the Buddha. He studied intently and eventually became an arahant. Later, he invited his younger brother to join him. But Little Wayman was very stupid, and after four months of faithful intent and effort, he had not even managed to master a single small section of text. Seeing how bad things were, Great Wayman expelled his little brother from the sangha and disinvited him from a gathering that was to be held the next morning at the home of Jivaka, a renowned doctor and dedicated lay supporter of the Buddha.

Little Wayman cherished dharma and did not want to leave, but he knew that his brother was right. The Buddha divined Little Wayman's situation and knew his struggle in understanding had nothing to do with his present circumstances; rather it was a result of bad karma earned in a past life for mocking another person who was struggling to learn scripture. So, early the next morning, the Buddha waited near Little Wayman's quarters. When he came out to start his journey home back to lay life, the Buddha said he would help him. He materialized a perfectly clean cloth and

told Little Wayman to sit and handle it continuously while repeating, “Removal of impurity.” While Little Wayman did as he was told, the Buddha left to attend that morning’s gathering.

Not long after starting with the cloth, Little Wayman noticed it had become dirty, and he instantly understood that all things are impermanent, that death and decay are inevitable. The moment it happened, the Buddha perceived that Little Wayman had reached a breakthrough and he sent an apparition of himself to preach that the evil impurities of lust, anger, and delusion were still in his mind, and removal of these would bring salvation. Suddenly, Little Wayman went from not knowing a single verse to full arahantship.

Meanwhile, Jivaka was about to begin a “water of donation” ceremony, but the Buddha stopped him and asked whether any disciples were back at the monastery. Great Wayman said there were not, but the Buddha corrected him and Jivaka sent one of his servants to check. Little Wayman, wanting to send a message to his brother, multiplied himself a thousand times and had these visions fill the whole mango grove where he sat. After the servant reported what he saw, the Buddha sent him back to tell Little Wayman to come. But when the servant asked for Little Wayman, all one thousand replied. Again the servant reported to the people at Jivaka’s home what had happened, and this time the Buddha told him to bring back the first one claiming to be Little Wayman; he

would be the real one. This time, the servant returned with Little Wayman, and the Buddha had him perform the ceremony with Jivaka.

Later in the day, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing what had happened that morning. He told them this story to explain that while Little Wayman had risen to great faith in this life, in a previous life he had risen to great wealth—in both cases by following the Buddha's advice.

Tandulanali Jataka (#5)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's appraiser. He alone determined the cost of everything the palace bought, and sellers had no choice but to accept his prices. The king was greedy and did not appreciate that the Bodhisatta paid fair prices, so he replaced him. Since he sought like-mindedness rather than competence, the king chose a random peasant he saw walking by his window for the job. The man was a complete idiot and he chose prices for things based entirely on whims rather than their true value.

One time the foolish new appraiser decided that five hundred horses were worth only one measure of rice. The horse dealer was beside himself and asked the Bodhisatta what could be done. He told the man to offer the appraiser a bribe if he would agree to answer, in front of the king, the question, "If five hundred horses are worth one measure of rice, then what is the value of a measure of rice?" The appraiser accepted the seller's money, and at his next audience with the king he said that one measure of rice is worth "all the city and its suburbs." The assembled advisors broke out in laughter and applause, exclaiming how the king and the appraiser were so well suited for each other. Made to look like a fool, the king restored the job to the Bodhisatta.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The foolish appraiser was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was quite stupid and often said one thing when he meant another. Each morning at the monastery, rice was distributed to the disciples, with the elders getting the best rice and the inferior rice going to the youngest disciples. As Laludayi had a middle rank, sometimes he got good rice and sometimes not. When he did not get it, he complained. Eventually the steward told him to do the distribution himself, but he failed miserably at the task and was quickly relieved of the duty.

When the Buddha heard about Laludayi's failure, he told this story so people knew that Laludayi had also been a dullard in the past.

Devadhamma Jataka (#6)

The Bodhisatta was once a crown prince. His mother died after giving birth to a second son, Prince Canda. The king took another chief queen and had a third son, Prince Suriya. The king was so overjoyed by the birth of this boy that he granted the queen any wish she desired. She didn't call in her wish until the three princes had all grown up, and then she asked that her son be the one to take the throne. The king refused her request, but she persisted so zealously that he feared she would unleash some evil plot to get her way. The king explained the situation to the Bodhisatta and his brother, and with great sadness sent them out to live in the forest until he died, at which time they could return to rule. When Prince Suriya, who was thoroughly honorable, heard why his half-brothers were departing, he joined them.

One day as they traveled, Prince Suriya went down to a pond to bathe and drink. In it lived a demon who devoured everyone entering the water if they could not answer the question, "What is truly *devadhamma* ("god-like")?" When Prince Suriya stepped into the pond, the demon seized him and asked his question. The prince answered confidently, "The sun and the moon," but this was wrong. The demon dragged him down to the depths of the pond and kept him in a cell. When Prince Suriya did not return promptly, Prince Canda went down to find him. As he stepped into the water he was also seized and quizzed. "The four quarters of

heaven" was his answer, but it was also wrong and he was imprisoned.

When Prince Canda did not return, the Bodhisatta knew something had gone wrong and figured there was a demon in the pond. He went to the shore and waited. When the demon saw that the Bodhisatta was not going to enter the water, he took the shape of a forester and encouraged him to refresh himself in the pond. Not fooled, the Bodhisatta knew this was the demon and asked why he took his brothers. The demon explained that he was allowed to eat all who entered the water and could not pass his test. The Bodhisatta said he knew the answer, but was too weary from his travels to tell him. This persuaded the demon to bathe the Bodhisatta; bring food, drink, and perfumes; and construct a gorgeous pavilion for him to rest in. Refreshed, he had the demon sit at his feet and told him that *devadhamma* is avoiding sin.

Pleased with this wise answer, the demon agreed to release one of the brothers. The Bodhisatta asked for his half-brother, Suriya. The demon criticized this choice, accusing the Bodhisatta of understanding *devadhamma* but not practicing it because Canda, being older, should be granted the esteem that comes with seniority. The Bodhisatta countered that his choice really was the most god-like. Nobody would believe him, he explained, if he returned to the kingdom claiming a demon devoured Suriya; he would be presumed a murderer

in pursuit of the throne and would be reviled. Impressed by this wisdom, the demon set both brothers free.

The Bodhisatta explained karma to the demon, telling him that he was born into his odious life because of the evil deeds he had done in the past, and the only way to break this cycle was to avoid doing evil in this life. The demon accepted this truth and stopped eating people. The three brothers chose to live at the pond with the demon until one day the Bodhisatta read in the stars that his father had died. He returned to the kingdom and took the throne, with Prince Canda serving as viceroy and Prince Suriya as commander-in-chief. The demon also went there and lived a comfortable life with a home, food, and flowers provided by the king.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The demon was an earlier birth of a wealthy landowner who became a disciple of the Buddha but did not completely give up luxuries. He owned many robes, maintained a storeroom full of food, and had his servants come cook for him.

When other disciples uncovered this prohibited behavior, they took him to talk with the Buddha. The wealthy disciple got angry and threw off his robes, standing amidst them wearing only his loincloth. But after some reassuring words from the Buddha, he put his clothes back on and listened to the Buddha tell this story so he knew that he had overcome bad behavior in the past by following the Buddha's advice. And thus the Buddha convinced him to change his ways.

Prince Canda and Prince Suriya were earlier births of Sariputta and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Katthahari Jataka (#7)

The Bodhisatta was once an illegitimate son of a king. While a king was out picking fruits and flowers in the forest, he met a peasant woman gathering firewood. They became intimate, and the Bodhisatta was conceived. The king gave the woman his signet ring in case she became pregnant: if she had a daughter she could sell the ring and use the money to raise her; if she had a son she should bring him to the palace.

One day, while he was a young boy, the Bodhisatta was out playing and the other children teased him for having no father. Upset, he ran home and asked his mother who his father was. When she told him, he demanded to go see the king, and she took him to the palace. The king knew she told the truth, but out of shame he denied his relations with her, claiming the ring was not his.

To prove she was telling the truth, she grabbed the Bodhisatta by the leg and hurled him into the air, telling the king, “If you are indeed the father of my child, I pray he stays in mid-air. But if not, may he fall and die.” The Bodhisatta floated cross-legged in the air and begged the king to accept him, which he did. His mother became the queen, and the Bodhisatta took the throne when his father died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, always provided food for the Buddha’s disciples, but

they did not stay and eat at the palace because the people there were not friendly. When the king found out that they went to eat at their friends' homes, he decided to marry a woman from the Buddha's Sakya clan in order to build closer relations with the Buddha and his disciples. However, the Sakya clan was arrogant and insular and did not want to marry into a relationship with the king; but because he was their leader, a request like this could not be refused without consequences. So they sent a daughter of a nobleman born to a slave woman and told King Pasenadi she was noble.

Knowing the Sakya clan's reputation, the king's assistants wanted to be sure the woman they were taking back was truly noble-born. So the family faked eating a meal together as proof. This was done by having what was claimed to be a very important letter delivered to the father at the start of the meal, so after taking just one bite he sat at the table reading rather than eating. This made it appear that he had dined with his daughter, but since he didn't actually eat, he didn't degrade himself with a slave.

King Pasenadi truly loved his new consort and made her his chief queen. Soon a son was born and he grew up receiving all the advantages a prince deserved, except he did not get gifts from his maternal grandfather's family. Not wanting her son to know about her life, his mother lied and told him they sent nothing because they lived very far away. Once he grew

up, he decided to visit his other family; and though she tried, his mother could not stop him.

Upon learning the prince was coming, the Sakya clan sent all their noble children younger than him away to the countryside so nobody would need to bow down in respect to someone born from a slave. A few days later, when the prince was leaving, one of his soldiers overheard a Sakya slave saying the prince's mother had been a slave. Now knowing how the Sakyas had disrespected both his mother and him, the prince vowed to destroy them when he became king.

When King Pasenadi heard the news about his wife, he was furious and gave her and his son nothing more than he gave to his other slaves. But a few days later, the Buddha, while admitting that his clan did wrong, explained to the king that his queen and son were children of royal men and the mother's birth was irrelevant. Then he told this story as an example of when he himself had been the illegitimate son of a king and a peasant woman but still inherited the throne. The king changed his mind and restored their honor.

The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother.

Gamani Jataka (#8)

This story is the same as the Samvara Jataka (#462)

Makhadeva Jataka (#9)

The Bodhisatta was once King Makhadeva. He reigned with wisdom and virtue for eighty-four thousand years. Before taking the throne, he had served as prince and viceroy, each for the same length of time. Throughout the Bodhisatta's life, his barber had standing orders to inform him if he spotted a grey hair. When the first grey strand appeared, the Bodhisatta became fixated on his death and decided to immediately abdicate and live out his final eighty-four thousand years as an ascetic in a mango grove. That same day, he passed the throne to his eldest son, gave a village as a gift to his barber, and walked away from society. During this final phase of his life, the Bodhisatta cultivated the four perfect virtues, and he was reborn in heaven after he died. His story continues as King Nimi in the Nimi Jataka (#541).

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the magnificence of his Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment. He said he had renounced the world in previous lives too and told them this story as an example.

The barber was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the king's son was an earlier birth of the Buddha's son.

Sukhavihari Jataka (#10)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers studying with him in the Himalayas. One rainy season when his group went to stay in the city, they resided in the royal park and were taken care of by the king. When the rains had ceased and it was time to return to the wilderness, the Bodhisatta, having grown quite old, bid his disciples farewell and remained behind to live out his final days in the city.

One day the eldest of the ascetics, who had been a king before pursuing a religious life, returned to the city to visit the Bodhisatta. While the two talked, the king arrived to see the Bodhisatta. The other ascetic did not rise when the king entered: he just lay on his mat uttering, “Oh, happiness, oh happiness . . .” The king criticized him for this disrespect, but the Bodhisatta explained that this ascetic was also once a king. And now, unrestrained by his former life of luxury, with royal pomp and armed guards around him at all times, he had true happiness that only insight can provide. He was free from being a slave to lust. The king listened to the Bodhisatta’s lesson and returned to his palace with new understanding.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The disciple who visited the Bodhisatta in the city was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha’s disciples who had been a king before ordaining. In his royal days, he lived in a perpetual

state of fear, even while in his private chambers deep inside the palace, despite being constantly surrounded by guards.

Now as an arahant, he roamed widely through dangerous wilderness with no fear. Thinking back to his past, he felt overwhelming joy and exclaimed, “Oh, happiness, oh happiness . . .” Some other disciples overheard him saying this and mentioned it to the Buddha. The Buddha told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time this disciple had been filled with happiness after adopting a religious life.

Lakkhana Jataka (#11)

The Bodhisatta was once a deer who led a large herd living in the forest. When he got old, he put his two sons, Lakkhana and Kala, in charge of the herd, each having half in their care. During the crop season, people set many traps around their fields to kill animals that came to eat, and many deer died. So each year, the herd took to the safety of the mountains, returning after the harvest. One year the Bodhisatta said he and the elder deer would remain behind, but Lakkhana and Kala would lead the rest to safety.

Knowing about the annual migration, hunters hid along the route to shoot deer. Kala, being dumb, marched his deer quickly and directly to the mountains, passing near villages and continuing to walk during dawn and dusk. Most of his deer were killed. Wise Lakkhana, on the other hand, stayed far from villages and traveled only in the dead of night. He arrived at the mountains without losing a single deer. After four months, the deer returned and Kala did not change his ways. The rest of his herd died and he returned home alone, while Lakkhana brought back all his deer safely and earned the Bodhisatta's praise for being cautious.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Kala was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and Lakkhana was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Devadatta left the sangha with many disciples to set up his own order and declared that he too was a Buddha. The real Buddha sent Sariputta and Moggallana, another of his top disciples, to preach to those who departed, and during the night, after hearing Sariputta speak, they left Devadatta and returned to the Buddha's fold.

The next morning, the Buddha told this story to let his disciples know this was not the first time Devadatta had led his followers astray, nor the first time Sariputta had made a glorious return.

Kala and Lakkhana's halves of the herd were earlier births of the disciples who went with Devadatta and the disciples who stayed faithful to the Buddha, while the Bodhisatta's mate was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Nigrodhamiga Jataka (#12)

The Bodhisatta was once a deer. He was golden in hue and perfect in form and was the leader of a large herd. He was friends with another deer, Sakha, who had the same golden color and also led a large herd. The king enjoyed hunting, and every day he took his subjects to the forest to assist him. The people hated this disruption to their lives, so they encircled a vast stretch of forest and drove the Bodhisatta and Sakha's herds into the king's gated park. They told the king what they had done and asked him to eat these deer instead of taking them out to the forest. He agreed. And having seen the two beautiful golden deer, the king gave them immunity.

Some days the king came and shot the deer himself, but usually he sent his cook to do it. When either of the hunters came, the deer ran away and trembled in fear. It usually took two or three arrows piercing their bodies before they would finally die. Though he could not stop the hunts, the Bodhisatta wanted to stop the suffering. He suggested that each day one deer be chosen at random, alternating between the two herds, to go sacrifice itself by laying its neck on the chopping block. Sakha agreed to the plan.

One day the lot fell to a pregnant doe in Sakha's herd. She begged him to let her wait until after her fawn was born. When Sakha rejected her request, she went to the Bodhisatta, who agreed that she should skip her turn. And when the time came, he went and lay his own head on the

chopping block. The cook, knowing this deer had immunity from death, informed the king who rushed to his park to see what was happening.

The Bodhisatta explained the situation and the compassionate king, impressed by this display of love and charity, agreed to also spare the doe's life. The Bodhisatta asked why only their lives, and soon he had convinced the king to forbid the killing of all animals great and small. The Bodhisatta preached to the king about righteousness and justice for a few days, then led his herd back to the forest, instructing them to never eat men's crops. The doe gave birth to a fawn as beautiful as a lotus bud and ordered him to only associate with the Bodhisatta's herd.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The daughter of a wealthy merchant believed from an early age that she was in her final existence before entering nirvana, so she wanted to become a disciple of the Buddha. But her parents said no because she was their only daughter. After she married, her caring husband saw just how much she respected dharma and encouraged her to ordain.

The woman took up residence under the tutelage of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who later became his nemesis. Soon after, she discovered she was pregnant, and Devadatta, who lacked love and charity, ordered her expelled without even having an inquiry as to whether the pregnancy happened before or after she had become a disciple. But

because she had made her vow to the Buddha, not Devadatta, the woman insisted on letting him hear her case. The Buddha had another female disciple examine the woman, and when it was announced that she had conceived her child before joining the sangha, she returned to her nunnery. King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, adopted her son, and he later became a disciple of the Buddha. Both he and his mother became arahants.

The doe and her fawn were earlier births of this disciple and her son, and the Buddha told this story to let his other disciples know he had saved this mother and son once before. Sakha and his followers were earlier births of Devadatta and his followers, and the king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kandina Jataka (#13)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. When farmers' crops were growing, the deer living around villages would flee deep into the forest to avoid the danger from traps and guards. One year a stag who lived in the forest year-round fell in love with a village-dwelling doe and wanted to join her when she returned home after the harvest. She told him not to come because he was ignorant of the dangers there, but he was so in love he ignored her advice.

During the period when the deer returned from the forest, villagers would sit in hiding to shoot them. As the couple walked along a road, the doe smelled the scent of a human. Suspecting that a hunter lie in ambush up ahead, she let the stag walk well in front of her. He was killed with a single arrow, and the selfish doe fled to safety.

Later, the Bodhisatta discussed these events with the other fairies, explaining that passion begins as bliss but ends in suffering, and a man who falls under a woman's sway is a fool.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's junior disciples always received poor food (lumpy gruel with stale or rotting ingredients and dried or burnt sprouts) and he did not get enough to stay healthy. He started to return each morning to the wife he left behind, and she gave him delicious rice with sauce and curry. This

made him miss his former life, and with her encouragement he decided to leave the sangha.

The two deer were earlier births of this disciple and his wife, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that his wife had once caused his death in the past. This convinced him to remain a disciple.

Vatamiga Jataka (#14)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. When a wild antelope started spending time in his royal park, the Bodhisatta ordered his gardener to capture it. He began by spreading honey in patches of grass, and after the antelope had a taste, it returned to these same spots daily. Later, the gardener began to stand near the honeyed grass. While initially the timid antelope stayed away, eventually it grew confident and began to eat the honey again. The gardener gradually moved closer and closer, day by day, until it would eat grass from his hand. Finally, he hung a gourd full of honey from his shoulder, stuck a bunch of grass in his waistcloth, and walked away from the antelope, dropping honeyed grass along his path. He walked right into the palace and the antelope, lost in thoughts of treats, followed him through the door. The gardener then slammed it shut, completing his task.

Hearing the commotion of the trembling, terrified antelope running about the entrance hall, the Bodhisatta came down and commented, “Truly, my friends, there is nothing viler in the world than this lust of taste.” Pitying the antelope, the Bodhisatta set it free.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man had joined the Buddha’s order against the wishes of his wealthy parents. He became a dedicated disciple and a shining example to others. His parents, though, were

depressed at the loss of their only son and they hatched a plan with one of their slaves to get him back. They set up a house for her on a street where their son walked his morning alms round. Every day the slave gave him foods and drinks that he had previously loved in order to rekindle his fondness for them. Later, the slave charmed him into taking a seat in her house each morning to wait for his food. One morning, she feigned illness and did not greet him, so he entered an inner room to see her, breaking his monastic vows. At this point, the slave revealed her plan and convinced the son to quit his religious life and return home.

The wild antelope and the gardener were earlier births of the quitter disciple and the slave. The Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that this was not the first time this disciple's bondage to cravings had caused him to fall under her power.

Kharadiya Jataka (#15)

The Bodhisatta was once the leader of a herd of deer. One day his sister asked him to teach her son tricks to avoid and escape hunters. They made an appointment, but his nephew did not come for his lessons. Soon after, as he roamed the forest, the young deer got caught in a snare and was killed by a hunter who took his flesh home to eat. His sister asked the Bodhisatta why her son had not learned how to stay safe in the forest. The Bodhisatta had no pity for her disobedient son and told her not to mourn because he got what he deserved.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The young deer was an earlier birth of an unruly disciple who did not heed the advice of his seniors. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past this behavior had led to his death.

The young deer's mother was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples.

Tipallattha-Miga Jataka (#16)

The Bodhisatta was once the leader of a herd of deer. One day his sister asked him to teach her son tricks to avoid and escape hunters. They made an appointment and his nephew came right on time and was diligent about his lessons. Soon after, as he roamed the forest, the young deer got caught in a snare. When his mother heard about it from the other deer, she was anxious, but the Bodhisatta told her not to worry because her son had studied well.

The young deer lay on his side with his legs stretched out, lolled out his tongue, turned up his eyes, and breathed softly through his nostrils, playing dead so convincingly that flies swarmed around him and crows perched in nearby trees. When the hunter arrived, he saw what he thought was a dead deer starting to rot, so he released the trap and went to gather wood for a fire to smoke the meat. Now free, the young deer got up and ran back to his mother.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The young deer was an earlier birth of Rahula, the Buddha's son, who became a novice and never sought special attention because of his lineage. After listening to the Buddha preach, many disciples and novices would just fall asleep on the floor of the sermon hall instead of going off to their quarters. The Buddha disapproved and made it a formal offense for novices to sleep in the same room as disciples.

The next night the disciples, out of fear of breaking the new rule, would not set up a bed for Rahula as they had always done previously, leaving him to go off and find a place to sleep on his own. Rahula was so diligent in following rules that, rather than risk sleeping somewhere a disciple might come into later in the night, he slept in the Buddha's outhouse. The incident prompted the Buddha to change his mind and allow novices to stay in a disciple's quarters for up to two days when necessary.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing Rahula's excellent behavior, he told them this story so they knew that Rahula had been as thoroughly dedicated to following rules in the past as he was now.

The young deer's mother was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples.

Maluta Jataka (#17)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived in the wilderness at the foot of a mountain, and two friends, a lion and a tiger, lived in a nearby cave. One day the pair argued about the cold. The tiger thought the dark half of the month (the half of the lunar cycle when the moon is less than half illuminated) was the coldest period, while the lion believed it was the light half. Unable to convince each other, they asked the Bodhisatta who was right. Both, he answered, because cold is caused by wind, not light or dark. Thus the two friends made peace with each other.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The lion and the tiger were earlier births of two forest-dwelling disciples, Elder Junha ("Light") and Elder Kala ("Dark"), who had the same disagreement about when cold appeared during the lunar cycle. When they asked the Buddha about it, he told them he had once answered this same question for them in the past and told them this story.

Matakabhatta Jataka (#18)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy who lived near a famous brahmin priest. When it was time to offer a Feast for the Dead, the priest had his students take a goat down to the river to bathe and groom him and feed him a final meal. Nearing death, the goat became aware of his past lives and broke out in joyous laughter, but then the laughter turned to tears. The students asked the goat why he both laughed and cried, and he told them he would answer this question in front of their master.

When they brought him to the brahmin priest, the goat explained that he had once been a brahmin priest who sacrificed a goat for a Feast for the Dead, and his punishment for killing that single goat was five hundred births that all ended with his head being cut off. This was going to be his last beheading, so the laughter was because his impending death would free him from misery. And he wept wails of compassion because he realized the priest would suffer a similar karmic fate after killing him. When the priest heard the story, he decided not to kill the goat and said he would follow him around to protect him. But the goat said that no matter what the priest did, there was no escaping his fate. Shortly after he was set free, a bolt of lightning struck a rock and a shattered fragment tore the goat's head off.

The Bodhisatta had seen these events and magically materialized seated cross-legged in mid-air to preach about

the consequences of killing to the crowd of people that had gathered there. He filled them with the fear of hell, and everybody who heard him speak lived righteous lives from that point on.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When local people began killing goats, sheep, and other animals to offer to their departed relatives during a Feast for the Dead, some of the Buddha's disciples asked him if any good could result from this. The Buddha answered that good never came from killing, even when the intention was noble, and he told them this story as an example.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Ayacitabhatta Jataka (#19)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy who lived in a banyan tree at the entrance to a village. One day a man promised the Bodhisatta an offering if his venture was successful. When it was, the man sacrificed several animals and took them to the tree to fulfill his promise. But the Bodhisatta appeared and told the man that taking life to honor a vow was foolish because it results in future karmic suffering. Following this lesson, all the people of the village stopped making animal sacrifices.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

It was common for business people to sacrifice animals to a god before departing on a journey, and to do so again if they returned safely and with a profit. The Buddha's disciples asked him if any good could result from this practice, and he answered them by telling this story.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Nalapana Jataka (#20)

The Bodhisatta was once a king of monkeys and he led a troop of eighty thousand. To protect them from danger, he had instructed them to ask him before eating any fruit they had not seen before or drinking from any water source they had not used before. One time, as the troop roamed the forest, some monkeys came upon a new lake, so they sat and waited for the Bodhisatta to arrive. He examined the shore and saw that all footprints led into the water and none led out, so he knew that an ogre haunted it.

When the frustrated ogre saw that the monkeys were not going to enter the water, he emerged and begged the monkeys to go in so he could eat them. The Bodhisatta, however, came up with a plan to drink the water without entering it. He took a reed from the shore and blew into the end of it, miraculously turning it hollow. He then commanded that all reeds growing around this lake turn hollow; and they have stayed so ever since. All eighty thousand monkeys took a seat around the lake and drank their fill through one of these special reeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While on a pilgrimage, the Buddha's disciples sent the novices out to collect reeds to use as cases for holding needles. But all the reeds they found were hollow with no

nodes inside. They asked the Buddha how this could be and he told them this story to explain.

The ogre was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. The eighty thousand monkeys were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Kurunga Jataka (#21)

The Bodhisatta was once an antelope who loved to eat fruit. A clever hunter used to look for footprints below fruit trees. When he found them, he'd build a platform in that tree and wait patiently for animals to come feed on fallen fruit; then he'd kill them with his spear. The Bodhisatta knew of this hunting method and always approached trees with caution. One time he stood near, but not under, a tree where this hunter lay in wait, and the impatient hunter threw fruit in front of the Bodhisatta to lure him in. Suspicious, the Bodhisatta scanned the tree and caught sight of the hunter, but pretended not to see him. The Bodhisatta told the tree that since its behavior was odd, the fruit coming near him rather than dropping straight down, he was going to eat at another tree. When the hunter heard this, he threw his spear at the Bodhisatta, but missed. The Bodhisatta now addressed the hunter directly, telling him, "Even though you missed me, you won't miss your punishment in hell."

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Devadatta's attempted murder, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried unsuccessfully to kill him in the past.

Kukkura Jataka (#22)

The Bodhisatta was once a dog who led a large pack living in a cemetery. One day after the king had been out having fun in his royal park, he arrived back at the palace after sunset, so his servants left the harness hitched to his luxurious chariot rather than putting it away. That night the king's dogs came down and gnawed the beautiful leatherwork. Certain that no purebred dog would misbehave like this, the king assumed dogs from outside the palace must have snuck in through the sewer and done it. Enraged, the king ordered all dogs other than his own killed.

When the slaughter began in the city, many dogs fled to the cemetery and told the Bodhisatta what was happening. He knew that no city dogs could breach the palace walls, so it must have been the king's own. The Bodhisatta promised the other dogs he would save them, then he set out to meet with the king. By focusing his mind on thoughts of love and the ten perfections of character, he was able to freely walk the city streets and sneak into the palace unmolested. He and the king discussed the situation and the Bodhisatta explained that, since the king had ordered certain dogs spared, even though he did not know which dogs had actually gnawed the leather, he was following the four evil courses (partiality, dislike, ignorance, and fear) and this was unbecoming of a king.

Recognizing that the Bodhisatta was wise, the king asked if he knew who the real culprits were. When the Bodhisatta told him it was his own purebreds, the king wanted proof; so the Bodhisatta gave it to him. He told the king to mash up some grass, mix it with buttermilk, and make his dogs eat it. When they vomited, out came bits of leather. Impressed, the king offered to let the Bodhisatta become king. Instead, the Bodhisatta asked that the king listen to a sermon on righteousness. When it was finished, the king was so moved that he commanded no living creatures be killed in the kingdom ever again and that from then on all dogs be fed the same fancy food that he himself ate.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, always provided food for the Buddha's disciples, but they did not stay and eat at the palace because the people there were not friendly. When the king found out that they went to eat at their friends' homes, he decided to marry a woman from the Buddha's Sakya clan in order to build closer relations with the Buddha and his disciples. However, the Sakya clan was arrogant and insular and did not want to marry into a relationship with the king; but because he was their leader, a request like this could not be refused without consequences. So they sent a daughter of a nobleman born to a slave woman and told King Pasenadi she was noble.

Knowing the Sakya clan's reputation, the king's assistants wanted to be sure the woman they were taking back was truly noble-born. So the family faked eating a meal together as proof. This was done by having what was claimed to be a very important letter delivered to the father at the start of the meal, so after taking just one bite he sat at the table reading rather than eating. This made it appear that he had dined with his daughter, but since he didn't actually eat, he didn't degrade himself with a slave.

King Pasenadi truly loved his new consort and made her his chief queen. Soon a son was born and he grew up receiving all the advantages a prince deserved, except he did not get gifts from his maternal grandfather's family. Not wanting her son to know about her life, his mother lied and told him they sent nothing because they lived very far away. Once he grew up, he decided to visit his other family; and though she tried, his mother could not stop him.

Upon learning the prince was coming, the Sakya clan sent all their noble children younger than him away to the countryside so nobody would need to bow down in respect to someone born from a slave. A few days later, when the prince was leaving, one of his soldiers overheard a Sakya slave saying the prince's mother had been a slave. Now knowing how the Sakyas had disrespected both his mother and him, the prince vowed to destroy them when he became king.

When King Pasenadi heard the news about his wife, he was furious and gave her and his son nothing more than he gave to his other slaves. But a few days later, the Buddha, while admitting that his clan did wrong, explained to the king that his queen and son were children of royal men and the mother's birth was irrelevant. The king changed his mind and restored their honor.

The wife of King Pasenadi's commander-in-chief had never borne him a son, so he sent her back to her family. Accepting her fate, she went to pay respect to the Buddha before departing, and he told her not to go. Elated by his counsel, she went home and told her husband. The commander-in-chief figured the Buddha must have a good reason for it and let her stay. Soon after, she got pregnant. She told her husband she wanted to bathe in and drink the holy water used for ceremonial sprinkling by the families of kings from another clan, so he took her to the well in his chariot.

Once there, the commander-in-chief fought off the guards and broke through the iron net, and they both bathed in the holy water before fleeing the city. Furious about this egregious violation, five hundred kings ignored the warning from their spiritual advisor that the commander-in-chief would slay them all and chased after him in their chariots. The commander-in-chief waited for all five hundred chariots to line up just right; then he shot an arrow with his special bow, one thousand times stronger than a regular bow, and it

passed through all five hundred kings right at the point where they fastened their belts. The kings did not notice their injuries and continued pursuit until the commander-in-chief stopped his chariot and shouted at them that they were already dead. Still standing and feeling fine, the kings thought he was crazy. But he told them to loosen one man's belt, and upon doing so the man fell over dead. The commander-in-chief told the other men to go home and set their affairs in order before taking off their armor, and they all did, dying when they were ready.

Over time, the commander-in-chief's wife gave birth to twin boys sixteen times. All thirty-two of their sons grew up to be heroic and perfect in every way.

One day some men who lost a court case pleaded with the commander-in-chief to help them because they felt that the judges were corrupt. He looked into the matter and found that the judges really were corrupt, so he judged the men's case himself and sided with them. The city's citizens applauded his intervention, and when King Pasenadi learned about it, he put the commander-in-chief in charge of the court system. But the judges lost so much money by not being able to take bribes that they told the king his commander-in-chief was planning to overthrow him. Believing this lie, the king decided he must kill him. He hired some men to pillage towns in a border region and sent his commander-in-chief and all thirty-two of his sons to capture

these bandits. King Pasenadi also ordered some of his soldiers to behead the commander-in-chief and his sons while they were away; and they did.

When she learned of her husband and sons' executions, the commander-in-chief's wise wife summoned all thirty-two daughters-in-law and told them not to be angry or upset. Though their husbands were pure and innocent now, this must have resulted from misdeeds in their former lives. Seeking revenge would be a sin even worse than the king's. King Pasenadi's spies reported this meeting to him, and after hearing about their reaction he was overcome with remorse. The king went to see the Buddha, and while he was away from the palace, his new commander-in-chief, angry about the assassination, pulled a coup and put the half-slave prince on the throne. King Pasenadi vowed to reclaim his kingship and set out for his city, hoping to muster some troops. He arrived after the gates had been closed for the evening and had to spend the night in a shed. Weak from traveling far and fast in the sun and wind, he died of exposure that night.

The new king had never forgotten his grudge against the Sakya clan for their disrespect, and now he could finally get revenge. He set out with a large army to their territory. The Buddha divined what was happening and wanted to save his clan. He went to the border and sat under a small tree that provided little shade. When the king came to this area, he stopped to greet the Buddha and asked why he didn't sit

under the large, shady banyan tree nearby. The Buddha answered that the shade of his family kept him cool. The king understood this meant the Buddha was there to protect his clan, so he turned around. The king later set out on the warpath twice more, and both times the Buddha sat under the same tree, causing the king to back down.

After stopping the king's rampage for the third time, the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about how great he was for protecting his clan. He told them this story so they knew that he had also done good things for his family in the past.

Later, the king set out a fourth time hoping to destroy the Sakya clan. This time the Buddha decided that because of his clan's sins, he would not protect them anymore. The king's army slayed everyone they met, starting with babies, then returned to the palace.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the city's dogs were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Bhojajaniya Jataka (#23)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's warhorse, and he lived a life far more luxurious than most humans. His food was served in a golden dish worth one hundred thousand coins and his stall was perfumed with the four odors and decorated with crimson curtains and flower garlands.

One time, seven kings from nearby lands surrounded the kingdom where the Bodhisatta lived and ordered his king to surrender or face war. The king discussed strategy with his advisors and they decided the best course of action was to send out their top soldier on the king's warhorse to battle all seven armies by himself. If this method failed, then they would consider a different plan. The soldier and the Bodhisatta fought heroically and captured six of the kings and brought them back to the palace as prisoners. But while capturing the sixth, the Bodhisatta was wounded.

The soldier rode back to the palace gate and started to put armor on another horse. When the Bodhisatta saw this, he thought to himself that no other horse was anywhere near as good as he was: if he didn't return to battle, the soldier and the king would surely be slain and the kingdom would fall. So he told the soldier to bind his wound to stop the bleeding, and then they rode out again and captured the final king.

His kingdom saved, the king came out to greet them. The Bodhisatta implored the king to not kill the seven captured

kings, but to make them swear an oath to never wage war on him again. Then, after telling the king to rule with righteousness and charity for the rest of his days, the Bodhisatta died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples stopped taking his practice seriously, and the Buddha told him this story as motivation. After hearing it, the disciple became an arahant.

The king and the soldier were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Ajanna Jataka (#24)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's warhorse, and he lived a life far more luxurious than most humans. His food was served in a golden dish worth one hundred thousand coins and his stall was perfumed with the four odors and decorated with crimson curtains and flower garlands.

One time, seven kings from nearby lands surrounded the kingdom where the Bodhisatta lived and ordered his king to surrender or face war. The king discussed strategy with his advisors and they decided the best course of action was to send out their top charioteer to battle all seven armies by himself. If this method failed, then they would consider a different plan. The charioteer, with the Bodhisatta and his brother pulling him, fought heroically and had captured six of the kings and brought them back to the palace as prisoners. But while capturing the sixth, the Bodhisatta was wounded.

The charioteer rode back to the palace gate and started to put armor on another horse. When the Bodhisatta saw this, he thought to himself that no other horse was anywhere near as good as he was: if he didn't return to battle, the charioteer and the king would surely be slain and the kingdom would fall. So he told the charioteer to bind his wound to stop the bleeding, and then they rode out again and captured the final king.

His kingdom saved, the king came out to greet them. The Bodhisatta implored the king to not kill the seven captured kings, but to make them swear an oath to never wage war on him again. Then, after telling the king to rule with righteousness and charity for the rest of his days, the Bodhisatta died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples stopped taking his practice seriously, and the Buddha told him this story as motivation. After hearing it, the disciple became an arahant.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Tittha Jataka (#25)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day someone washed an ordinary horse in the regular bathing spot of the king's warhorse. Later, when the mighty thoroughbred's caretaker took it to bathe, it would not get in the water and nobody understood why. The king sent the Bodhisatta down to solve the problem. He examined the warhorse and saw that nothing physically ailed it. Pondering the problem further, he guessed that the warhorse was acting spoiled and vain because another horse had used its regular bathing spot. The caretaker confirmed the Bodhisatta's assumption about another horse bathing there not long before. To please the haughty warhorse, the Bodhisatta told the groom to wash it elsewhere because change can be beneficial.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king's warhorse was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples, an ex-goldsmith, who after four months of effort was unable to grasp the meditation on impurity. Even Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, couldn't help him. The struggling disciple had been a goldsmith in his previous five hundred lives, and spending so much time around pure gold had caused a mental blockage on the subject of impurity. The Buddha was able to divine this as the cause of his impasse, so he made a pond appear and told the struggling disciple to stare at the magnificent lotus flower in the middle of it. The Buddha made the flower decay while

the disciple watched, and this allowed him to have a breakthrough in understanding and become an arahant.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this perfect lesson, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time he had understood the struggling disciple's state of mind.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mahilamukha Jataka (#26)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king's state elephant was good-natured and never hurt anybody. One night a murderous band of thieves sat down outside the elephant's stall to discuss their plans. They returned nightly to plan their crimes, and soon the elephant, being quite dimwitted, concluded that they had been coming to teach him and he should change his ways. So when his mahout next came, the elephant picked him up with his trunk and smashed him to death on the ground. Several more people approached and the elephant did the same to them.

When the king heard that his elephant had gone mad, he sent the Bodhisatta to find out what had happened. He examined the elephant and saw that he wasn't sick or injured. Pondering the problem further, he guessed the elephant had been perverted by overhearing wicked talk. He asked the elephant keepers about any visitors, and they told him about the thieves meeting in their building, confirming his assumption. So the Bodhisatta sent sages and brahmin priests to sit by the elephant's stall and talk of virtue. Hearing new "lessons," the elephant resolved to be good again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The elephant was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been persuaded by a friend to skip his morning alms rounds and eat fancy meals at the monastery

of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis.

The Buddha told this story to the traitorous disciple and those who had reported his misbehavior so they knew that it was this disciple's nature to be easily led astray.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Abhinha Jataka (#27)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One of the king's elephants was best friends with one of the mahout's dogs. They always ate together and the dog would swing on the elephant's trunk.

One day a villager bought the dog and took it home. The elephant missed its friend so much that it refused to eat, drink, or bathe. When the king heard of the elephant's behavior, he sent the Bodhisatta to find out what had happened. He examined the elephant and saw that nothing physically ailed it. Pondering the problem further, he guessed that it must be missing a close friend. The Bodhisatta asked the elephant's mahout if the elephant had any friends, and he mentioned the dog that had been sold, but he did not know where the buyer lived. The Bodhisatta explained the situation to the king and told him to make an official proclamation that whoever possessed the dog would face punishment. When the dog's new owner heard the news, he released the dog and it ran back to the palace, just as the Bodhisatta predicted would happen. The elephant cried upon the return of its friend and placed it upon its head, then the two ate a meal together.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The elephant and the dog were earlier births of two friends, one a disciple of the Buddha who lived at the monastery and

the other a lay follower. The two men were so close, they sat and talked together all day every day. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the two men's friendship, he told them this story so they knew that the pair had also been best friends in the past.

Nandivisala Jataka (#28)

The Bodhisatta was once an ox. His owner treated him like a member of his family and always fed him the best rice. As a result, the Bodhisatta grew up exceptionally strong and completely loyal. He appreciated being so well cared for and one day devised a plan to show his gratitude. He told his owner to find someone to wager one thousand coins that his ox could pull one hundred loaded carts. A wealthy merchant accepted the bet and the owner loaded the carts with sand and stones and harnessed up the Bodhisatta at the front. To begin, the owner pulled out his goad stick and shouted, “Go, you rascal! Pull them, you rascal!” But, upset by the name-calling, the Bodhisatta didn’t budge.

The owner, depressed over losing almost all his money, returned home and lay down in grief. The Bodhisatta told his owner the failure was his own fault. He had never broken anything, brushed up against anyone, or made a mess, but the owner insulted him. His lesson delivered, the Bodhisatta told him to repeat the bet for two thousand coins. This time to begin, the owner stroked the Bodhisatta’s back and called out, “Go, my fine fellow! Pull them, my fine fellow!” And the Bodhisatta walked until the one-hundredth cart arrived where the first cart had started. Not only did the owner receive his agreed-upon two thousand coins, but many impressed onlookers also gave him money.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A group of six of the Buddha's disciples had the bad habit of taunting and insulting other disciples when there was a point of disagreement. When the Buddha heard about this, he rebuked them and told this story to show that speaking with kindness was more beneficial than using harsh words.

The ox's owner was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kanha Jataka (#29)

The Bodhisatta was once an ox. His owner was a poor, elderly woman who treated him like her child and always fed him the best rice. The Bodhisatta wanted to earn some money to help her, so he made it a habit to roam about looking for work. One day a caravan with five hundred oxcarts passed near the Bodhisatta's town, and the river ford was so rough the oxen could not pull the carts through. The merchant in charge hooked all five hundred oxen up into one team, but still they could not get even a single cart across the river. The merchant went out looking for more oxen, and when he saw the Bodhisatta he was confident he could pull the carts. He sought out the Bodhisatta's owner to get permission, but the herdsmen there told him she lived far away and he should just go ahead.

The merchant put his rope through the Bodhisatta's nose to take him to the river, but he wouldn't budge. The merchant understood the message and promised to pay two coins per cart that he pulled across, and so off they went. The Bodhisatta was so strong he got every cart across the river. The task completed, the merchant tied a sack of five hundred coins around the Bodhisatta's neck and prepared to set off. But the Bodhisatta stood blocking the road, and the entire caravan team could not move him out of the way. So the merchant added the additional five hundred coins he had promised, and the Bodhisatta walked home, where his owner,

having been told by the herdsmen what the Bodhisatta had done, fed him, bathed him, and rubbed him with oil.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how he had performed miracles, unlike other teachers who promised miracles but could not actually do them, he told them this story so they knew that in the past, just as today, he was without peer.

The elderly woman was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples.

Munika Jataka (#30)

The Bodhisatta was once an ox who, along with his younger brother, was owned by a village family. One day a daughter got engaged and the family began to fatten up their pig to serve at her wedding. The young ox noticed that the pig was being fed rice while the two oxen, who did all the work, got nothing but grass and straw. The Bodhisatta explained that he should not be envious because rice was the food of death. In a short while, he told him, the pig would be converted into curry—their humble food was a sign of a long life. What the Bodhisatta said came true, and his brother never bemoaned his food again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The daughter was an earlier birth of a plump, lascivious young woman who had no suitors for marriage. Her mother decided to entice one of the Buddha's disciples into falling for her. That morning, as she offered alms to the disciples walking past her house, the mother looked for one who could be tempted by a craving for good food. Eventually she saw a disciple (the pig in an earlier birth) who had not given up concern with his appearance: the corners of his eyes were anointed with oil, some hair hung down, his robes were of fine fabric and immaculately clean, and his bowl was colored like a precious gem. The mother knew she could corrupt him, so when he came to the door she took his bowl and invited him into the house to eat the best food she could provide.

When he finished eating, she told him to come by again anytime. He took up her offer and they got to know each other well.

When she thought it was the right time, the mother took the next step in her plan by telling the disciple that theirs was a happy household, but she had no son or son-in-law to maintain it. The next time the disciple came, she had her daughter adorn herself and begin seducing him with womanly tricks and wiles—and it worked. He fell under her power and wanted to leave the sangha. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that this same woman had harmed him in the past.

The young ox was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kulavaka Jataka (#31)

The Bodhisatta was once a young brahmin in a small village. He spent his life doing good deeds and always kept the five precepts. The other men of the village used to get drunk and commit murder and other crimes. But inspired by the Bodhisatta's example, they gave up their evil ways and joined him in doing community projects like maintaining roads and building water tanks. The village headman had once earned a lot of money collecting fines from these men and selling them alcohol. When these profits disappeared, he sought revenge by reporting them as a band of thieves to the king. The king took the village headman's word and, without even hearing their defense, sentenced the Bodhisatta and his companions to be trampled to death by an elephant.

The men were brought to the palace courtyard and ordered to lie down, but when the elephant came it would not approach them. Other elephants were brought in with the same result. The king assumed they must be using some potion or uttering a spell, so he had them brought before him and this time the Bodhisatta was allowed to explain their situation. When he heard the truth, the repentant king gave the men all their accuser's wealth, made him their slave, and gave them command over their village.

When the men returned home they continued their charitable life, though they refused to allow any women to join them. When they began building a rest house for

travelers out at the junction of the four highways, one of the Bodhisatta's wives, Sudhamma, conspired with the carpenter to become a part of the project. She paid him to build her a pinnacle for the roof, but not tell the men about it. When the rest house was nearly finished, the carpenter suggested it should have a pinnacle, and the men agreed. When they asked the carpenter to build one, he explained that pinnacles must be made with dried wood, not fresh-cut wood, so they would need to wait a long time for him to build one—or they could buy one pre-built.

Choosing the latter, the men asked around, and to their surprise Sudhamma told them she would give them one for free if they allowed her to share in the merit. Since she was a woman, the men rejected her offer. But the carpenter reminded them that the realm of Brahma is the only place where women are excluded, and the men changed their minds. Now that they were able, two more of the Bodhisatta's wives got involved. Citta planted a garden around the rest house, and Nanda dug a lotus pond. His fourth wife, Sujata, did nothing.

When the Bodhisatta died, he was reborn as Indra, king of the gods, and his companions also went to Indra's heaven after they passed away. There were demons living there at this time, and the Bodhisatta did not want to share his heaven with them. So he got the demons drunk, grabbed them by their feet, and tossed them down to their own realm

on the lower slopes of Mount Meru. When they sobered up and realized what had happened, they decided to seize Indra's heaven by force. As the demons climbed back up the mountain, the Bodhisatta rode his grand chariot down to fight them. But he was not strong enough and had to flee the battle.

The Bodhisatta retreated so fast that he knocked down the trees of a forest where garuda lived, and they shrieked in fear as they rushed to safety. Regretting the accidental destruction he had caused, the Bodhisatta turned back to sacrifice his life to the demons so no others would suffer or die. The demons, not knowing what had happened, saw the Bodhisatta turn around and assumed he was returning with reinforcements. They called off their assault and retreated. The Bodhisatta returned home victorious, and a thousand-league-tall Palace of Victory rose out of the earth. He set up five guard stations to ensure that the demons would never return.

After this great victory, the Bodhisatta's wife from his previous life, Sudhamma, died and was reborn as one of his handmaidens. Because of the merit she had accrued helping build the rest house, she got a five-hundred-league-tall palace studded with jewels. Soon after, Citta and Nanda were also reborn as handmaidens of the Bodhisatta and were given a magnificent garden and lake respectively for their part in making the rest house. Sujata, however, who had not taken

the opportunity to make merit, was reborn as a crane in a forest on earth.

When the Bodhisatta divined where Sujata was, he brought her to see the pleasures of heaven and told her to live a noble life now so that someday she could join him there. She promised that she would. Later, the Bodhisatta tested her by changing into the form of a fish and lying down on the ground where she could see him. Thinking the fish was dead, Sujata picked it up in her beak to eat. But when the Bodhisatta wagged his tail and she saw that the fish was actually alive, she let it go. The Bodhisatta revealed himself and praised her for following the precepts.

After Sujata the crane died, she was reborn as a potter. When the Bodhisatta divined this, he went to her city disguised as an old man with a cart full of solid gold cucumbers, calling out that he was there to give them free to anyone who kept the five precepts. Some people tried to buy them, but nobody would take them for free until Sujata heard his hawking and went to get some, again passing the Bodhisatta's test.

Sujata's next rebirth was as the gorgeous daughter of a demon king. When she reached the right age, her father gathered the young male demons together to let her pick a husband. The Bodhisatta had divined this event and came down to her realm in the form of a demon. She did not recognize him, but attracted by their past love she chose him

over all the others. The Bodhisatta carried her off to his heaven and made her the chief of twenty-five million dancing girls.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Two brothers who became disciples of the Buddha traveled together to see him. During the long journey they had a falling out, so one of them would not share his water strainer with the other. (Disciples strained all water they used so they would not accidentally kill any tiny creatures living in it). The disciple without a strainer had to drink regular water for the rest of the trip.

When the Buddha heard how this disciple had drunk unfiltered water, he rebuked him and told him this story to remind him that killing is a serious sin and that in the past he himself had once risked his own life to save other lives.

Indra's chariot charioteer, Matali, was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Nacca Jataka (#32)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden mallard. All the birds chose him as their king. He had granted his lovely daughter one wish, and she asked to choose her own husband. So the Bodhisatta called all manner of birds to gather. Taken by his beauty, she chose the peacock. Overcome with joy, the peacock spread his wings and began to dance, thus exposing himself. The Bodhisatta shamed the peacock for his lack of decency and gave his daughter to a young mallard instead.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The peacock was an earlier birth of a disciple who had amassed many robes, maintained a storeroom full of food, and had his servants come cook for him, despite taking a vow to live a modest life. When the Buddha questioned him about it, the disciple lost his cool. He tore off all his clothes, yelling, “I will go about like this!” and ran away naked to become a layman again.

Later, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the incident and he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time this disciple’s shamelessness had cost him something valuable.

Sammodamana Jataka (#33)

The Bodhisatta was once a quail. He was the leader of many thousands of quails living in the forest. A clever hunter worked this forest and he led quails to him by imitating their call, then throwing his net over the gathered birds. The Bodhisatta devised a plan to thwart the hunter. He instructed all the quails that if they got covered by a net to stick their heads through the mesh and fly away together. They should land on a thorn bush and then walk away, leaving the net so entangled that the hunter had to spend the rest of the day removing it.

As soon as the quails started working together like this, the hunter could not catch any. The hunter's wife grew angry with him for his failure, but he was not worried because he knew the quails would eventually quarrel and he would have success again. And he was right. One day, while feeding, a quail accidentally stepped on another quail's head. He apologized, but the other quail remained angry and the two bickered for a long time. The Bodhisatta knew that any conflict compromised their safety, so when he saw this, he took his flock and moved elsewhere in the forest. When the hunter next returned and cast his net, the entrapped quails argued about who should begin lifting, and this gave the hunter time to pick up the net and kill them.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Members of the Buddha's Sakya clan were feuding with another clan that they usually got along with very well. He told them this story so they knew that quarreling leads to destruction, and he had seen it happen in the past.

The foolish quail who wouldn't forgive was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis.

Maccha Jataka (#34)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. One day a large fish was affectionately playful with his wife as the pair swam in a river. She noticed that a fisherman had just tossed his net and she quickly swam around it. But she did not warn her amorous husband, who was snared. The fisherman tossed him on the sand and went to light a fire for cooking.

The Bodhisatta was at the river to bathe and heard this fish lamenting his fate. The fish was not upset over his impending death; rather that his wife might think he'd run off with another fish. The Bodhisatta pitied the fish because he knew if he died in this state of passion he would be reborn in hell.

The fishermen of this area provided the palace with one fish a day, so the Bodhisatta asked to take this fish as the daily contribution. The Bodhisatta sat on the riverbank preaching to the fish he had just saved to stop being a slave to passion, then he threw him back into the river.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The two fish were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and the disciple's former wife. When the disciple began to long for her, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that she was ultimately harmful to him, and that he had saved him from her in a previous life.

Vattaka Jataka (#35)

The Bodhisatta was once a quail. Just after he'd hatched, while still too young to walk or fly, a forest fire swept toward his nest. Unable to flee as all the other animals had, including his parents, the Bodhisatta performed an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) and the flames miraculously never got closer to him than sixteen lengths.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day, while the Buddha was out on a morning alms round in the same place that he had lived as the quail, a forest fire broke out. Some new disciples started a counter-fire to burn some ground that would serve as a place of safety when the big fire arrived. The experienced disciples mocked them and told them to stop; all they needed to do was seek safety from the Buddha. They walked to the specific spot in the forest, gathered around the Buddha, and the roaring flames got no closer than sixteen lengths.

After the fire was extinguished, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that what had just happened was not due to his present powers, but because he had performed an act of truth at this very spot in the past: no flames would burn this spot for an eon.

The quail parents were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother.

Sakuna Jataka (#36)

The Bodhisatta was once a bird who led a flock that lived in a large tree. One windy day, the branches rubbed against each other hard enough to produce smoke. The Bodhisatta saw this and knew that if the strong wind continued, the tree could catch fire. He told the flock they must leave, and most of the birds followed him, but some foolish birds felt that the Bodhisatta worried too much, and they stayed behind. It wasn't long before the Bodhisatta's prediction came true. As the fire grew, the old leaves created a thick smoke and the birds still in the tree were blinded and unable to get away, so they all burned to death.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha had sent one of his disciples out to the forest to meditate during the rainy season. Soon after the disciple arrived, his hut burned down and he was forced to sleep outdoors in great discomfort. He told nearby villagers about the problem, and they promised to build him a new hut as soon as they finished irrigating their fields. But when this was done, they said they needed to plant the seeds, then they needed to put up fences, pick weeds, and so on; always asking the disciple to wait just a little longer.

When the disciple's three-month retreat was over, nobody had built him a new hut and he failed to progress in his meditation because of it. Upon returning to the monastery,

he told the Buddha he had failed and explained why. The Buddha told him this story so he understood that he was a fool for not relocating to a more suitable place to do his meditation.

The birds who fled the tree with the Bodhisatta were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Tittira Jataka (#37)

The Bodhisatta was once a partridge. He was best friends with a monkey and an elephant, and the three of them treated each other as equals. As time went on, they felt it was unseemly for them to act as equals and the subordinates ought to show deference and honor to whoever was their elder. But first they had to know who was the oldest.

They sat at the foot of a banyan tree and each told the others how tall it was in their earliest memory. The elephant remembered walking over it and the topmost branches scratched its belly. The monkey remembered eating from its top branches while still sitting on the ground. The Bodhisatta remembered eating fruit from a giant banyan tree nearby and voiding the seeds, one of which grew into the tree. They took their proper order in life and henceforth sought the Bodhisatta's counsel on all matters and gave him the utmost respect.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while the Buddha was traveling, his senior disciples were the last to arrive in town, and the disciples who had come earlier had already filled all available rooms. So that night, Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, had to sleep under a tree. In the morning, after he found out what had happened to Sariputta, the Buddha gathered his disciples and rebuked them for their lack of courtesy and

subordination. He explained that honoring seniority was a virtue and told them this story so they knew that even animals have proper behavior. After this incident, the Buddha made it a formal offense for disciples to not provide the best lodging, rice, and water to the senior-most among them.

The monkey was an earlier birth of Sariputta and the elephant was an earlier birth of Moggallana, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Baka Jataka (#38)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy who lived alongside a lotus pond. A smaller pond elsewhere in the forest was full of fish, but it was the dry season and the water had dropped very low, making food scarce and the water hot. A wicked, clever crane saw this as an opportunity to eat all the fish. He told the fish he would carry them one by one from their dwindling pond to the larger, better lotus pond. Knowing that cranes are the enemy of fish, they were skeptical, but the crane said he would take one fish to swim in the lotus pond, and then bring it back as proof. They sent a large fish, too big for the crane to swallow, as a scout, and he told the other fish that the lotus pond was wonderful, so they all agreed to move. The same large fish was the first to go, but this time the crane dropped it into the fork of a tree, pecked it to death, and picked the bones clean. And all the other fish met the same fate, their bones piling up around the base of the tree.

The last resident of the small pond, a crab, really wanted to move to the lotus pond, but he did not trust the crane and assumed the fish had been eaten. He told the crane that he feared riding in his beak like the fish did because he might fall, but his claws were strong and he could hang onto the crane's neck. Not suspecting any tricks, the crane agreed. When the crane veered toward the tree, the crab protested, and the confident crane told him he was going to eat him like

he did all the fish. But the crab replied that he was tricking the crane, not the other way around. “If I am going to die, you will too,” and he squeezed the crane’s neck to make his point. The crane began to cry and tremble from fear and agreed to put the crab in the lotus pond. And as the crane landed, the crab snipped off his head.

The Bodhisatta praised the crab, preaching, “There is no reward for tricking people with deceit. See what the crane got in the end,” and the animals of the forest applauded his wisdom.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha’s disciples was a masterful tailor and he sewed robes for many disciples. But this robe-making disciple was also devious. He took brand-new cloth from the disciples, but gave them robes made from old cloth, hiding the imperfections with a dressing made of starch so the patches would not show until after the robe was washed.

When a simple village tailor who regularly ran the same ruse heard about this cultured, urbane disciple, he wanted to scam the scammer. He put on one of his own sham robes and visited the monastery. When the robe-making disciple saw the robe, he wanted to have it, so he exchanged some brand-new cloth for it. When the robe-making disciple washed it and found he had been scammed, all the other disciples heard about it.

The crane and crab were earlier births of the robe-making disciple and the village tailor. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this incident, he told them this story so they knew that in the past the robe-making disciple had been equally dishonest and also got swindled by the village tailor.

Nanda Jataka (#39)

The Bodhisatta was once a landowner. He was friends with an old man who had a young wife. The old man felt certain that after his death his wife would remarry and spend all his money rather than give it to their son. To thwart her, he buried his fortune in the forest, telling only his slave where the money lay. The old man instructed his slave to not let anyone sell the land and to take his son there when he became an adult.

When the son grew up, his mother told him what his father had done and said it was time for him to get his fortune. The slave took the son to the forest, but when they got there, he grew arrogant and insulted his master with, “You servant of a slave-wench’s son! You don’t deserve to have this money!” The son, a gentleman, pretended not to hear these words and calmly returned home. A few days later, they returned to the forest and again came back with nothing after the slave hurled more abuse.

The frustrated son sought advice from his father’s friend, the Bodhisatta, who explained that since the slave’s change in attitude was surely prompted by thoughts of taking the money himself, it must be buried right at the place where he spoke rudely. He advised that when the slave began to talk, the son should take the spade and dig for the gold and jewels himself, then make the slave carry the treasure back. The son did as suggested and found that the Bodhisatta was right.

With his father's wealth and the Bodhisatta's wisdom, he lived a happy life, giving charity and doing good deeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time when Sariputta, one of the Buddha's chief disciples, went on an alms pilgrimage, one of his resident students who came along had a drastic change in behavior. Usually meek and obedient, he turned haughty and insubordinate because of the attention he received during the trip. But, upon returning to the monastery, he reverted to his natural docile self.

The slave was an earlier birth of this student, and the Buddha told Sariputta this story so he knew that the slave had shown the same odd, inappropriate behavior in the past.

Khadirangara Jataka (#40)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. He lived a life of luxury, but faithfully kept the precepts and was extremely generous. One day a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) awoke from a seven-day trance and went to the Bodhisatta's palace for morning alms.

The demon Mara, enemy of all that is good, believed this private Buddha would die if he did not eat that morning. To stop the Bodhisatta from giving him alms, Mara conjured up a deep pit of flaming coal inside the palace. The Bodhisatta knew this must be a ploy of Mara, and he vowed not to let it succeed. He took a bowl of food for the private Buddha and walked right into the fiery pit; as he did so, a large lotus rose up under his feet to protect him. The Bodhisatta placed his offering into the private Buddha's bowl, then the latter rose into the air and flew away on a track made of clouds. Defeated, Mara vanished into his own realm. The victorious Bodhisatta, still standing on the lotus, preached to those around him about the virtue of giving alms and following the precepts.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, had a fairy living over the fourth gateway of his massive palace. The fairy was not a follower of

the Buddha and was greatly annoyed that she and her children had to come down to the ground floor to pay respect every time he and his elder disciples visited Anathapindika. She tried unsuccessfully to get Anathapindika's business manager and his eldest son to stop him hosting these people because of all the money he wasted.

Even after Anathapindika fell into poverty from neglecting his business in order to focus fully on helping people, he continued to give what he could to the Buddha's sangha. The fairy now saw a chance to change his mind, and she appeared before him in visible form, imploring him to stop donating to the Buddha and instead think of his future and his family. Anathapindika, whose faith in the Buddha never wavered, was so incensed by her words that he kicked her and her children out of the palace.

Now homeless, the fairy asked several gods to convince Anathapindika to let her return. But when they heard the wicked words she had spoken, all refused. Indra, king of the gods, however, did propose a way she could earn his forgiveness. Anathapindika had not sought recovery of many of the loans he had made and had also lost some buried treasure chests. Indra suggested the fairy tell Anathapindika's delinquent borrowers that while he had not sought payment of debts when he was wealthy, now that he was poor it was time to pay up. And she should take some young goblins with

her to scare these people into action. She should also use her supernatural powers to find the missing money.

The fairy did as Indra advised and placed a fortune in his treasury; then she went to seek forgiveness. She explained that she had been stained by passion and blinded by ignorance, but she now recognized the Buddha's infinite virtue and had sought atonement by recovering his money. Anathapindika welcomed her conversion, but he wanted her to request his pardon in the presence of the Buddha. So the next day they went to his monastery and she confessed what she had done. The Buddha preached that to bad people sin looks good before it ripens, and to virtuous people goodness feels like sin before it ripens. The fairy then fell to the Buddha's feet in tears to apologize and ask forgiveness, which both the Buddha and Anathapindika granted.

Anathapindika then began to speak highly of himself since the fairy had not swayed him to stop supporting the Buddha. But the Buddha corrected him, explaining that his dedication was no great accomplishment because he was living in the lifetime of a perfect Buddha. As an example of something truly marvelous, the Buddha told Anathapindika this story of one of his own earlier births, when he had taken a huge leap of faith despite there being no perfect Buddha alive to preach truth to the world.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Losaka Jataka (#41)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famed across the land. Long before this, there was a virtuous monk in a village who was supported by a wealthy landowner. One day an arahant arrived in the village, and the landowner was so impressed by his demeanor and his teaching that he asked him to stay at the local monastery so they could talk further. The village monk worried that his patron would begin supporting the arahant instead of himself and schemed to make sure this did not happen.

The next morning, the village monk was supposed to accompany the arahant to the landowner's house, but he rang the gong with the back of his fingernail so the arahant would not hear it and went to see the landowner alone. He told his sponsor that the arahant had ignored his wake-up call and suggested he did not want to return because the food served the day before was not fancy enough. Assuming, instead, that the arahant must have been weary from his journey, the landowner asked the village monk to take him a bowl of delicious food. Still acting with a jealous heart, the monk discarded the food instead of delivering it. He was immediately racked with remorse, fell ill, and died soon after.

The monk suffered hundreds of thousands of years of damnation in hell before being reborn for five hundred lives as an ogre who never found enough food to eat, five hundred more as an eternally hungry dog, and then as a starving child

named Mittavindaka in a beggar family. His mother and father, tormented by the perpetual hunger pangs that had struck them every day since the boy had been born, knew Mittavindaka had cursed them and cast him out of their village.

Now homeless, Mittavindaka wandered aimlessly and ended up in the city where the Bodhisatta was teaching. He was taken in as a charity scholar in the Bodhisatta's school, but he often fought with other students and disrespected the Bodhisatta. It wasn't long before Mittavindaka ran away to a remote village and worked as a laborer. He married a poor woman, had two children with her, and eventually the villagers hired him to teach them about the true doctrine. But hardship plagued the village—the king punished it seven times, it burned to the ground seven times, and the water supply dried up seven times. When the villagers realized all this misfortune had begun after Mittavindaka came to live there, they beat him and drove him away.

Mittavindaka ended up in a haunted forest where demons ate his family. He took to wandering again and found work on a ship. On his seventh day at sea, the winds died and the ship wouldn't move. The crew cast lots to see who had cursed them, and when Mittavindaka drew the lot seven times straight, he was set afloat on a bamboo raft. As soon as he was overboard, the ship began to sail again.

Mittavindaka's raft drifted to an island where four female spirits (specifically *vimana petas*, ghosts whose blissful lives are regularly interrupted by hell-like tortures) lived in a crystal palace, and he stayed with them for seven happy days until they needed to leave for a week of penance. Next, he encountered eight more such spirits in a silver palace, then sixteen in a jewel palace, and finally thirty-two in a gold palace; and he always left when the spirits did.

Then Mittavindaka reached a city of ogres. One of them walked around in the form of a goat. Not knowing her true form, Mittavindaka grabbed the goat by its leg, intending to eat it. In anger, the ogress hurled him across the ocean and he landed in the dry moat around the Bodhisatta's city. A herd of the king's goats was grazing in the moat, and Mittavindaka figured if one goat could throw him all the way here, perhaps another could throw him back to one of the islands. He grabbed a goat by the leg, and when it bleated loudly, the goatherders, hiding nearby waiting to catch thieves, ran out and seized him. They beat Mittavindaka and started to haul him away to the king.

While walking out of the city to go bathe, the Bodhisatta saw his former student in bonds. When the goatherders explained why they had seized him, the Bodhisatta asked if he could take Mittavindaka as a slave. They agreed. The Bodhisatta asked Mittavindaka what he had been up to these many years. Upon hearing the story, the Bodhisatta told

Mittavindaka that had he been less stubborn and accepted his help at the time, he could have avoided all that misery.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

An elder disciple of the Buddha named Losaka Tissa was eternally unlucky and never got enough food. On the day he was conceived, all the fishermen of his village failed to catch even a single fish, and while he was in the womb, the village was destroyed by fire seven times and ravaged by the king seven times. The village's misfortune continued until people figured out which family was the source of the curse (by dividing into two bands and seeing which group was dogged by ruin, then dividing that group, and so on) and drove them out. After Losaka was born, his mother raised him just long enough until he could be sent out as a beggar, and then she left.

When Losaka was seven years old, Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, saw the dirty child picking up grains of rice tossed in the street after the pots had been washed. When he heard Losaka's story, Sariputta invited him to become a novice. He readily agreed and later became a full disciple. But his bad luck continued, even after becoming an arahant, and he rarely got a full helping of food on his alms rounds, receiving just enough for basic sustenance. People were not intentionally cruel to him, but a magic power made a single ladle of rice appear to fill his alms bowl to the brim—seeing this, nobody else gave him more.

When it was Losaka's last day on earth, Sariputta sensed it and decided that he should finally get to eat a full meal. Sariputta had Losaka accompany him on the morning alms round, but due to Losaka's bad luck, they both received nothing. So he sent Losaka back to the monastery and collected food on his own. When Sariputta returned, he sent some food to Losaka, but the person who was supposed to deliver it forgot and ate it himself. That afternoon, Sariputta asked Losaka if he had enjoyed his meal, and Losaka said no food had arrived. By this time, it was afternoon and too late for disciples to eat a meal. So Sariputta went to the palace and asked the king to fill his bowl with honey, ghee, butter, and sugar, which disciples can eat at any time. He returned with the food and held the bowl himself while Losaka ate so that there could be no mishaps, and finally Losaka ate until he was satisfied. Not long after that, he passed into nirvana.

Mittavindaka was an earlier birth of Losaka Tissa. The Buddha told this story to explain to the other disciples why Losaka had such incredible misfortune in his life yet was able to achieve arahantship.

Kapota Jataka (#42)

The Bodhisatta was once a pigeon. In those days, people used to hang baskets around town for birds to live in, and the Bodhisatta had taken up residence in the kitchen of the king's treasurer.

One day a crow smelled fish and meat cooking and wanted to eat it. When he saw the Bodhisatta fly into the kitchen, he hatched a plan to get at the food. The next day, the crow followed the Bodhisatta from place to place as he fed. Knowing they had very different diets, the Bodhisatta asked the crow why. The crow answered that he respected the pigeon's demeanor and wanted to stay with him always. That evening when the cook saw the Bodhisatta's companion, he hung a basket for him to live in.

The two birds dwelled together in the kitchen for several days until finally the cook hung some fish there and the crow decided now was the time to get some of the splendid food he had come for. He spent the night moaning loudly, and the next morning when the Bodhisatta was leaving to search for food, he said he had a stomach ache and could not go. The Bodhisatta knew that crows did not get stomach aches and so knew what the crow was really up to. He urged the crow not to do it, but to no avail.

When the crow saw the cook step out of the kitchen, he flew over to take some fish. But he landed noisily on a colander,

and the cook rushed back in. He grabbed the crow, plucked all his feathers, covered him in sauce and spices, and tossed him into his basket to suffer a slow, painful death. When the Bodhisatta returned, he scolded the crow for his greed and for not listening to good advice. Then the Bodhisatta flew off to find another dwelling.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, who had been the crow in an earlier birth, was greedy. The Buddha told him this story to explain how greed had once before led him to ruin.

Veluka Jataka (#43)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers studying with him in the Himalayas. One of his students kept a pet snake in a bamboo tube. The Bodhisatta told him snakes cannot be trusted and he should let it go—if he didn't, the snake would kill him. But the man told the Bodhisatta he loved the snake as if it were his child, and he kept it.

A short time later, all the ascetics went out into the forest to gather fruit for a few days. Upon their return, the student opened the bamboo tube to feed his snake, as he had always done before. But this time the snake was angry about being kept caged for so long and it bit the student's hand, killing him instantly.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, who had been the ascetic who kept the snake as a pet in an earlier birth, was stubborn. The Buddha told him this story as a warning that stubbornness can have bad results.

Makasa Jataka (#44)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. One day he stopped at a carpenter's home in a faraway border village. While the carpenter was planing wood, a mosquito bit him on the head and he told his son to swat it. The boy picked up an axe and hit the mosquito, splitting open his father's head and killing him instantly. The Bodhisatta told those around him that smart enemies are better than stupid friends because the fear of vengeance stops a smart enemy from killing someone.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While out on an alms pilgrimage, the Buddha came to a village with many wounded men. He asked people what had happened. They explained that the mosquitoes in the forest bothered them immensely, so many of the villagers declared war on the mosquitoes and went to attack them. When they fired their bows, the arrows struck each other, not the mosquitoes.

The carpenter and his idiot son were earlier births of two of these stupid villagers, and the Buddha told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time they had attacked each other rather than mosquitoes.

Rohini Jataka (#45)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. While one of his slaves pounded rice, her mother was getting bitten by flies and asked her daughter to shoo them away. Without thinking, the daughter tried to kill the flies with her pestle and struck her mother so hard she died. When the Bodhisatta heard what happened, he told those around him that smart enemies are better than stupid friends.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While visiting the Buddha, the king's treasurer told him one of his slaves had accidentally killed her mother by smashing her with a pestle while intending to kill flies. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that his slave and her mother had done the exact same thing in earlier births.

Aramadusaka Jataka (#46)

The Bodhisatta was once a wise and respected man. A large festival was happening in the city, and the king's gardener wanted to join the festivities. So he asked the monkeys living in the royal park, who benefited from eating the bountiful fruits and shoots, to water the young trees in the garden for him while he was away. The monkey king agreed, and the gardener gave him the waterskins and watering cans. Wanting to do a good job, the monkey king told the other monkeys they needed to conserve water or they might run out before getting to all the trees. He had them pull up each tree to see the size of its roots and give lots of water to those with big roots and just a little water to those with small roots.

The Bodhisatta walked past the park and saw some monkeys at work. He asked why they were pulling up the trees, and the monkeys told him they were following their king's orders. The Bodhisatta rebuked the monkey king for being a fool and commented to his followers that this was an example of how ignorant people who desire to do good end up doing harm.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While on an alms pilgrimage, the Buddha was invited to eat lunch at a man's home, and they did so in his lush garden. Walking around the garden, some of the Buddha's disciples saw a bare patch and they asked the gardener what had happened. The gardener told them he had hired a boy from

the village to do the watering, and he pulled up all the young trees to judge how much water they needed by the size of their roots. These trees withered and died, making the space they saw.

The monkey king was an earlier birth of this village boy, and when the disciples later told the Buddha about what the boy had done, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time the boy had destroyed a garden.

Varuni Jataka (#47)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. One day a tavernkeeper who lived under the Bodhisatta's protection left his apprentice in charge of the bar while he went off to bathe. The apprentice saw that the customers liked to eat salt before drinking, so he put some in the liquor, ruining the whole batch and angering the customers. After the tavernkeeper told him this story, the Bodhisatta explained that this was an example of how ignorant people who desire to do good end up doing harm.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, was visiting. He told the Buddha a funny story about his friend, a tavernkeeper. He had once gone to bathe and left his apprentice in change. The apprentice mixed salt in with the liquor thinking the customers would like it. Of course they didn't, and when the tavernkeeper returned a short time later, there were no customers.

The Buddha told Anathapindika this story so he knew that his friend's tavernkeeper apprentice had also been a tavernkeeper apprentice in an earlier birth and had spoiled liquor in exactly the same way.

Vedabbha Jataka (#48)

The Bodhisatta was once a student. His teacher, a powerful brahmin priest, knew the magical Vedabbha Spell, which caused gold, silver, pearl, coral, cat's eye, ruby, and diamond to rain from the sky during a particular alignment of the planets. One time while the two were traveling, they were seized by bandits who kept the priest and sent the Bodhisatta away to gather a ransom. Before departing, the Bodhisatta warned his master not to cast the spell that evening when the planets were aligned; if he did, there would be a terrible result.

But the priest didn't want to wait to be set free. So, after sunset, he told his captors what he could do, and they untied him, washed his head, brought him fresh clothes, and covered him with perfume and flowers. The priest gazed up to the heavens and made the seven valuables fall down. The bandits gathered their riches and began to walk out of the forest with the priest. But before they got out, a second band of thieves captured the first. When they heard of the priest's power, they let the other bandits go and demanded he give them treasure too. But when the priest explained that he would have to wait another year to invoke the precious rain, one of the thieves sliced him in half with his sword. This group then chased down the first band of thieves, killed them all, and took their treasure.

But the thieves' greed was intense and the gang fought among themselves until just two of them remained alive. This pair dragged the treasure away from the road and one guarded it while the other walked to a village to get rice for dinner. Neither was satisfied having just half the haul and each conspired to kill the other and take everything for himself. The bandit guarding the treasure sat with his sword drawn, and he killed the other the moment that he returned. But the bandit who had brought the rice had poisoned half of it, so when the last bandit ate his dinner, he also died.

When the Bodhisatta returned with the ransom and did not find the gang, he knew that his master had not heeded his warning. The Bodhisatta walked down the road and found the bodies and the treasure, and he understood everything that had happened. He mused aloud that those who seek selfish gain always reap ruin eventually; not only for themselves, but for other people too. Tree fairies who heard the Bodhisatta speak shouted applause. He took the treasure home and spent the rest of his life giving alms and doing good deeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The brahmin priest was an earlier birth of a selfish and obstinate disciple of the Buddha. The Buddha told him this story of his past life so he knew that his refusal to listen to advice had once resulted in devastation.

Nakkhatta Jataka (#49)

The Bodhisatta was once a wise and respected man. Some townspeople had arranged a marriage to a country girl and set a date with her family. After this, they asked a naked ascetic if the chosen day was lucky or not. Upset that they picked a day without consulting him first, he lied and said the stars were not favorable and there would be great misfortune if they had a marriage on that day. So when the appointed day came, the family stayed home.

The countryfolk were quite upset when the townspeople did not show up on the day that they themselves had chosen, so they married the girl off to someone else. The townspeople showed up in the village the next day for the marriage, and an argument broke out when they learned what had happened. The Bodhisatta, who lived in the city but was in the village on business, heard the commotion. He told the townspeople, with contempt, that they were fools because there is no luck to be found in the stars. They went home without a new bride.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A marriage was foiled by a resentful naked ascetic in the Buddha's time almost exactly as it had been in the past, with the only difference being that the bride's family lived in the town and the husband's family in the countryside and were the ones who consulted the ascetic.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the failed marriage, he told them this story so they knew that the same thing had happened to earlier births of the same two families and the ascetic.

Dummedha Jataka (#50)

The Bodhisatta was once a king, and he ruled righteously by following the ten royal virtues. The people of his city used to make animal sacrifices to the gods. While he was still the crown prince, the Bodhisatta started a scheme to end the practice. He began joining the crowds who prayed to a tree fairy residing in a holy banyan tree outside the city, offering perfumes and flowers, sprinkling the tree with water, and walking around its trunk. Later, after the Bodhisatta took the throne, he assembled his advisors and told them that while he was still a prince, he had promised the tree fairy that he would make a great offering if he became king. He ordered them to go forth throughout the city and proclaim by the beat of a drum that the king had vowed to give the tree fairy the flesh and blood of one thousand subjects who broke the precepts and lived in sin. From this point forward, all evildoers would be slayed and sacrificed. And as the Bodhisatta had predicted, not a single person was caught doing any bad things, including sacrificing animals.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples sat around discussing how great the Buddha was: how he kept a simple life, was kind to all (even nagas and garudas), converted many people, and always lived for the benefit of the world. When the Buddha heard their discussion, he told them this story so

they knew that he had also acted in the interest of others in the past.

The king’s advisors were earlier births of the Buddha’s disciples.

Mahasilava Jataka (#51)

The Bodhisatta was once the King of Varanasi, and he ruled righteously, wisely, and generously. He had expelled one of his advisors from the kingdom for making personal use of the royal harem, and this man later became the chief advisor to the King of Kosala. The ex-advisor convinced this king that the Bodhisatta was a weak leader and could easily be conquered. Upon hearing his plan, the King of Kosala suspected that his advisor was a traitor sent to lead him into a trap; but the advisor said he could prove it. He told the king to send some men to massacre a village across the border; then he would see that they would not be punished. The king did so. The murderous attackers were captured and sent to the palace, where the Bodhisatta asked why they had killed the villagers. When they answered that it was because they were poor and could not find work, the Bodhisatta made them promise not to do it again, gave them money, and set them free.

Though things transpired just as his advisor said they would, the King of Kosala was still not convinced. He repeated the test twice more, the last time inside the capital city, and after the same result he realized his new advisor was right about the Bodhisatta being a thoroughly righteous man and no threat at all. The now confident King of Kosala set out on conquest with his army and elephants. Varanasi had the bravest, fiercest warriors in all of India, and when word spread of the coming invasion, they begged the Bodhisatta to

set them loose, as did his advisors. But the Bodhisatta was steadfast that he would not allow anyone to suffer, and he prohibited resistance. When the invaders arrived at the city, the Bodhisatta opened the gate and let them in. The effortlessly victorious King of Kosala ordered the Bodhisatta and his advisors bound and buried up to their necks in the cemetery, where at night jackals would come and eat them. At no point had an ill thought entered the Bodhisatta's mind. And so loyal were his advisors that they said and did nothing.

At midnight the jackals arrived at the cemetery to feast on corpses and found the buried men. When the first jackal approached the Bodhisatta, he bit into the beast's throat and did not let go. The captured jackal's howling sent his companions fleeing, and as it struggled to free itself, its legs dug up dirt around the Bodhisatta. After enough time had passed, the Bodhisatta released his bite and let the jackal go. Then, through his mighty strength, he was able to dig himself out of the loosened dirt and free his advisors.

Nearby, two ogres had found a corpse lying right on the border of their territories and were quarreling over how to divide it. Since they could not decide, they dragged the body to the Bodhisatta and asked him to divide it. He agreed, but told them he first needed to freshen up. So the ogres used their magical powers to bring him scented water, robes, perfumes, food, and betel, all of which had been prepared for the King of Kosala. Refreshed, the Bodhisatta then told them

to fetch the usurper's sword of state from his room. The Bodhisatta used it to part the corpse straight down the spine and gave one half to each ogre. The Bodhisatta then asked the ogres to transport him to the King of Kosala's bedroom.

Finding the king asleep, the Bodhisatta smacked him in the stomach with the flat of his sword. Struck with terror, he sat up and listened to the Bodhisatta explain how he managed to escape and get past all the guards into the room. Hearing the tale, the king realized he had made a mistake. He swore an oath of friendship and asked the Bodhisatta for forgiveness, which was granted. In the morning, the King of Kosala gathered all his men, praised the Bodhisatta, punished his chief advisor, and returned to his own kingdom. The Bodhisatta told those gathered around him that it was only because of perseverance that he had been able to save his kingdom with no lives lost, and people must have faith that doing good gives the best result.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples stopped concentrating on the practice of his faith. When the Buddha heard about it, he told him this story to explain that once before, when it seemed that all hope was lost, some wise virtuous men did not waiver in their perseverance. The disciple became an arahant after hearing the story.

The exiled advisor was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and the Bodhisatta's loyal advisors were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Cula-Janaka Jataka (#52)

This story is the same as the Mahajanaka Jataka (#539)

Punnapati Jataka (#53)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. One day as he walked to the palace, some men invited him to sit with them and drink some rare liquor. The Bodhisatta did not drink alcohol, but he knew an invitation like this could be a ruse; and if so, he wanted to expose it. He agreed to join them, but said he could not drink before going to the king's palace. They should wait for him and he would think about joining them when he returned. After his business was finished, the Bodhisatta saw the men again, and their bowls were still full. If the liquor was actually good, they would have drunk some already. He told them he knew they were thieves and that they had drugged the liquor.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some men who had no money decided to rob Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity. Knowing that Anathapindika wore his rings and richest attire when he went to see the king, they set up a table along his regular route to the palace and invited him to sit down and drink some rare liquor. Anathapindika did not drink, but he knew this was likely a ruse and agreed so that he could expose them. After sitting for a while and seeing that the men did not drink any of their liquor, he was certain it was drugged. He told them he knew what they were up to and challenged the men to take the first swig. The thieves got up and fled.

When Anathapindika told the Buddha about this incident, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that these same men had tried to do the same thing to he himself during earlier births.

Phala Jataka (#54)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant who led large oxcart caravans to trade with distant lands. During one trip through a vast forest, the Bodhisatta warned his men not to eat anything unfamiliar without checking with him first, because poisonous trees grew there. Some of his men came upon a *kimpakka* tree, which in every regard, from the appearance of the leaves to the taste of the fruit, is similar to a mango tree; except that eating the *kimpakka* fruit causes instant death. Impatient, these men ate some. When the Bodhisatta arrived later, he realized this was not a mango tree and gave his men an elixir that saved their lives.

People from a nearby village knew that travelers on this road often ate the *kimpakka* fruit and died, and they would come take their oxen, wagons, and wares. That morning, they were surprised to see that even though the Bodhisatta had set up camp near the tree, everyone was still alive. They asked the Bodhisatta how he knew this was not a mango tree and he answered that if a mango tree grew near a village, people would pick the mangoes, but this tree was full of fruit.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man had invited some of the Buddha's disciples to receive alms in his garden. After they had eaten rice gruel and cakes, the man ordered his gardener to walk around with the disciples and give them fruit. They were impressed by the

gardener’s knowledge—he could tell with a single glance at a tree which fruits were ripe and unripe.

When the disciples told the Buddha about these impressive skills, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that in the past he himself had similar knowledge of fruits.

The people of the caravan were earlier births of the Buddha’s disciples.

Pancavudha Jataka (#55)

The Bodhisatta was once a crown prince. Right after the Bodhisatta was born, eight hundred brahmin priests predicted he would be both a powerful, virtuous leader and an expert fighter. When the Bodhisatta turned sixteen, his father sent him to study in Taxila. After his lessons ended, his teacher gave him a set of five weapons and he set off for home. Along the way, he came upon a forest where a resident ogre killed everyone he met. Despite being warned of this danger, the Bodhisatta was fearless and walked into, rather than around, the forest.

The ogre was as tall as a palm tree and gruesome, but when the Bodhisatta saw him, he did not run. He fired fifty poison arrows at the ogre, though they got caught in his thick fur and none pierced the skin. The ogre charged the Bodhisatta, who hurled his sword, but it could not penetrate the fur. Then he smashed the ogre with his club, which also got stuck in the ogre's shaggy coat. Full of bluster, the Bodhisatta shouted at the ogre that he would crush him into dust and threw a punch with his right hand. But, like the weapons, it became snarled in the fur, and as he continued to fight, so did his left hand, right foot, left foot, and head.

The ogre was impressed by the Bodhisatta's absurd bravery and realized that he was no ordinary man, so he set him free. But before he left, the Bodhisatta explained that the ogre lived his miserable, murderous existence because of sins from

bygone days. The ogre could end the cycle by living a good life from then on, and he vowed to do so. The Bodhisatta returned home and in due time became king, serving with virtue and generosity.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When a backsliding disciple stopped making an effort, the Buddha told him this story as a reminder that perseverance pays rewards.

The ogre was an earlier birth of Angulimala, a dreaded bandit who cut off a finger of each person he murdered and wore them around his neck, and who later became an enlightened disciple of the Buddha.

Kancanakkhandha Jataka (#56)

The Bodhisatta was once a farmer. One day, while plowing his field, he struck a giant gold bar, two meters long and as thick as his thigh, that had been buried by a wealthy merchant who died long ago. The Bodhisatta dug it out, but it was too heavy to lift. He took a seat and thought about his good luck. He would use some of his new wealth to live on, some for trading, bury some for the future, and give away some as charity. This gave him the idea to cut the gold bar into four pieces, and he carried each to his home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man who had just become a disciple of the Buddha was overwhelmed by the many rules of morality he was told to learn. He felt he would be unable to fulfill his vows, despite his desire to do so. He decided to give back his bowl and robes and return to doing good deeds as a layman, but his teachers urged him to talk to the Buddha first. The Buddha scolded the teachers for not explaining things well, and then he told the disciple there were only three moral rules he must know: guard against doing evil through speech, thought, and action. Full of joy over this insight, he remained a disciple and became an arahant a few days later.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this event, he told them this story to explain that heavy burdens become light when broken into smaller pieces.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Vanarinda Jataka (#57)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. Every day he went to eat fruit on an island in the river by hopping onto a lone rock between the island and the shore. A pair of crocodiles lived near the island and the female, being pregnant, got an urge to eat a monkey's heart, and she told her mate to get it for her. He promised he would, and went to lie on the rock waiting for the Bodhisatta to cross over that evening.

The clever Bodhisatta always kept close watch on the river's height, and when he prepared to return home he noticed that the rock was higher than normal. He suspected a crocodile could be on top of it. To find out, he called, "Hello Rock" three times. When he got no response he asked, "Rock, my friend, why do you not answer me today?" The crocodile, now thinking the rock actually could talk, replied, "Yes, monkey. What do you want?"

The Bodhisatta told the crocodile how he'd tricked him, and the crocodile admitted he was there to eat him. With no other way off the island, the Bodhisatta knew he had to outwit the crocodile. He claimed that since he was trapped, he would give himself up. "Open your mouth and catch me when I jump," he said, knowing that crocodiles shut their eyes when they open their mouths.[1] As soon as the crocodile's jaws opened, the Bodhisatta jumped onto his head and reached the shore. The crocodile told the

Bodhisatta he was so wise he would not try to catch him again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The male crocodile was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried unsuccessfully to kill him in the past.

The female crocodile was an earlier birth of Cinca-Manavika, a woman who had falsely claimed the Buddha impregnated her.

Tayodhamma Jataka (#58)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. The king of his troop feared being overthrown and so castrated all newborn males with his teeth. Because of this, when the Bodhisatta's mother got pregnant by the king, she fled the troop and raised her son alone. When the Bodhisatta grew up, he asked about his father. His mother told him why she left the troop and said that even now his father would still kill him to protect his leadership. But the Bodhisatta was confident in himself and told his mother they need not be afraid. So they went.

When the monkey king saw his son, he feigned happiness and hugged him. Really though, he attempted to crush the life out of him. But the Bodhisatta was too strong and didn't even get hurt. So the king hatched another plan. He told the Bodhisatta that, because he was now old, it was time to pass on the throne to his son. In preparation for the coronation, he sent the Bodhisatta to a nearby lake to collect lotuses and water lilies.

When the Bodhisatta reached the lake, he noticed that the footprints on its bank only went down to the water, none came back. Surely an ogre lived in the lake, and this was another assassination attempt by his father. But the Bodhisatta came up with a plan to get the flowers. He went to a spot narrow enough to jump over and was able to grab some flowers during each leap, landing safely on the opposite bank.

The ogre watched the Bodhisatta picking flowers and had never seen anyone, human or animal, so clever. He rose out of the water and said that anyone mastering dexterity, bravery, and resourcefulness like this could never be defeated. Since hauling flowers was beneath a being so great, the ogre believed, he offered to carry them.

When the monkey king saw the Bodhisatta return with the ogre at his service, his heart burst into seven pieces, and he died. The other monkeys made the Bodhisatta their new king.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past.

Bherivada Jataka (#59)

The Bodhisatta was once a village drummer. One time he traveled with his son to play at a festival in the city and they made a lot of money. Returning home, they had to pass through a forest that was infested with thieves. The Bodhisatta told his son not to play the drum continuously; rather, just play occasionally so any thieves hearing it would assume a large group with an important lord was passing by. But the son did not listen. When the thieves heard the drum beating nonstop, they knew it was not a grand procession, so they went to look. They saw it was just two people walking and they robbed them. Because of the son's excess, they lost all their money.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of an obstinate disciple of the Buddha. The Buddha told him this story of his past life so he knew that his refusal to follow advice had previously led to misfortune.

Samkhadhamana Jataka (#60)

The Bodhisatta was once a village conch-blower. Once as a boy, he traveled with his father to play at a festival in the city and they made a lot of money. Returning home, they had to pass through a forest that was infested with thieves. The Bodhisatta told his father not to blow his conch shell continuously; rather, just play occasionally so any thieves hearing it would assume a large group with an important lord was passing by. But the father felt he knew better and did not listen. When the thieves heard the conch shell nonstop, they knew it was not a grand procession, so they went to look. They saw it was just two people walking and they robbed them. Because of the father's excess, they lost all their money.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The father was an earlier birth of an obstinate disciple of the Buddha. The Buddha told him this story of his past life so he knew that his refusal to follow advice had previously led to misfortune.

Asatamanta Jataka (#61)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. When a wealthy family's son reached age sixteen, they told him it was time to choose his path in life: renounce the world and worship the fire god as an ascetic to ensure rebirth in heaven, or study and work for the family business. The son knew that his parents preferred he take the religious path, but he wanted a home life and so went off to Taxila to study with the Bodhisatta.

His parents' desire that he worship the fire god never faded. When the son's studies were complete and he returned home, his mother schemed to change his mind. She knew that if he truly understood the utter wickedness of women, he would switch paths; and she knew that the Bodhisatta could teach this better than she and her husband could. So she asked her son if he had learned the Anguish Texts. He had not, and his mother insisted that he had not properly completed his education and must return to Taxila.

The son found the Bodhisatta at his remote forest home and explained that his mother had sent him back to learn the Anguish Texts. As there was no such scripture, the Bodhisatta understood she had sent him back to learn the truth about women. Without revealing the actual intent, the Bodhisatta agreed to teach him these texts, and the lessons began with caring for the Bodhisatta's blind and decrepit one-hundred-twenty-year-old mother. Not only did he need to wash and feed her, but praise her beauty and report to him how she

responded. The student obeyed, and soon, because he cared for her so well, she thought he had fallen in love with her, and passion rose in her heart. One day she told the student she was in love with him and he should kill the Bodhisatta so they could be together. He told her that he would never do such a thing, so she said she would do it herself.

As instructed, the student told his master what his mother had said. In his wisdom, the Bodhisatta was able to divine that his mother would die that day, so he told his student they were going to put her through a test. He cut down a fig tree, carved a human-sized figure, put it in his bed, and tied a string so his mother could find it. The Bodhisatta told his student to give his mother an axe and the end of the string and tell her now was a good time to kill him. She went to the bedroom and without hesitation swung the axe down on the throat, realizing by the resulting thud what had happened. She shrieked at this betrayal and died instantly, as was her fate.

The Bodhisatta gave his mother a respectful cremation, then told his student that the real reason he had been sent back to Taxila was to see that women are vile creatures. The lesson learned, the son rejected family life to live in the forest as a fire-worshipping ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, while out on a morning alms round, saw a woman so beautiful he fell in love at first sight.

The lovesick disciple became lean as a wild deer and could no longer concentrate on his studies or meditation. The Buddha told this story to remind him that women are vile and only bring misery.

The student and his mother and father were earlier births of Ananda, Bhadda Kapilani, and Maha Kassapa, three of the Buddha's top disciples.

Andabhuta Jataka (#62)

The Bodhisatta was once a king, and he ruled righteously. He used to play dice with his chaplain, whose infallible good luck mantra was, “It’s nature’s law that rivers wind, and trees grow of wood by law of kind; And given opportunity, all women work iniquity.” Tired of constantly losing money to the Bodhisatta, the chaplain devised a plan to extinguish the mantra so he could win games and get rich. He found a poor pregnant woman and, divining that she was carrying a girl, paid to take the child after she was born. He kept this girl confined to his palace under lock and key and had her raised entirely by women, never letting her even see a man other than himself. And when she came of age, he married her.

All this time, the chaplain had stopped playing dice, but finally he challenged the Bodhisatta to a game. After the Bodhisatta sang his mantra, the chaplain uttered, “Except for my girl” at the end—and he won. The Bodhisatta now knew there was a virtuous woman locked up at his chaplain’s home, so he hired a clever young scamp to corrupt her.

Knowing that the chaplain sent his wife’s servant out daily to buy perfumes and flowers, the scamp used the Bodhisatta’s money to open a perfume shop near the chaplain’s house. One day as the servant passed by, the scamp rushed out of his store, threw himself at her feet, and cried out, “Oh mother, where have you been all this time?” His friends aided the lie by remarking emphatically how similar the two looked,

and eventually the servant was convinced. The two embraced and discussed their lives. The servant told her “son” about the beautiful woman she cared for, and he promised to give his “mother” all the flowers and perfumes she wanted for free. The servant returned home with so many flowers and perfumes that the chaplain’s wife asked what she had done to please her husband. She explained that she was not spending more money, she was now getting things from her son instead of the regular shop.

After a few days, the scamp feigned illness. When the servant came to see him, he told her that because the chaplain’s wife was reportedly so beautiful he had fallen madly in love with her; and if he could not have her, he would die of a broken heart. The servant said she would try to arrange it.

When the servant told the chaplain’s wife about her son’s infatuation, she agreed to meet him if he could be smuggled into her room. From this point on, the servant pretended to be clumsy when she returned to the palace, spilling dust on the guards when they searched her. The guards grew tired of her “accidents,” and eventually they all stopped inspecting her baskets. Then she had the scamp hide in a flower basket and she carried him up to the young wife. She was glad for the company, and they fell for each other right away. He stayed for several days, hiding when the chaplain was at home.

Eventually the chaplain's wife told her new lover he must leave and he agreed, but said he wanted to hit the chaplain first. She liked the plan, so when her husband next came to her room, she told him she wanted to dance while he played the lute. But he needed to cover his face because she was shy, and he agreed. While she danced, she told her husband she had the urge to hit him once on the head. Again he agreed (since he was an idiot), and the scamp snuck up and whacked him so hard it hurt his eyes and left a bump on his head. His wife took off his blindfold and rubbed oil on his bruises. And when the chaplain left, the scamp went out of the palace the same way he got in, and he immediately told the Bodhisatta all that had happened.

The next time the chaplain took a game of dice with the Bodhisatta and added his, "Except for my girl," he lost. The Bodhisatta mocked his chaplain for believing that any woman could be trusted to be faithful to just one man and revealed his scheme with the scamp, including what had really happened when he was blindfolded.

When the chaplain confronted his wife over her wickedness, she denied everything and said she would brave the ordeal of fire to prove she was telling the truth. Agreeing to her idea, the chaplain had a fire lit and the girl swore to the assembled crowd, "No man's hand but yours, my husband, has ever touched me. I call on the truth to protect me from this fire." Before the ceremony, she had ordered her servant to tell her

lover to grab her hand just before she walked into the flames. And when the time came, he ran up to her, seized her hand, and condemned the chaplain for forcing her to do this. The woman pulled her hand free and told her husband that she was now unable to test herself in fire because her assertion was technically no longer true. But the chaplain, seeing through the ruse, beat her and sent her away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples became attracted to a woman, and the Buddha told him this story to remind him that women cannot be trusted.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Takka Jataka (#63)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in bliss on the banks of the Ganges River. One of the royal treasurer's daughters was a terrible person who beat and berated her servants and slaves. One afternoon while she was at the river, a great storm arose, and her servants pushed her into the river to die. She was swept downstream in the swollen waters until, deep into the night, the Bodhisatta heard her cries and pulled her out. He took care of her for a few days as she recovered. During this time, she successfully seduced him, causing him to lose his insight. The couple moved to a remote village and made a living selling dates and telling fortunes, so he became known as the Date Sage.

One day a gang of thieves from the mountains raided the village and not only took away all the valuables, but their chief also kidnapped the treasurer's daughter. The Bodhisatta continued his life in the village, hoping his wife would return someday. But she became very happy with her new life and feared that the Bodhisatta would take her back, so she schemed to have him killed. She sent a loving message asking the Bodhisatta to come rescue her, and he did. She told him to hide in her house until the night, then they could flee safely.

When the chief thief returned, the woman told him that her former husband was hiding in the next room, and he went in to beat him. During the merciless attack, the Bodhisatta did

not cry out, he only said “Ungrateful wretch” over and over. The thief tied him up, and in the morning beat him once more; and again the Bodhisatta’s only reaction was to repeat, “Ungrateful wretch.” The thief was puzzled by this response and asked the Bodhisatta to explain himself. He related his tale, and the thief realized if she could kill a man who had done so much for her, he himself was not safe from her wickedness. So he sliced the woman in half with his sword. In thanks for saving him, the thief bathed the Bodhisatta from head to foot and fed him all the fine food he could eat. Eventually the Bodhisatta returned to a holy life in the forest, and the thief went with him. They lived out their years with the joy of insight and entered heaven after they passed.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha’s disciples could not overcome the attachment of being attracted to women, and the Buddha told him this story to remind him that women were ungrateful, unreliable, dishonest, wrathful, and quarrelsome and that religion was the only path to happiness.

The chief thief was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Durajana Jataka (#64)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. He was famed across the world and had five hundred students. One of his students had a wicked wife—meek as a slave on days when she did something wrong, impulsive and tyrannical on others—and she caused him so much stress that he sometimes missed his lessons.

When the Bodhisatta learned why the student was absent, he explained to him that this was the nature of all women because they are inherently sinful. He told the student to stop caring what his wife liked and disliked because women's nature is as unknowable as the path of a fish through water. The student took the Bodhisatta's advice to heart, and when his wife heard what the Bodhisatta had said about her, she improved her behavior.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A layman who was deeply devoted to the Buddha did not visit for over a week, and the Buddha asked why he had been away so long. He explained that his wife was meek as a slave on days she did wrong, but impulsive and tyrannical at other times, and she stressed him out immensely. The Buddha told him that he and the same woman had been a married couple with the same issue in earlier births, and then he told him this story to give him the same advice about the nature of women and how men should treat them. And just as had

happened in the past, the man changed his attitude toward his wife and she stopped her bad behavior.

Anabhirati Jataka (#65)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. He was famed across the world and had five hundred students. One of his students discovered that his wife had been unfaithful, and he was so upset about it that he missed several days of classes.

When the Bodhisatta learned why the student was absent, he explained to him that this was the nature of all women—like highways, rivers, courtyards, and taverns, they make themselves public property—therefore wise men do not demean themselves by getting upset about their wives' adultery. After listening to the Bodhisatta's advice, the student stopped caring what women did. And when his wife heard what the Bodhisatta had said about her, she ceased having affairs.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A layman who was deeply devoted to the Buddha did not visit for over a week, and the Buddha asked why he had been away so long. He told the Buddha he had been distraught after finding that his wife had been unfaithful. The Buddha told him that he and the same woman had been a married couple with the same issue in earlier births, and then he told him this story to give him the same advice about women's infidelity. As they had done in their previous lives, the man stopped worrying about his wife's behavior and his wife ceased having affairs.

Mudulakkhana Jataka (#66)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas. One time, while on a short trip to the city, he slept in the royal park. The next morning, the king saw the Bodhisatta out collecting alms and, impressed by his demeanor, invited him into the palace for a big meal. After they talked, the king invited the Bodhisatta to remain in the city and live permanently in the park. The Bodhisatta accepted the offer and stayed there, being fed and cared for by the king, for sixteen years.

When the king needed to go put down a rebellion in a border region, he told his queen to ensure the Bodhisatta was well taken care of. One morning, the Bodhisatta was late departing to the palace for his meal, so he flew through the air instead of walking. Hearing him arrive outside, the queen hastily rose to greet him and her robe slipped off. The Bodhisatta saw her naked and was overcome by the sight: his heart filled with lust and his insight vanished. He took his food back to his hut and remained alone for seven days, but he continued to burn with lust.

After the king returned, he visited the Bodhisatta and saw that he had taken ill. When the Bodhisatta explained what really ailed him, and for who his lust was aimed, the king gave him his queen. But secretly, he told his queen to follow his plan to save the Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta and the queen left the palace and moved into an abandoned house that

passersby used as a toilet. The queen directed the cleaning and repair while the Bodhisatta did all the work. She sent the Bodhisatta to the palace to fetch every tool, material, and furnishing one at a time and came up with as many tasks as she could, making the project as long and difficult as possible.

When the house was finally finished, the queen lay on the bed with the Bodhisatta and grabbed his beard, drawing his face toward hers; but instead of kissing him, she asked, “How have you forgotten that you are a holy man?” Shocked, the Bodhisatta suddenly came to his senses and realized how close he had come to the doom of hell at the end of this lifetime.

Cured of his lust, he rushed to the palace, gave the queen back to the king, and returned to the mountains, his power of insight restored.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha’s disciples, while out on a morning alms round, saw a woman so beautiful he fell in love at first sight. He no longer took joy in his studies or meditation and became so depressed that he stopped cleaning himself. The Buddha told the disciple this story to remind him that controlling natural passions takes great effort, even for highly purified people.

The king and queen were earlier births of Ananda and Uppalavanna, two of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Ucchanga Jataka (#67)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Some men were robbed in a forest and they chased after the thieves. They saw three men plowing a field and believed they were the thieves in disguise, so they hauled them off to prison.

One day a country woman stood outside the palace loudly crying that she needed her husband. The Bodhisatta brought her in to talk, and she told him about the three men wrongly captured as thieves: they were her husband, son, and brother. The Bodhisatta agreed to let her choose one man to go free, and she chose her brother. Surprised by her answer, the Bodhisatta asked her why choose a brother, the least important of the three relations. She answered that she could find a new husband and have another son, but she could never get another brother. Impressed by her wisdom, the Bodhisatta set all three men free.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Three men were mistaken for thieves, wrongly incarcerated, and then saved by a woman, just as had happened in the past. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples praising her, he told them this story so they knew that the same thing had happened to earlier births of the same four people.

Saketa Jataka (#68)

The Bodhisatta was once a son, nephew, and grandson of the same man in one thousand five hundred successive lives (five hundred lives for each relation) and he was then born into the same three relationships in another one thousand five hundred successive lives (again, five hundred lives each) to one woman.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while the Buddha was traveling, a stranger threw himself at his feet and called him “son,” asking why the Buddha had not visited for such a long time. This man insisted the Buddha should come to his house to see his “mother,” who likewise fell at his feet and criticized him for being away so long. After the Buddha accepted their hospitality and gave a sermon about old age, he left.

The disciples traveling with the Buddha at the time wondered why this family did not know who the Buddha’s real parents were and why the Buddha did not comment about it. To end their confusion, the Buddha told this story explaining his relation to the man and woman in earlier births.

Visavanta Jataka (#69)

The Bodhisatta was once a snakebite doctor. When a man was bit by a snake, the Bodhisatta asked his patient whether he wanted the venom treated with medicine and charms or if he wanted the snake to suck it out of the wound. He chose the latter. The snake was captured and admitted biting the man, but refused to extract the venom. So the Bodhisatta built a fire and told the snake that if he did not take back the venom, he would be thrown in and killed. The snake said he would never do so, preferring to die strong than save his life by being weak, and he crawled toward the fire. The Bodhisatta blocked the path and ordered the snake to never harm anyone again. He then set the snake free and cured the patient in the usual way.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The headstrong snake was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples. One time some lay visitors had brought meal-cakes to the monastery for the disciples and left some extras for those who were not there at the time. A portion was set aside for a young disciple who lived with Sariputta, but as noon (after which time disciples cannot eat solid food) approached and he had still not returned, these leftover cakes were given to Sariputta. Right after he ate them, the young disciple returned. Feeling bad about eating the disciple's food, Sariputta vowed to never eat meal-cakes again.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about this, he told them this story so they knew that Sariputta never broke a vow, even in the past when his life was at stake.

Kuddala Jataka (#70)

The Bodhisatta was once a farmer. He made a modest living growing vegetables and herbs, and people called him the Spade Sage because his spade was his only significant possession. One day he resolved to become an ascetic, and he took up a religious life in the Himalayas. But he couldn't stop thinking about his spade and he soon returned to his old life. Five more times he left with the same intent but quit for the same reason. The seventh time, determined not to backslide again, he closed his eyes and threw his spade into a river so he could not come back and find it. When the spade hit the water, he shouted out with joy, "I have conquered!"

The king, having just returned from putting down a rebellion on the border, was bathing in the river and heard the Bodhisatta's declaration of triumph and wondered what it was about. He summoned the Bodhisatta to come see him and, explaining that he had just won a battle of his own, asked what his conquest was. The Bodhisatta answered that victories such as the king's were unimportant; only victories over lust and greed really matter. And while he explained the dangers of cravings, he reached full insight and floated into the air for the conclusion of his sermon. So impressed was the king by these words that he lost his lust for the throne and asked the Bodhisatta if he could join him. Upon hearing the news, everyone in the city also chose to become ascetics

and a procession twelve leagues long headed toward the Himalayas.

The throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm, and he looked out to see the migration below him. He ordered a monastery built to accommodate the masses and drove away all noisy creatures from the area. When the group arrived, the Bodhisatta made a formal declaration renouncing the world, and all the others did the same. They took up their abodes and became obedient disciples of the Bodhisatta, every last one eventually reaching insight.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples had first visited a monastery on a whim and converted because he was so happy with the food. He studied hard, but after six weeks his desire for the outside world returned, and he left. Five more times he joined and quit. Finally, on his seventh try, all desire left his heart and he not only remained, he became an arahant.

The Buddha heard his disciples discussing this and told them this story as a reminder that overcoming attachment to the world is difficult for most people, and he too once struggled mightily with it in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the residents of the city were earlier births of the Buddha's current followers.

Varana Jataka (#71)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famous around the world. One day his students were gathering firewood. One of them was lazy, and when he encountered a large tree that he thought was dry and rotten, he took a nap at its base before breaking off any branches. When the other students started heading back, they woke him up, and he quickly climbed the tree, still half asleep. He pulled on a branch, and as it snapped off, the end poked him in the eye. With one hand covering his wounded eye, he quickly gathered some green branches and went back after all the others, throwing his bundle on top of the pile.

That night the Bodhisatta told the students that the next morning they were going to visit a country family who wanted to serve them a meal. It was a long journey and they needed to leave early. In the morning, the servant started to cook them some porridge. She picked up the topmost firewood, the green branches gathered by the lazy student, and no matter how hard she blew she could not get a fire started. The sun rose, and since breakfast was not yet ready, the students had to cancel their trip. They told the Bodhisatta what had happened, and he criticized the lazy student, saying that putting off doing things creates problems.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A group of thirty friends traveled to hear the Buddha preach and were so impressed they became disciples. Five years later, the group, who had remained close while living in the monastery, were ready to go off and practice meditation in the forest. Shortly after they began their journey, however, one of the men, who was weak-willed and less advanced on the path to insight than the others, decided living as an ascetic would be too difficult for him, and he turned back. The others continued on, and after striving for the entire rainy season they all became arahants.

They visited the monastery to pay respect to the Buddha, but planned to return to the forest promptly. Their friend who stayed behind now felt he was ready and wanted to join them. He was so eager that the night before they were to depart, he slept upright, as some ardent ascetics did. At one point, he turned and fell off his plank bed, breaking his thigh. His friends stayed at the monastery to take care of him.

The disciple who broke his leg was an earlier birth of the student who poked his eye, and his friends were among the other students of that time. When the Buddha saw them the next morning, he told them this story so they knew that this disciple had also delayed their departure in the past.

Silavanaga Jataka (#72)

The Bodhisatta was once an elephant. He was white all over and magnificently beautiful. A herd of eighty thousand elephants followed him as their leader, but when he found that some of them were sinners, he left to live alone.

One day a forester got lost, and the Bodhisatta heard him crying in despair for fear of death. He invited the man to his home and fed him fruit of every kind for several days. Then he took the man, riding on his back, to the road so he could return home.

When the forester got back to the city, the man asked some ivory workers if they would buy elephant tusks from him, and they said yes. So he took a saw and returned to the Bodhisatta's home and moaned about not being able to earn enough money. The man asked to cut off parts of his tusks to sell, and the ever-generous Bodhisatta agreed. The man later returned and claimed the money he got selling the tusks was only enough to pay off his old debts, and he begged for the rest of the tusks. Again, the Bodhisatta agreed. Seized by greed, the man returned a third time and again feigned poverty, this time saying he needed to dig out the stumps, and the Bodhisatta let him do it. But as the forester walked home, the earth split open and the flames of hell dragged him down. A tree fairy who saw everything happen commented for all forest creatures to hear that there is nothing in the world that can satisfy ungrateful beings.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The forester was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day the Buddha overheard his disciples talking about how Devadatta was ungrateful for all that the Buddha had provided them. The Buddha told them this story to explain that even in the past, Devadatta had been an ingrate and lacked virtue.

The tree fairy was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Saccamkira Jataka (#73)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. The crown prince was a thoroughly wicked, violent man. Like grit in the eye, he was hated and feared by all. One day as he bathed in the river, a storm came, and his servants threw him in the water to drown. He managed to climb to safety atop a floating tree trunk, and as he rode it downstream, a snake, rat, and parrot all took refuge on the same log. At midnight, the Bodhisatta heard the prince's cries for help and he jumped into the river and pulled the tree to the shore. He took the prince and the animals to his home, gave them fruit, and set a fire, warming the animals before the prince, since they were the weakest. Because the Bodhisatta showed no respect for his royal birth, the prince hated him.

A few days later, after recovering from their ordeal, all four rescuees set off for home, each promising to repay the Bodhisatta's kindness if he ever came asking. The snake and rat said they had buried gold in past lives and would take him to the spots so he could dig it up, and the parrot said his kinsfolk would gather wagonloads of rice. At that moment, the prince, black of heart, vowed to kill the Bodhisatta if he ever saw him again; but concealing his intent, he said he would provide the four requisites (clothing, food, lodging, and medicine).

Sometime later, the Bodhisatta tested all four to see if their offers were genuine. When he visited the animals, all three

tried to give him what they had promised, though the Bodhisatta did not accept their gifts. Then he went to the city where the prince was now the king. When he saw the Bodhisatta on his morning alms round, the king ordered his soldiers to seize him and parade him around town, beating him at every street corner; then take him out of town to behead him and impale his body on a stake.

While being beaten, the Bodhisatta did not cry out in agony, he just repeated the proverb, “A log pays better reward than some men.” Some wise bystanders asked what he meant by this, and the Bodhisatta told them how he had rescued their king. This filled the people with such rage that they rushed the king and killed him on the spot. They flung his body into a ditch and chose the Bodhisatta as their new king. He ruled righteously, giving charity and doing good deeds. And because they were such kind creatures, he brought the snake, rat, and parrot to live in luxury at the palace.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked prince was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past.

The snake, rat, and parrot were earlier births of Sariputta, Moggallana, and Ananda, three of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Rukkhadhamma Jataka (#74)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. When a new king took the throne, he granted permission to all the fairies of the forest to live wherever they wanted. The Bodhisatta told his relatives to stay in the forest with him and not go live in trees that stand alone. But because fairies who live in big trees near towns get the highest praise and most offerings, some chose to live in these.

One day a tremendous storm passed over the land and all the big lone trees blew down while the trees packed together in the forest suffered no damage. The fairies who lived in these toppled trees went to the forest and told of their misfortune. The Bodhisatta explained that families should stick together, like a forest, and the fairies who lost their homes suffered because they did not follow his advice.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha's Sakya clan was quarreling with another clan over who should get water for their crops after their shared dam ran low at the end of the dry season. As tempers flared, people came to blows and the two clans declared war.

The Buddha went to quell the feud, and when they saw him, every man threw down his weapon to listen to him speak. The Buddha said life was more valuable than water, then taught them lessons encouraging unity and self-control, while denouncing fighting and blindly following others. He told

them this story to explain the value of cooperation, and it helped convince them to settle their dispute peacefully.

The fairies were earlier births of the Buddha’s followers.

Maccha Jataka (#75)

The Bodhisatta was once a fish. One year there was a terrible drought and his pond dried up, forcing all the fish and turtles to bury themselves in the mud to stay alive. Birds flocked there to pick them out with their beaks and eat them. Knowing that only he could save them, the Bodhisatta climbed out of the mud and spoke an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) to the rain god, telling about his lifetime of virtue and begging for rain to save the lives of those in the pond. His request was answered and heavy rain filled it.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

There was a terrible drought across the land; crops withered and lakes dried up, and the Buddha felt he needed to do something. When he came back to the monastery after his morning alms round, he stood on the steps of the dried-up pool where he usually bathed (it was built from the same pond where he had previously lived as the virtuous fish) and told Ananda, one of his top disciples, to bring his bathing robe. Ananda brought it, but wondered what the Buddha was thinking because the pool had no water, only mud. The Buddha put on his robe and said, "I wish to bathe." The throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm, and he looked out to see what was happening. Seeing the Buddha, he ordered the rain god to send a deluge and end the

drought, and it lasted until the water in the Buddha's pool rose to the top step.

When he later heard some of his disciples singing his praises, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that it was not the first time he had made it rain.

The rain god was an earlier birth of Ananda and the other fish were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Asamkiya Jataka (#76)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived in the Himalayas, and one time when he went down from the mountains to get salt and vinegar, he joined a merchant's caravan. While the workers slept one night, the Bodhisatta did walking meditation. A band of thieves surrounded their camp and waited for the Bodhisatta to go to sleep before they snuck in to plunder the wagons. But the Bodhisatta did not stop, and as dawn approached, the thieves called off their raid.

As the thieves left, they threw down their sticks and stones and shouted to the sleeping workers that they should reward the Bodhisatta since he saved their cargo. The grateful workers, in fear and shock, asked the Bodhisatta if he had seen the thieves. He had, he answered, and then they asked if he was afraid. "No," he replied. "Only rich people fear thieves, I own nothing of value, so I have no reason to be afraid." The workers understood his wisdom and showed him great honor.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A layman who was deeply devoted to the Buddha was traveling with a trade caravan. One night as he did walking meditation, some thieves surrounded the camp and waited for him to go to sleep. But he didn't, so the thieves left empty-handed.

When he next saw the Buddha, the man recounted what had happened. The Buddha said, “In guarding himself, a man guards others; in guarding others, he guards himself.” Then the Buddha told this story so the layman knew that he himself had once done the same thing.

The caravan workers were earlier births of the Buddha’s disciples.

Mahasupina Jataka (#77)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. One night the king had sixteen vivid dreams, and he awoke in fear, wondering what they foretold. That morning he told his chaplains about the dreams, and they said there would be grave misfortune if they did not sacrifice animals at every crossroads. So the king ordered them to do it. But there was one young righteous chaplain among them who rebuked the others for proposing to kill animals, which is against the precepts. They responded that they were going to do it because they would earn a great deal of money, and he should keep his mouth shut. Refusing to take part in their scheme, the young chaplain left the palace and sat in the royal park.

From his home in the Himalayas, the Bodhisatta divined what was happening and wanted to save the animals that were about to be killed. He flew to the royal park to see the young chaplain, who explained that the king was a righteous man, but was being led astray by the others. The Bodhisatta offered to consult with the king to stop the impending slaughter, and the young chaplain got the king to agree.

The king related the dreams to the Bodhisatta, who explained them and told the king he had nothing to worry about. They were all about the distant future when kings would become stingy and wicked and the world would be perverted and decayed. The dreams and their prophecies were as follows.

- Four black bulls entered the royal courtyard looking like they were going to fight, but they only roared and postured. – There will be a great drought and famine, and storm clouds with thunder and lightning will gather, but no rain will fall.
- Tiny trees and shrubs emerged from the soil and promptly bore fruit. – People will have short lives, so men will start to father children with young girls.
- Cows suckled on their calves right after they were born. – People will no longer give respect to elders.
- Some men unhitched a team of strong oxen and had young ones try to pull the load, but they were unable. – Kings will stop relying on wise lords and hire the young and foolish as advisors.
- A horse had mouths on both sides of its head, and it ate with both. – Kings will appoint greedy men as judges, and they will take bribes from both sides in disputes.
- People held an expensive golden bowl and asked a jackal to urinate in it. – Kings will start respecting low-class people instead of the nobles, and the nobles will be forced to marry their daughters off to low-class men.
- A man wove a rope, and a she-jackal ate the completed rope as fast as he wove it. – Women will stop being modest and responsible and will start drinking alcohol, and they will eat up their families' food stockpiles.

- Masses of people came to pour water into an overflowing pitcher while not pouring any into the empty pitchers around it. – Kings will become poor and demand all citizens provide food for the palace, so they will not have enough for themselves.
- There was a deep pool, muddy in the middle but crystal clear along the shore where many people and animals came to drink. – People will flee from the towns to live in border regions, out of the reach of kings.
- Rice cooked in a pot came out unevenly; some moist, some raw, and some cooked well. – Rain will never fall evenly on the land, so some crops will flood, some will wither, and some will thrive.
- Buttermilk was traded for sandalwood. – Dharma will be corrupted into promoting greed.
- Empty pumpkins sank into water. – Kings will show favor to the low-class, who become established, and the nobles will become impoverished.
- Blocks of solid rock as big as houses floated on water. – Kings will show favor to the low-class while the wisdom of nobles and religious leaders will drift by and people will not take it to heart.
- Tiny frogs chased and gobbled up huge snakes. – Women will come to rule over men and be in charge of households.

- A flock of golden-sheened mallards escorted a wicked crow. – Kings will rely on the low-class to serve them because they will fear being overthrown by the nobles; so the only work available for the nobles will be serving the low-class.
- Goats chased and devoured panthers, and wolves ran away at the sight of the goats. – The low-class shall be the royal favorites and take over the property of the nobles, and when the nobles complain about it to the king, he will have them beaten.

After he had explained all the dreams, the Bodhisatta floated into the air to give the king a sermon about following the five precepts, and then flew back home. And since the dreams were not about him, the king called off the sacrifices.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One night King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, had sixteen vivid dreams, and he awoke in fear of what fortune they foretold. When he told them to his chaplains, they predicted that disaster was inevitable; harm to either his kingdom, life, or wealth. They said they must sacrifice animals at every crossroads, and the king told them to do it. As their preparations proceeded that day, they repeatedly told the king they needed to expand the offering ceremony, and each time he gave them more money. His exceptionally wise chief queen, Mallika, grew suspicious

and suggested the king consult the Buddha, so he went to the monastery.

After hearing the sixteen dreams, the Buddha explained their meanings and told him he had nothing to fear. The dreams were all about the distant future, and his chaplains were just using this as an opportunity to take his money. The Buddha convinced the king to call off the sacrifices. Then he told him this story to explain that other kings in the past have had the very same dreams, and their greedy chaplains had also exploited them.

The king and the righteous young chaplain were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Illisa Jataka (#78)

The Bodhisatta was once a barber. The royal treasurer in those days was exceptionally rich and extremely miserly, neither sharing his wealth nor enjoying it himself. He also suffered a host of physical ailments, from a disabled leg to a permanent squint, making him instantly recognizable to all. One day the treasurer saw a man enjoying a mug of liquor, and a craving for it arose in him. But not wanting to share it with anyone else, he had his slave buy a jar and hide it in a thicket by the riverside. Then he snuck down there to drink alone.

The treasurer's family had held the same position for seven generations before him, and they were always generous and righteous. His father was so virtuous that he had been reborn as Indra, king of the gods. And at the particular moment the treasurer went off to get drunk in the bushes, Indra wondered for the first time about his family's legacy. When he divined his son's wicked behavior, he went down to earth to convert him to goodness.

Taking his son's likeness, Indra visited the king and offered to give him the entire family fortune. The king, being righteous, refused the offer, so Indra went to his son's house, where nobody could tell he was not the real treasurer. He told the servants to be on the lookout for an imposter and not let him in. Indra then told his son's family it was time to be generous, and he sent the town crier through the streets proclaiming by

the beat of a drum that he was giving away his treasure and anyone who wanted some should come to his house. And come they did, filling baskets and sacks with gold, diamonds, pearls, and the like.

One man took the treasurer's carriage and oxen, and as he rode out of the city he sang the treasurer's praises for giving everything away. Shocked, the treasurer tried unsuccessfully to seize them back, but the man fought him off. The treasurer ran home, where he saw what was happening, and got more beatings from each person he tried to stop.

Following Indra's orders, the servants would not let the real treasurer into his house, so he went to the palace to ask the king why he was being punished this way. When the confused king told the treasurer about his earlier visit, he asked the king to summon the other person. Indra arrived, but even side by side, nobody, not even his wife and children, could tell who the real treasurer was. Then the treasurer thought of one person who could definitively tell them apart: his barber, the Bodhisatta. The treasurer had a wart on his head, hidden by his hair, and only the Bodhisatta had ever seen it. The Bodhisatta was brought to the palace to examine their scalps. But Indra, being a god, just willed a wart to grow on his own head, and even the Bodhisatta was unable to say who the real treasurer was.

The treasurer lost all hope and crashed to the floor in despair over the loss of his riches. Then Indra floated into the air and

revealed his true self, and everyone there bowed before him. He explained to his son that he had risen to this exalted state in heaven because he gave generously to the poor and enjoyed doing good deeds. If his son did not begin to do the same, he would slice off his head with a thunderbolt. The humbled treasurer swore he would give alms and do good deeds, and he kept this promise for the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The treasurer of the past was an earlier birth of a rich and miserly royal treasurer (known as the Millionaire Miser). He got an insatiable urge to eat a sweet stuffed cake, but he didn't want to share. To keep the cake to himself, he had his wife sneak up to the seventh floor of their house and cook a single cake for him using only broken rice. That same morning the Buddha became aware of the treasure's fate and sent Moggallana, one of his top disciples, to save him by getting him to make cakes for all the Buddha's disciples.

Moggallana flew to the treasurer's home and floated in mid-air outside the window where he and his wife were. Thinking this magical sage wanted to eat a cake, the treasurer frothed with anger, repeatedly telling him to leave. But Moggallana stayed, and eventually the frustrated treasurer told his wife to make a second cake for him. She mixed in just a tiny bit more dough, but it swelled up to fill the pot. And each small piece of dough put into the oven swelled large. She put the finished cakes in a basket to cool, and when they were ready,

she tried to give one to Moggallana, but they had all stuck together. As the treasurer tried to pull them apart, his craving waned and he decided to give them all away.

Moggallana accepted the basket and preached to the couple about how generosity is a blessing. He then invited the couple to offer their cakes to the Buddha and his disciples who were waiting in the monastery six hundred fifty kilometers away; all they had to do was walk downstairs and the door at the foot of their staircase would transport them there. So the couple served their cakes, along with milk mixed with ghee, honey, and sugar, and even after everyone had eaten, there were leftovers. After a sermon from the Buddha, they climbed back up the stairs and magically returned home, where they spent the rest of their lives giving away all their money.

The next day, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples praising Moggallana, he told them this story so they knew that Moggallana, who had been Indra in that earlier birth, had also converted this miserly treasurer to goodness in the past.

The king in those days was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kharassara Jataka (#79)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. The king had appointed one of his advisors to oversee the village where the Bodhisatta was staying. When it was time to collect taxes, the village headman made a deal with a band of thieves that, in exchange for half the loot, he would lead the village men on a short expedition into the forest so the thieves could come pillage with no resistance.

After the raid, the headman marched back into town feigning ignorance about what had happened. But the Bodhisatta knew that the village headman was the ringleader and heaped scorn on him as he returned. Soon after, the king learned what his advisor had done and had him brought back to the palace to be punished.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A king visiting the Buddha told him how he'd appointed one of his advisors as the headman of a border village, and when it came time to collect taxes he schemed with a band of thieves. In exchange for half the loot, the headman marched the village's men into the forest for one day and let the thieves plunder the unprotected village. The thieves killed the cattle, burned down houses, took everything of value, and got away. But soon, the advisor's role became known and the king punished him.

The Buddha told the king this story so he knew that in an earlier birth this same village headman had done the same thing to a different king.

Bhimasena Jataka (#80)

The Bodhisatta was once a dwarf archer. He believed his appearance would make it impossible to get a job with the king, so he hired a tall, muscular man named Bhimasena to front for him at the palace. Bhimasena told the king that he was the best archer on the continent, so the king hired him, along with the Bodhisatta, his “assistant.”

There was a fierce tiger in the forest that had eaten many people, so the king sent Bhimasena to kill it. The Bodhisatta told Bhimasena he could do this task by himself if he followed his plan. As instructed, Bhimasena took a group of villagers with him to the forest, and when they found the tiger, Bhimasena jumped into a thicket while the villagers ran forth and killed the tiger. When the tiger was dead, Bhimasena came out with a vine and, feigning anger, told everyone he was going to tie up the tiger and take it back to the king alive. He demanded to know who had killed it, but everybody kept their mouths shut out of fear, so Bhimasena got the credit from the king. This same trick was successfully used later to kill a dangerous wild buffalo. The Bodhisatta and Bhimasena collected hefty rewards from the king both times.

Bhimasena grew arrogant over these successes and began to disrespect the Bodhisatta, believing he could now get by on his own. When a rival army besieged the city, the king sent Bhimasena out atop an armored war elephant to lead his troops in battle. The Bodhisatta sat in the rear. As they

reached the front lines, Bhimasena began to shake with fear and soiled himself. The Bodhisatta told Bhimasena to climb down, and he dashed into battle alone, captured the rival king, and took him back to the palace. Now knowing the truth about the pair, the king lavished honor on the Bodhisatta and sent Bhimasena back to his home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Bhimasena was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who boasted about his noble, ultra-wealthy upbringing, saying his family's slaves dressed and ate better than most regular people. It was later discovered that these stories were all lies. When the Buddha heard other disciples discussing how this dishonest disciple had not yet detached himself from desire, he told them this story so they knew that the dishonest disciple had the same bad personality in the past.

Surapana Jataka (#81)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had five hundred followers studying with him in the Himalayas. He sent his students down to the city for one rainy season, and they stayed in the royal park at the invitation of the king, who had been informed of their excellent character. When the city had a drinking festival, the king sent a large supply of liquor to the students, and they all got drunk, dancing and singing late into the night. When they woke the next morning, they felt so ashamed of their behavior that they immediately returned to the mountains. When they told the Bodhisatta what they had done, he told them it was normal for students not living under the care of a master to misbehave and they should never do it again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time Sagata, one of the Buddha's top disciples, who was very adept at magic, pacified a dangerous naga and converted him to respect dharma. When people heard of this, they wanted to give him special alms, but he asked for nothing. Some mischievous disciples suggested giving him liquor, and the next day Sagata received a lot. He got drunk and passed out along the road.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Sagata's transgression, he told them this story so they knew

that it was not the first time people who had renounced the world had gotten drunk.

The Bodhisatta's students were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Mittavinda Jataka (#82)

The incidents of this birth are told in the Catu-Dvara Jataka (#439).

Kalakanni Jataka (#83)

The Bodhisatta was once a treasurer. One of his childhood friends, whose name was Curse, came upon hard times, and the Bodhisatta hired him to look after his property. The Bodhisatta's friends thought it was inappropriate to speak such a name around the house, especially for a wretch such as this man, and said he should be fired. The Bodhisatta insisted superstitions about names were pure folly, and he rejected their advice.

One time while the Bodhisatta was traveling, a band of armed thieves who knew about his trip surrounded his house to break in. But Curse, who was there alone, suspected that thieves were coming, so he stayed up all night waiting. When he heard the thieves arrive, Curse ran around the house making loud noises to convince them there were actually many people there, so they threw down their weapons and left. The next morning, the people who had wanted Curse banished now glorified him for being so wise. When the Bodhisatta returned home, he mocked his friends because if he had listened to their advice, he would be a beggar now.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, told him a story about how his friend named Curse had cleverly saved all his wealth from thieves while he was away from home. The Buddha told him this

story so he knew that the exact same thing had happened in the past to a man also named Curse.

Curse from the past was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Atthassadvara Jataka (#84)

The Bodhisatta was once a treasurer. His son was very smart, and when seven years old, he asked his father how to care for his spiritual welfare. The Bodhisatta told him the six paths: be healthy, be righteous, listen to elders, study the scriptures, be truthful, and do not get attached to things. The son followed these rules for the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A precocious seven-year-old boy asked his father, a wealthy treasurer, what were the paths to spiritual welfare. Not knowing the answer, the father went to ask the Buddha, who answered by telling him this story because the wise child from the past was an earlier birth of this boy.

Kimpakka Jataka (#85)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant who led many oxcarts to trade with distant lands. During one trip through a vast forest, the Bodhisatta warned his men that trees with poisonous fruit grew there, so they should not eat anything unfamiliar until they checked with him. Some of his men came upon a *kimpakka* tree, which resembled a mango tree. Some men ate the fruit, while others waited for the Bodhisatta. When the Bodhisatta arrived, he told them this was not a mango tree and he gave the men who ate the fruit a medicine to make them vomit. Some survived, but those who had eaten the fruit first died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While on an alms round, one of the Buddha's disciples saw a beautifully dressed woman and was aroused. The Buddha told him this story to teach him that desires are sweet in the beginning, but lead to ruin, just like *kimpakka* fruit.

The people of the caravan were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Silavimamsana Jataka (#86)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. He was thoroughly righteous and received more honor than anyone else in the king's inner circle. The Bodhisatta wanted to know if this was because of his virtue or if it was only due to coming from a respected family. To test this, he stole some coins in full view of the king's treasurer.

While the Bodhisatta was being taken to the king to receive his punishment, he saw some snake charmers and urged them to stop their dangerous activity. But they answered that, unlike him, these cobras were good and did not bite. This statement made the Bodhisatta realize that virtue is the best thing in the world because it can save one from death.

After the king ordered the Bodhisatta executed, he said he was not a thief and explained why he had pocketed the coins. And being given this punishment showed that the honor from the king really was earned from his virtue, not his lineage. Forgiven for his crime, the Bodhisatta left the palace and lived out the rest of his life as an ascetic in the Himalayas.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples had been a king's chaplain before joining the sangha. He received more honor than anyone else in the king's inner circle and wondered if it was because of his virtue or his lineage, so he did the exact same

test of his privilege. After being forgiven by the king, the man joined the sangha and eventually reached arahantship.

When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing this, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that he himself had once done the same test in the past.

The king’s followers were earlier births of the Buddha’s disciples.

Mamgala Jataka (#87)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. A brahmin priest who predicted the future by looking at pieces of cloth found a suit that mice had gnawed, and this made it so cursed that not even his servants could wear it. His son took the suit out on the end of a stick, like carrying a snake, and flung it with the corpses in the charnel ground. When the Bodhisatta saw the suit, he took it for himself, and the priest's son told his father about it. Fearing the suit would kill the Bodhisatta, the priest pleaded with him to throw it away. But the Bodhisatta told him people shouldn't believe in superstitions not approved by perfect Buddhas, private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others), or Bodhisattas. Hearing this, the priest gave up his beliefs and followed the teachings of the Bodhisatta.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The brahmin priest of the past and his son were earlier births of a brahmin priest and his son who the Buddha divined were destined for salvation. The brahmin of the Buddha's time also predicted the future by looking at pieces of cloth, and when he found a suit that a female mouse had gnawed on, he sent his son to discard it in the charnel ground. The Buddha waited for the son there, and then took the suit despite his earnest warnings. Concerned for the Buddha's safety, the father tried to give him different clothes, but the Buddha wouldn't take them. Instead, he preached to the pair that

wise men reject superstitions. Hearing this, the father and son abandoned their beliefs and followed the Buddha's teachings.

The Buddha told them this story so they knew that the exact same thing had happened to them in the past.

Sarambha Jataka (#88)

The stories of the past and the present are the same as the Nandivisala Jataka (#28).

Kuhaka Jataka (#89)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. A landowner had great faith in one ascetic, and he built him a hermitage and supported him with excellent food for every meal. One day the landowner took one hundred gold coins to bury at the hermitage for safekeeping. The ascetic, however, was not a genuine holy man, and he dug up the coins for himself. The next day, he announced that he had remained in the same place for too long and it was time to move on. The landowner escorted him to the edge of the city before saying goodbye. But shortly after they split up, the ascetic wanted to have a laugh and secretly mock the gullible landowner. He stuck a piece of straw in his matted hair and turned back. Meeting the landowner again, the ascetic told him that straw from his roof had got stuck in his hair, and he rushed back to return it to its rightful owner. The landowner was highly impressed by this display of virtue.

The Bodhisatta was traveling at this time and had stopped in the landowner's town for the night. He heard the pair's exchange about the straw and suspected that the ascetic had stolen something. The Bodhisatta approached the landowner and asked if he had left anything in the ascetic's care; if so, he should confirm it was safe. When they found the gold missing, the landowner and the Bodhisatta chased down the ascetic, punching and kicking him until he confessed to the theft and gave back the gold. The Bodhisatta ridiculed the

ascetic for telling such an implausible story and told him not to do anything like it ever again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The rogue ascetic was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who claimed to dedicate himself to seeking salvation, but was known by other disciples to be dishonest. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the dishonest disciple, he told them this story so they knew that he had also been this way in the past.

Akatannu Jataka (#90)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy merchant. A merchant from the border region, who the Bodhisatta knew only through correspondence, sent a large caravan to trade merchandise with him. While they were in his city, the Bodhisatta lodged these men and gave them spending money. Soon after, the Bodhisatta sent his own caravan to trade with the border merchant, but he did not provide food, lodging, or even simple courtesy to the Bodhisatta's men.

The next time the border merchant sent a caravan to trade with the Bodhisatta, his men told the travelers to set up camp outside the city and said provisions would be sent later. But instead, the men came late at night and looted the caravan, taking everything of value, including their wagon wheels. Later, when the Bodhisatta heard what his men had done, he told the crowd around him that ungrateful people get what they deserve.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, told the Buddha that recently he had treated some workers of a merchant from the border region very generously, but his men had not received the same courtesy in return, so when the merchant sent a second caravan, his men stole everything from it.

The Buddha told Anathapindika this story so he knew that he himself once had the exact same interactions with an earlier birth of the border merchant.

Litta Jataka (#91)

The Bodhisatta was once a dice player. One day he learned that one of the men he played with was a cheat, putting one of the dice in his mouth to pretend it was lost so games would have to end at the opportune time for him. The next time they played, the Bodhisatta covered his dice in a dried poison. And as soon as the cheat started to lose, he popped a die in his mouth. As the Bodhisatta called him out for his scam and told him about the poison, the cheat grew faint and doubled over in pain. The Bodhisatta then gave him a medicine to make him vomit, saving his life, and told him not to cheat again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha found that most of his disciples did not take care of the robes and other things provided to them. This carelessness was bad enough to result in rebirth in hell or the animal world, so the Buddha made specific rules about the proper use of the four requisites (clothing, food, lodging, and medicine). And he told them this story so they understood that using things thoughtlessly is like taking poison.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Mahasara Jataka (#92)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day, while the king was swimming with some of his wives in his royal park, the chief queen's slave dozed off, and a monkey stole her pearl necklace. The monkey wore it around her neck only briefly before hiding it away in a hole in a tree to avoid problems with other monkeys. When the slave awoke and saw that the necklace was gone, she tried to avoid blame for her blunder by yelling out that a man had just run off with it. While the guards spread out in search of the thief, a frightened peasant outside the park heard the commotion inside and fled out of caution, even though he didn't know what was going on. But the guards saw him running off and, assuming he was the thief, they gave chase.

The guards beat a confession out of the peasant, who feared they would kill him if he denied stealing the necklace. When asked where the necklace was, he claimed, hoping he would get some help in his defense, that the treasurer forced him to take it, and he had given it to him. When the treasurer was brought before the king, he figured having a second high officer also charged for the crime would eventually help prove his innocence, so he confirmed the accusation and said he had passed the necklace to the king's chaplain. The chaplain also strategically confessed and he named the palace's chief musician as his link in the plot, figuring this would make his time in captivity pass more pleasantly. The

musician then chose to indict a prostitute for the same reason. She, in turn, denied having any part in the theft.

Sunset came before the matter could be resolved, so the king decided to continue the investigation the next day. The Bodhisatta did not think the peasant could have snuck into the park, nor could anyone inside have got out without being seen. He was convinced that all five were innocent and the chain of accusations had just been made for tactical reasons. He figured that most likely a female monkey had stolen the necklace. The Bodhisatta requested and received permission from the king to carry out his own investigation. He had his servants carefully listen to the suspects' conversations that night, and these confirmed their innocence in the Bodhisatta's mind. So he turned to finding the necklace.

The Bodhisatta put beaded necklaces around the necks, wrists, and ankles of many of the park's monkeys and ordered men to watch them carefully. As expected, the thieving monkey grew jealous of the others who were flaunting their beads, so she put on her pearls. When the men saw the queen's necklace, they frightened the monkey and made her drop it. They took it to the Bodhisatta, who gave it to the king. The king was so pleased by the Bodhisatta's wisdom, he showered him with praise and treasure.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day a jewel went missing from the king's turban, and everyone residing and working in the palace was searched.

This worried them greatly. When Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, arrived at the palace, where he taught dharma to the king's wives, he heard what had happened. He went to the king and proposed getting the jewel back by allowing the thief to return it anonymously, since this would get results without causing stress to innocent people. After a few days, his plan worked.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about what Ananda had done, he told them this story so they knew that he himself had also once cleverly retrieved lost jewels and spared innocent people from worry.

The king from the past was an earlier birth of Ananda.

Vissasabhojana Jataka (#93)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy merchant. He owned a herd of cows, and when crops were growing, his herdsman took them to a forest pasture to protect the fields. A lion lived near the pasture, and the cows were so afraid of it that they produced very little milk. One day the herdsman's delivery of ghee to the Bodhisatta was very small, and he explained the problem. The Bodhisatta asked if the lion had grown attached to anything and the herdsman said it was very fond of a particular doe. The Bodhisatta told him to catch the doe and rub her with sugar and poison; then, when it dried, let her loose. As predicted, when the lion saw his deer friend, he licked her and died. When the herdsman brought the lion's hide, claws, teeth, and fat to the Bodhisatta, he explained that people should not trust or have affection for others because it leads to ruin.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha told this story to teach his disciples the importance of being cautious when using food, clothing, and other gifts, no matter whether given by family or strangers. Blind trust can lead to problems in one's present life and maybe rebirth as an ogre or ghost in the next.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Lomahamsa Jataka (#94)

The Bodhisatta was once a naked ascetic. He lived dirty, emaciated, and alone, deep in the forest, in his quest to learn the truth about life. He ate small fish, cow dung, and other refuse and fled when other humans came near. In the snows of winter he slept out in the open, and in the heat of summer he slept in a thicket, away from cooling winds. He embraced this insufferable existence for his entire adult life, but as he lay dying, he had a vision of hell and knew his life had been worthless. After this realization, he died free of his delusions and was reborn in heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples left the sangha to follow another religious teacher who promoted extreme asceticism. While out on a morning alms round, Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, heard this former disciple criticizing the Buddha for not being superhuman and saying his doctrine did not lead to the destruction of sorrow.

When Sariputta told the Buddha what he had heard, the Buddha listed some of his abilities and explained that people who spoke heresy such as this would be cast into hell if they did not renounce it. Then the Buddha told this story of his past life as a repulsive naked ascetic to show that this path was ineffective.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Mahasudassana Jataka (#95)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He ruled over eighty-four thousand cities, of which Kusavati was his capital. When he announced that he was going to die soon, his queen, his harem, and his courtiers wept and wailed. But he told them to stop and remember that nothing in life is permanent, that growth and decay are the natural order. Then, just before passing away to heaven, he preached to them to be charitable, obey the precepts, and observe the holy days.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Two of the Buddha's top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, had recently died, and so the Buddha felt it was time he die too. After his morning alms round, he walked to the city of Kusinara and lay down, never to rise again. Ananda, another of his top disciples, urged the Buddha to leave this rough little town and die in a proper city.

The Buddha told this story so Ananda knew he had dwelled here in a past life when it was the glorious royal city of Kusavati, surrounded by jeweled walls twelve leagues long—so dying here now was an opportunity to teach a lesson on impermanence.

The king's queen and eldest son were earlier births of the Buddha's wife and son, and the courtiers were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Telapatta Jataka (#96)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince, the youngest of a king's one hundred sons. Once when some private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) were eating at the palace, the Bodhisatta asked them if he would become king someday. They answered that it would never happen in his city. But if he could journey in seven days to Taxila—two thousand leagues away on a route inhabited by ogresses who enchanted men with their beauty and charm, and then ate them—he would become king there. Believing he had the power to resist, and taking a charmed thread and some charmed sand from the private Buddhas, he said goodbye to his family and set out. Five royal courtiers respected him so much that they insisted on joining him, despite stern warnings of the danger.

As they walked, one by one these men were ensnared by the ogresses' temptations, and they lagged behind the others to indulge their pleasures. All five were killed and eaten. One ogress followed the Bodhisatta, telling everyone they passed that they were husband and wife. When the Bodhisatta explained that she was actually a murderous ogress, she replied that he was only saying this because he was angry with her; and because she was so charming, everybody believed her.

When they reached Taxila and the king saw the ogress's beauty, he was so smitten that he ignored the Bodhisatta's

warning and invited her to stay in the best room in his palace. That evening he went to be with her. After he fell asleep, she rushed back to her city and returned with all the other ogres. They devoured every person and animal in the palace, leaving nothing but bones behind. In the morning, when the people broke down the palace doors and saw the carnage, they realized the Bodhisatta had been right and she really was an ogress. Because the Bodhisatta had been the only one to resist her, they knew he must be a noble, steadfast, and wise person. So they made him their king, and he ruled with righteousness and charity for the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While giving his disciples a lesson on mindfulness, the Buddha told a parable of a man forced to carry a pot of hot oil in front of a large crowd that was watching the most beautiful woman in all the land singing and dancing. A man with a drawn sword followed behind him, and if even a single drop of oil spilled, the man carrying the pot would be beheaded. In this circumstance, the man would be extremely careful and not gaze upon the woman. The Buddha said the pot represented a person's state of mind regarding their body, and people should practice right mindfulness about this as carefully as the man concentrated on carrying the pot.

When one of his disciples stated that it was very difficult for the man to not be distracted by the woman, the Buddha corrected him and said having an executioner escort made it

easy. Then he told this story so his disciples knew he had once had to preserve right mindfulness during a similar task without any assistance.

The royal courtiers who died were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Namasiddhi Jataka (#97)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. One of his many students was named Wicked, and he wanted to change his name to a more fortunate one. He asked the Bodhisatta to choose a name for him, but he refused and instead told Wicked to travel until he found one he liked. Wicked wandered village to village listening to names. On his trip he saw a man named Quick being carried to the cemetery, a slave named Rich being beaten by her master and mistress for not bringing home enough money, and a man named Guide who was lost. And when Wicked commented about the oddity of these names not matching their situations, everybody told him he was a fool for thinking a name did anything more than tell who is who. When he returned home, Wicked told the Bodhisatta he had learned his lesson and wanted to keep his name.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The student was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples, who was also named Wicked. When the Buddha heard that this disciple was dissatisfied with his name and wanted to change it to a more fortunate one, he told him this story to explain that names only tell who is who, nothing more, and it was not the first time he had wanted to change his name.

The Bodhisatta's other students were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Kutavanija Jataka (#98)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. He was named Wise, and a business partner was named Wisest. One time after they took a large caravan of merchandise to sell outside the city, Wisest demanded he get a double share of their profits because his name showed he was the better of the pair. They had each provided half the goods and half the oxen, so the Bodhisatta rejected this idea and they began to quarrel.

Wisest had his father hide in a hollow tree, then he proposed to Wise that they let a tree fairy decide the matter. When they appealed to the "fairy," the father answered, "Wise should receive one share, and Wisest two." But the Bodhisatta was not convinced and he placed straw in the tree and set it on fire. As the flames rose, the father climbed out and declared that Wise was actually the wisest. They then split the profits equally.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Two merchants took a long, difficult journey to sell their goods. When they returned, one of them felt certain his partner would soon die of indigestion because he had eaten very poorly on the trip, and now back at home he would feast on foods he loved. So this scheming merchant delayed dividing the profit, hoping he would be able to give one share to his partner's orphans and keep two shares for himself.

As the delay dragged out, the honest partner went to seek advice from the Buddha about this problem. Wisest was an earlier birth of the merchant who wouldn’t pay, and the Buddha told this story so the honest merchant knew that he had also been a scoundrel in the past.

Parosahassa Jataka (#99)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers living with him in the Himalayas. While his chief disciple was away, the Bodhisatta became ill, and just before he died, the people at the monastery asked him what his spiritual attainment was. He told them, "I have won *nothing*," so they did not pay him the customary honors at his cremation. When the chief disciple returned and heard what had happened, he explained that they misunderstood. The Bodhisatta meant that he had attained insight into the nothingness of things, one of the highest attainments. But none of the other disciples believed this. Looking down from heaven, the Bodhisatta saw what was happening and went down to tell his disciples they were fools and his chief disciple was correct and wise. After criticizing them, he returned to heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's chief disciple was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples. One day the Buddha heard some of his disciples praising Sariputta's wisdom and skill at explaining things clearly, and the Buddha told them this story so they knew that Sariputta also had this ability in the past.

Asatarupa Jataka (#100)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Another king conquered the city and killed him. The victorious king took the Bodhisatta's queen as a wife, though the Bodhisatta's son escaped. The son raised an army and soon returned to fight, but his mother sent a message that he should lay siege to the city instead of attacking. He took her advice, and after seven days of no water, firewood, or food getting inside, the angry citizens cut off the king's head and brought it to the son, who took the throne.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the king's daughters carried a child in her womb for seven years and was in painful labor for seven days. She was a loyal supporter of the Buddha and sent her husband to give him a greeting since she had not seen him for a long time. The Buddha gave a blessing for a healthy child, and as these words were spoken, her son was born. Following this, the relieved princess honored the Buddha with seven days of hospitality. During this time, Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, asked the boy how he felt. "Not great," he answered, "since I had to wallow in blood for seven long years." The boy ordained as a novice under the Buddha at age seven and became a full disciple at age twenty. Through his righteousness, he became an arahant.

The son who became king and his mother were earlier births of this child and his mother. One day, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the seven-year pregnancy, he told them this story so they knew that it was a result of the boy and his mother sieging the city in past lives.

Parosata Jataka (#101)

This story is the same as the Parosahassa Jataka (#99).

Pannika Jataka (#102)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy, and he saw the following happen near his dwelling. A fruit and vegetable seller had a beautiful daughter who acted virtuously in every way; but because she laughed a lot, he had doubts about her chastity. When a family asked for her to be married to their son, her father needed to know for sure whether she was truly good or not, because if she wasn't, he would be shamed. As a test, he had his daughter come with him to gather herbs in the forest, and while there he took her hand and asked her to have sex with him. She burst into tears and cursed her father. Then he explained himself and asked if she was a virgin. She said she was, so he took her home, made a feast, and gave her away in marriage.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A lay follower of the Buddha who made a living as a fruit and vegetable seller took his daughter to the forest and propositioned her to determine if she was a virgin or not. When she swore that she was, he gave her away in marriage. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that in earlier births he and his daughter had done the same test in the same manner for the same reason with the same result.

Veri Jataka (#103)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy merchant. One day, while returning home from collecting money in a village, he saw thieves on the road. He had his oxen run as fast as they could, and he reached home without being robbed and was able to relax.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, was returning from a village and saw thieves on the road. He urged his oxen to hurry home, and he got there without being robbed. Later, he told the Buddha about his experience, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past the same thing had also happened to he himself.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Mittavinda Jataka (#104)

The incidents of this birth are the same as those in the Catu-Dvara Jataka (#439).

Dubbalakattha Jataka (#105)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. The king sent one of his young elephants to the mahouts for training, the first step of which was to tie it to a post and beat it with metal hooks. As the elephant was being tortured, it broke free and fled to the Himalayas where it lived without happiness and in constant fear of death; even the sound of the wind could make it panic. The Bodhisatta saw the elephant's plight and said that for its own well-being it must get over its fear; and hearing this wisdom, it did.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The elephant was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who lived in constant fear of death. The sound of wind, birds, and other such things made him shriek and run away. The Buddha told this story to the disciple so he knew that he had been the same way in the past and had overcome it.

Udancani Jataka (#106)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a wealthy brahmin, but after his wife died, he took his young son to live an austere religious life deep in the Himalayas. Many years later, some bandits from the border region raided a town to take plunder and slaves. One beautiful but wicked woman fled their attack, and during her journey she came upon the Bodhisatta's hut. He was away gathering fruit, but his son was at home and the woman quickly charmed him into sleeping with her. Then she told him they should leave and live in civilization. He agreed to go with her, but needed to say goodbye to his father first. The woman knew that if she was still there when the Bodhisatta returned, he would beat her and drag her into the forest by her feet; so she left right away, giving the son directions how to get to her village. He became sad and lay down without doing his duties.

When the Bodhisatta returned, he saw the woman's footprints and knew his son's virtue had been lost. He asked his son why he was acting pitiful, and he answered that he had fallen in love with a woman and decided to give up the difficult forest life and return to the kingdom. The Bodhisatta understood there was no way to convince him to change his mind, so he bid his son farewell and told him he could always come back if things didn't work out. At her house, the woman ordered him to fetch meat, ghee, and salt, and do everything else she wanted. Feeling more like a slave than a husband, he

quickly grew unhappy and ran away back to his home in the Himalayas and never again wavered from the ascetic life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked woman who tempted the Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of a plump, lascivious young woman who had no suitors for marriage. Her mother decided to entice one of the Buddha's disciples into falling for her. That morning, as she offered alms to the disciples walking past her house, the mother looked for one who could be tempted by a craving for good food. Eventually she saw a disciple who had not given up concern with his appearance: the corners of his eyes were anointed with oil, some hair hung down, his robes were of fine fabric and immaculately clean, and his bowl was colored like a precious gem. The mother knew she could corrupt him, so when he came to the door she took his bowl and invited him into the house to eat the best food she could provide. When he finished eating, she told him to come by again anytime. He took up her offer and they got to know each other well.

When she thought it was the right time, the mother took the next step in her plan by telling the disciple that theirs was a happy household, but she had no son or son-in-law to maintain it. The next time the disciple came, she had her daughter adorn herself and begin seducing him with womanly tricks and wiles—and it worked. He fell under her power and wanted to leave the sangha. The Buddha told him

this story so he knew that this same woman had harmed him and tried to lure him away from a spiritual life in an earlier birth, when he was the young ascetic living in the Himalayas.

Salittaka Jataka (#107)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king's chaplain was so talkative and longwinded that nobody else could get a word in during conversations. And though the king looked, he could not find anybody who would interrupt him.

There was a disabled man so skilled at throwing stones that people wheeled him around and paid him to make shapes such as elephants or horses in trees by trimming the foliage. One day the king saw this man's work and wondered if he could solve the chaplain problem. The king explained the situation to him, and the man said he could do it with a peashooter full of goat dung. Elated by the possibility, the king brought him to the palace and had him sit behind a curtain with a slit in it. The next time the chaplain came, he, as always, completely took over the conversation and the disabled man started shooting tiny dung pellets down his throat. When the whole load had been unknowingly swallowed, and the pellets were swelling up in the chaplain's stomach, the king revealed what had just happened and why he had done it. He then sent the chaplain home with the instruction to take panic seeds to induce vomiting.

After this incident, the chaplain never again spoke during conversations with the king. The king was so grateful, he gave the disabled man four villages, making him very wealthy. After all this, the Bodhisatta told the king this was an

excellent example of why wise people should try to master a skill.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The disabled man was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who was not very serious about his study and practice. One day after bathing in the river, this disciple saw swans flying by and boasted to another that he could kill one by throwing a stone through both of its eyes. After he did it, the other disciple reported him to the Buddha. After reprimanding this stone-throwing disciple, the Buddha told this story to explain that he had always had this particular skill.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Bahiya Jataka (#108)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day, while looking out his window, the king saw a fat, badly dressed country woman stop to pee while she walked past the palace. The king was impressed by how quickly and modestly she managed her business and figured she must be healthy and tidy. So after confirming she was not already married, he made her his queen. They soon had a son, and because she maintained an immaculate house, he grew up wholly virtuous and became a universal monarch. One day the Bodhisatta commented how this turn of events was a good lesson to remind people that being modest and following the proper observances was the wise choice in life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A pious prince hosted the Buddha and some of his disciples at his home. When the Buddha later heard the disciples discussing their surprise that the prince had married and was deeply in love with a fat, badly dressed woman, he told them this story so they knew that this same couple had also been married in earlier births.

Kundakapuva Jataka (#109)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy living in a castor-oil tree. During a festival, the villagers all took offerings to the particular tree fairies they worshipped, and the Bodhisatta received garlands, perfumes, and fancy cakes. One poor man came with a cake made only of rice husk powder and water; he felt ashamed and assumed his humble offering would be rejected, so he figured it was best to eat it himself. But the Bodhisatta materialized and told the man he appreciated all offerings that were appropriate for the person giving them. After the Bodhisatta ate the man's cake, he asked why he worshipped him. The man answered that he hoped to have his poverty eased someday, and the Bodhisatta told him to worry no more because there were pots of treasure buried there. If he took the treasure to the palace, the king would be so pleased he would make the poor man his treasurer; and things happened just as the Bodhisatta predicted.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A group of families went to give alms to the Buddha and his disciples, and one very poor man was determined that his bran cake, though ever so humble, would go to the Buddha himself. The man got a spot right in front of the Buddha and was the first to step forward to put his offering in the master's alms bowl. The Buddha ate his cake and refused anything else that morning. All the other people were impressed and said they would give the poor man great sums

of money if he passed his merit on to them. The man asked the Buddha what he should do, and he advised him to take the money. The man got rich and the king appointed him treasurer.

The poor man giving alms to the Buddha was an earlier birth of the poor man making an offering to the tree fairy. That evening when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the day's events, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time he had eaten the man's humble cake and that the other time also resulted in him becoming wealthy and being appointed royal treasurer.

Sabbasamharaka-Panha Jataka (#110)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Sabbasamharaka-Panha Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. As a seven-year-old boy, he was already incomparably smart, and King Vedeha had one of his advisors observe him while deciding whether he was the wise man whose coming had been predicted in a dream. During this time, the Bodhisatta performed many remarkable deeds, including judging what was called the All-embracing Question.

A poor, elderly woman made a necklace by tying together colorful threads. When she went to bathe, she laid the necklace atop her clothes. A young woman admired it and asked to try it on so she could check the size for making one of her own. The old woman said yes, and the young woman put it on and ran off. The old woman quickly got dressed and chased the thief down. A crowd gathered, and both women claimed the necklace was hers. The Bodhisatta asked each woman what fragrance they used on the necklace. The young woman said it was a fancy blended perfume, while the elderly lady answered that she could only afford panic seed flowers. The Bodhisatta put the necklace in a bowl of water and asked a perfume seller to smell it. He identified it as panic seed flower, and the exposed thief confessed.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another.

Gadrabha-Panha Jataka (#111)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Gadrabha-Panha Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. As a seven-year-old boy, he was already incomparably smart, and King Vedeha invited him to the palace, intending to hire him as an advisor. As the Bodhisatta traveled in a magnificent chariot to the city, he saw a male donkey along the road and had a strong man tie its mouth shut, put it in a bag, and carry it to the palace over his shoulder. The Bodhisatta entered the city to great applause and was warmly welcomed by the king, who told him to take a seat wherever he pleased. The Bodhisatta looked at his father, who, as he'd been instructed, stood up and said, "Wise son, take my seat." He did so, and the king's four advisors laughed loudly and cried out, "This is the boy acclaimed as wise? Only a blind fool would disrespect his father like this."

King Vedeha was visibly upset by the Bodhisatta's behavior. "My Lord," the Bodhisatta asked, "Do you think the father is always better than his sons?" The king answered yes, so the Bodhisatta released the donkey and asked the king its worth. "At most eight coins," he answered. Then the Bodhisatta asked the price of a mule born to this donkey and a thoroughbred horse—"It would be priceless." Thus the Bodhisatta disproved the king's assertion that the father is always better than the offspring, and this made the king happy again. Then, to hammer home the point, the

Bodhisatta mocked, “If you still believe the father is always better than the son, hire my father as your advisor instead of me.”

The room erupted in praise and applause—there was snapping of fingers and waving of a thousand scarves—except from the four advisors, who were upset at having been so thoroughly outdone. King Vedeha not only made the Bodhisatta his fifth advisor, he adopted him as his own son, giving the Bodhisatta’s parents all kinds of ornaments and command over their village.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha’s disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he’d also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another. The king’s chief advisor was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha, and the other three advisors were earlier births of Potthapada, Ambattha, and Pilotika, three ascetics who respected the Buddha.

Amaradevi-Panha Jataka (#112)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Amaradevi-Panha Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. When he turned sixteen, he went out to find a wife. He saw a beautiful woman, named Amara, with all the marks of good luck, walking down the road, and when they saw each other, they fell instantly in love. She answered all his questions with riddles, which he solved easily. Pleased that she was as smart as she was beautiful, the Bodhisatta said he wanted to visit her family, and she told him where they lived with the Secret Path Riddle: "By way of cakes and gruel, and the double-leaf tree in flower, by the eating hand, not the not-eating hand, this is the secret path to my home." The Bodhisatta walked past a cake shop, a rice gruel shop, and a blooming Mountain Ebony tree, then turned right and found her home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

Amara was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Sigala Jataka (#113)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. During a festival, people laid out fish and meat and large pots of liquor all around the city as sacrifices to ogres. That night a jackal snuck into the city through the sewer and feasted on this food and drink before passing out in some bushes. He awoke the next morning and realized he could not get out of the city safely in the daylight, so he hid alongside a road.

Eventually the jackal saw a brahmin walking alone, and since rich men like him were almost all greedy, the jackal thought he could use him to get out of the city. He called the brahmin over to his hiding place and said he would pay two hundred gold coins to be carried out under the brahmin's robe. The brahmin agreed. They went to the cemetery where the jackal told the brahmin to spread his robe on the ground, then dig up a tree to get his money. While the brahmin did as he was told, the jackal walked over to the brahmin's robe, defecated on it in five places, and walked off into the forest. The Bodhisatta, who watched this happen, mocked the embarrassed brahmin for being a fool.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Jackal was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One time when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Devadatta's lies were causing trouble, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also been a liar in the past.

Mitacinti Jataka (#114)

The Bodhisatta was once a fish. He and two companions swam downstream from the wilderness and came to a place where humans lived. The Bodhisatta knew it was dangerous for them to be there and said they should return, but the other two fish were lazy and chose to stick around. After three months had passed, these two fish got caught in a net. The Bodhisatta splashed the river's surface in front of the net and then behind it, making the fishermen think the two fish he'd just snared had broken out. So they lifted one corner of the net to repair it, and the two fish were able to swim out to safety.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The two lazy fish were earlier births of two elderly disciples of the Buddha who spent a rainy season in a forest. When it was time to return to the monastery, they packed provisions for the journey, but kept delaying their departure. It was three months before they finally took off. When they arrived, they admitted to being lazy, and the Buddha told this story so everyone knew this was not the first time they had been reluctant to leave their temporary dwelling.

Anusasika Jataka (#115)

The Bodhisatta was once a bird. He was the leader of thousands of other birds, including one who was both brave and greedy. She went to feed on beans, rice, and other grains that fell off wagons along a busy road, and wanted to keep this food for herself. She warned the others how dangerous the road was because of passing wagons, oxen, horses, elephants, and the like. All the other birds listened to her advice and stayed away. Then one day, while feeding on this road, the greedy bird was run over by a carriage. When she was absent from the morning muster the next day, the Bodhisatta sent some birds to search for her. They found her mangled body. The Bodhisatta told his flock that her death was due to being greedy.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The greedy bird was an earlier birth of a gluttonous disciple who took morning alms in a part of the city where people gave fancy food. Wanting to keep all this fine food for herself, she warned the other disciples it was a dangerous area with a fierce elephant, horse, and dog that menaced people. Her scheme worked, and no other disciples went there. Then, one day while out for alms in that place, a ram butted the greedy disciple and she broke her leg.

When the Buddha heard other disciples discussing her accident, he told them this story so they knew that she had also come to harm in the past after some similarly greedy deceit.

Dubbaca Jataka (#116)

The Bodhisatta was once an acrobat. He traveled around from town to town doing shows with his master teacher. His master could do the four-javelin dance, but one day while drunk decided to do the five-javelin dance instead, even though he had never practiced it. The Bodhisatta told him not to do it because he would die. But the master ignored the warning and, as predicted, impaled himself on the fifth javelin. As his master lay dying, the Bodhisatta told him this is what you get for ignoring advice from wise people.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The master acrobat was an earlier birth of a disobedient and impatient disciple of the Buddha who tended to ignore the instruction of his teachers and fellow disciples. The Buddha told him this story of his past so he knew that his failure to follow advice had once led to his death.

Tittira Jataka (#117)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers studying with him in the Himalayas. One of them, a jaundiced man, was cutting wood, and another came and sat by him, telling him repeatedly how to chop better. The jaundiced ascetic lost his temper and struck the meddling ascetic with his axe, killing him.

After the Bodhisatta had the body buried, a hunter heard a partridge singing at the monastery and shot it. The Bodhisatta was fond of this birdsong and noticed it was gone. When he learned what happened, he told those around him that both the bird and the ascetic died because they talked too much.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The meddling ascetic was an earlier birth of Cula Kokalika, a greedy disciple of the Buddha. Two of the Buddha's top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, spent one rainy season at Cula Kokalika's home, with the instruction not to tell the locals they were there. After the three months had passed, they set off back to the Buddha's monastery. Right after they departed, Cula Kokalika boasted to people about who had been staying with him. They quickly gathered food and robes to donate and rushed after the departed disciples to pay respect. Knowing that Sariputta and Moggallana were very frugal and would not accept the gifts, Cula Kokalika followed, expecting that the things would be given to him. But the

elder disciples just told the people to keep everything, and this angered Cula Kokalika.

A short time later, Sariputta and Moggallana led a thousand disciples on an alms pilgrimage. When they passed through Cula Kokalika's town, the laypeople greeted them enthusiastically and donated many robes and other things. Again, Sariputta and Moggallana gave nothing to Cula Kokalika, and this time he was so furious he began insulting them for being greedy and selfish. So the disciples left the town. People begged them to stay, but could not change their minds. The angry people told Cula Kokalika to fix the problem he had created; and if he could not convince Sariputta and Moggallana to return, he would have to go live elsewhere. Fearful of losing his home, he tried to persuade them. But he failed.

Forced to leave, Cula Kokalika went to the Buddha's monastery. When he got there, he immediately began to tell the Buddha how wicked Sariputta and Moggallana were, not stopping even after being rebuked by the Buddha for his inappropriate words. Moments later, bloody boils erupted on his body and he fell over in pain. One of his former teachers heard his cries and came down from heaven, encouraging him to make peace with the elders. But Cula Kokalika would not let go of his anger, and he died and went to hell.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples (who had been the Bodhisatta's followers in that lifetime) discussing Cula Kokalika's downfall, he told them this story so they knew

that this was not the first time Cula Kokalika's own words had caused his destruction.

Vattaka Jataka (#118)

The Bodhisatta was once a quail. One day a man caught him and many others and took them home to fatten them up for sale. The Bodhisatta pondered his predicament, and then refused to eat, becoming skin-and-bone thin. When all the other birds had been sold, the quail-catcher took the Bodhisatta out of the cage to see what was wrong with him, and at the right moment, the Bodhisatta flew away home. The other quails back in the forest wondered where he had been, and he told them the story, explaining that he got away because he thought of a plan, while the other birds did not think at all.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man had spent his previous afterlife in heaven, and now as a human again he was very righteous and did not suffer from passion. During a festival, his friends paid a beautiful prostitute to be with him for the week, but he was not interested and sent her away. As she left, a nobleman hired her to come with him instead. When the festival was over, the woman did not return home and her worried mother took the matter to the king who insisted the man return her daughter. He explained that she had not stayed with him and he had no idea where the woman was, but the king declared him guilty and sentenced him to death.

As the man was being led through the city for his execution, he vowed that if he could escape his predicament, he would ordain as a disciple of the Buddha. Meanwhile, the woman

heard the commotion in the streets, and when she learned what was happening, she rushed out to show that she was still alive. The man was set free, and he fulfilled his vow that same day.

When the Buddha heard other disciples discussing this, he told them this story so they knew that he too had once escaped a seemingly certain death.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Akalaravi Jataka (#119)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. His students rose before dawn, summoned by a rooster's crow. When their rooster died, they took a new one from the cemetery, but it had no knowledge of time and crowed randomly throughout the day and night. Sometimes it roused the students at midnight, and by dawn they were too tired to focus on their studies. And it crowed during the day so they could not hear their lessons. It wasn't long before the exasperated students wrung the rooster's neck and told the Bodhisatta they had killed it. He explained to his students that its behavior was a result of a bad upbringing; no parents or teachers had trained it.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples was disobedient and inconsiderate. He neglected his duties and made loud noises throughout the night, keeping other disciples awake.

The noisy rooster was an earlier birth of this disciple and the students were earlier births of some of the Buddha's other disciples. The Buddha told this story so they knew that their companion had also been inappropriately noisy around them in the past.

Bandhanamokkha Jataka (#120)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. The queen had asked the king to be fully faithful to her. Though he had initially refused, she persisted, and eventually he agreed. He stopped even looking at any of his sixteen thousand dancing girls and never broke his vow.

When the king needed to travel to the border region to oversee a campaign by his troops against bandits, the queen stayed behind. At her request, the king sent a messenger back to the palace after every league of travel to deliver a letter and check on her. During the journey there and back, he sent sixty-four messengers, and the queen seduced and sinned with each of them. And just before the king returned, the queen demanded the Bodhisatta sleep with her. When he refused her advances, she said she would have him killed.

Before the king came to see her in her bedchamber, the queen scratched herself and feigned illness. When the king asked what was wrong, she lied, saying the Bodhisatta had demanded sex and beat her when she refused. Fuming with rage, the king demanded his soldiers arrest and behead him without delay. As he was being led through the city to the execution place, the Bodhisatta convinced the king's servants to take him to the king before he died so he could tell where great treasures were buried.

When he faced the king, the Bodhisatta declared his innocence and his righteousness, saying he had never so much as killed an ant, stole a blade of grass, lusted over

another man's wife, spoken an untruth even in jest, or tasted a drop of strong liquor. He explained what had really happened between the queen and him and asked the king to summon her and the messengers to uncover the truth about her behavior. The queen confessed her transgressions, and the king ordered the messengers beheaded instead of the Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta suggested the king pardon them since they had been compelled by the queen, and he should forgive her because being unfaithful is the innate nature of all women and they cannot control themselves. The king accepted this wisdom and decided to be merciful, giving each messenger a place to live. After this, the Bodhisatta left the city to live as an ascetic in the Himalayas.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

As the Buddha's fame grew and his disciples multiplied, other religious teachers lost most of their followers. Upset over this, some heretics enlisted a beautiful woman named Cinca-Manavika to destroy the Buddha's reputation so they would receive more praise and alms. The scheme she devised began with her sleeping in the countryside near the Buddha's monastery, then walking toward the city early in the morning so the people she passed would believe she had actually been spending the night there. After four months of this, she started wrapping cloth around her stomach and announced that she was pregnant with the Buddha's child. Some people believed her.

As the ninth month approached, Cinca-Manavika added pieces of wood to her belly bundle and beat her hands and

feet with the jawbone of an ox to induce swelling. She then walked up to the Buddha during a sermon and cursed him for having a sweet voice but bad behavior. As she publicly denounced him for denying being with her and for not providing a chamber to stay in until she gave birth, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm and he divined what was happening. He and four other gods came to earth in the form of mice and gnawed through the ropes that held Cinca-Manavika's fake stomach up: The wood fell down, severing her toes and revealing her deceit. As she fled the Buddha's angry followers, the ground split open and the flames of hell dragged her down. The religious leaders who had helped her lost what little support they still had.

The wicked queen was an earlier birth of Cinca-Manavika, and after her lie was exposed, the Buddha told this story so his disciples knew this was not the first time she had made false accusations against him.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kusanali Jataka (#121)

The Bodhisatta was once a fairy living in a humble clump of kusha grass. The king's palace had one large pillar holding up the roof, and it needed to be replaced. The royal carpenters searched far and wide for a suitable tree, and the only one they could find was home to a tree fairy who the king greatly respected. The carpenters explained the situation to the king, and he told them to make the proper offerings before cutting the tree down; he would find a new tree fairy to worship. The carpenters performed a ceremony at the tree and said they would be back the next day with their axes.

The tree fairy was devastated about losing her home and had no idea where else she and her children could live. Other spirits from the forest heard her crying and came to console her, but none had any idea how to stop the carpenters. When the Bodhisatta heard the bad news about his close friend, he told her not to worry; he would save her tree.

When the carpenters returned the next day, the Bodhisatta transformed himself into a chameleon and climbed into the massive tree's branches. Rapidly moving his head around, he made this part of the tree appear rotten and full of holes, thus not usable for the palace pillar.

Her home saved, the tree fairy joyfully sang the Bodhisatta's praises to all the other tree fairies and advised them not to look down on grass fairies and other beings of lower rank; be friends with any and all wise beings because everybody has their own particular skills.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Friends and family of Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, tried to convince him to stop being friends with a poor man because they were not equals. Anathapindika not only rebuked them for suggesting such a thing, he left his poor friend in charge of his wealth when he was traveling, and the friend cleverly saved it from thieves.

A band of armed thieves who knew about Anathapindika's trip surrounded his house to break in. But his poor friend, who was there alone, suspected that thieves were coming, so he stayed up all night waiting. When he heard the thieves arrive, the friend ran around the house making loud noises to convince them there were actually many people there, so they threw down their weapons and left. The next morning, the people who had wanted the poor man banished now glorified him for being so wise. When Anathapindika returned home, he mocked his friends because if he had listened to their advice, he would be a beggar now.

Anathapindika told the Buddha about his escape from misfortune, and the Buddha said that no matter what level two people were in life, a true friend should be held as a superior, no matter their social status, because they can always be relied upon. Then the Buddha told this story so Anathapindika knew that he himself had also once saved a superior friend's home.

The tree fairy was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Dummedha Jataka (#122)

The Bodhisatta was once an elephant. He was white all over and perfect in every way, so the king made him his state elephant. As the king rode around the city on the Bodhisatta's back during a festival, the gathered masses exclaimed at the elephant's perfect beauty, stride, proportions, grace, and so on. Hearing his subjects singing the Bodhisatta's praises instead of his own filled the king with jealousy, and he decided to kill the Bodhisatta.

The king told the mahout to take the Bodhisatta to the top of a mountain, and there he ordered him to do tricks on the edge of a tall cliff, hoping he would tumble over. The mahout figured out the king's intent and so whispered in the Bodhisatta's ear that they should fly away. The Bodhisatta rose up in the air, and the mahout, sitting on his back, told the king that such a wonderful elephant was too good for a worthless fool like him.

They flew off to another kingdom and hovered over the royal courtyard where the righteous king, after hearing the mahout's story, invited them to stay. This king was so happy they came that he divided his kingdom into three parts, keeping one and giving the mahout and the Bodhisatta one each. And with the Bodhisatta's help, this righteous king soon ruled over the whole of India.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jealous king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the intense jealousy that arose in Devadatta's heart whenever he heard people praise the Buddha, and he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta suffered the same sort of jealousy in the past. The righteous king and the mahout were earlier births of Sariputta and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Nangalisa Jataka (#123)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, renowned around the world. One of his students was extremely stupid: full of foolish notions, always saying inappropriate things, and unable to master any of the scriptures he was taught. But he was a good-hearted child deeply devoted to the Bodhisatta. One day, after this student washed and perfumed the Bodhisatta's hands, feet, and back, the Bodhisatta asked him to prop up the feet of his bed. Not finding anything in the room to prop them up with, the student used his leg and stayed there the whole night. When the Bodhisatta awoke the next morning and saw his student's dedication, he vowed to double his efforts to educate him.

The Bodhisatta decided the best way to teach this student was to ask him a question every day about something he had seen or done, and then tell him to make a comparison. When the student returned from gathering firewood and leaves that day, he told the Bodhisatta he had seen a snake. The Bodhisatta asked what it looked like, and the student answered, "like the shaft of a plow." The Bodhisatta was pleased with this answer and his hopes were raised. The following two days the student reported that he ate sugarcane and saw an elephant. And when the Bodhisatta asked for comparisons, both answers were, "like the shaft of a plow." Thinking perhaps the student was referring only specifically to the elephant's trunk and that the sugarcane might have been oddly bent, the Bodhisatta said nothing. But when on the fourth day the student compared the molasses

with curds and milk that he had eaten to the shaft of a plow, the Bodhisatta realized his student was stupid beyond hope.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The idiot student was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was quite stupid and often said the wrong thing at the wrong time, such as giving a gloomy sermon at a festival and speaking of joy at a funeral. When the Buddha heard other disciples talking about this problem, he told them this story so they knew that Laludayi had also been stupid in the past.

Amba Jataka (#124)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic with many followers. A great drought came to the forest where he lived, so one of his companions cut down a tree, carved out a trough, and filled it with water for suffering wild animals to drink. The need was so great that he spent all his hours keeping the trough full, and he went hungry because he had no time to gather food. The animals noted his sacrifice and agreed that any creature who went to drink from his trough should take some fruit as thanks. Together the animals brought so much fruit there was more than enough to feed all five hundred ascetics living there. The Bodhisatta held this up to the others as an example of why a person should never waver from doing the right thing; good deeds are rightly rewarded.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The generous ascetic was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who was so diligent about his duties at the monastery that its reputation among lay followers grew and donations increased. When the Buddha heard other disciples discussing this diligent disciple's greatness, he told them this story so they knew that through his dedication the disciple had also earned honor and donations in the past.

Katahaka Jataka (#125)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. On the same day the Bodhisatta's son was born, one of his slaves also gave birth to a son. The two boys grew up together, and the Bodhisatta allowed the slave boy to get an education. When the slave boy came of age, the Bodhisatta employed him as his private secretary. The slave knew that any mistake he made would not be forgiven—he would be beaten, imprisoned, branded, and fed slave's food—so he came up with a plan to leave the city and live free. He forged a letter to a merchant living out at the border saying he was the royal treasurer's son and had been sent there to unite the two families by marrying the merchant's daughter. Since the letter had the official seal and the slave came in handsome dress and with perfumes and other appropriate gifts, the plan worked. The merchant believed he was the treasurer's son and he gladly gave his daughter to the slave. He lived a life of luxury, but he was arrogant and constantly criticized his food, clothes, and other things as too provincial.

The Bodhisatta, meanwhile, had his people search all over the kingdom for his missing slave, and eventually they located him. Angry over what his slave had done, the Bodhisatta went to bring him back. When news spread that the king's treasurer was coming to the border region, the slave knew he was the reason for the visit, and he wondered what he should do. Running away meant giving up his good life, so he chose to plead for mercy and hope the Bodhisatta would not expose his lie.

The slave put his plan in motion by frequently and publicly complaining that society was in a state of decay because so many people did not give their parents the respect they deserved. And he claimed he treated his parents with utmost reverence. When the Bodhisatta arrived, he met him on the road outside town and began acting the role of a slave with his master. He promised to give the Bodhisatta anything he wanted to keep his secret. Though the sight of his slave filled the Bodhisatta with disgust, he promised not to expose him. In town, the slave continued to treat the Bodhisatta as his master, but the people just interpreted this as him being an extremely gracious and devoted son. The Bodhisatta spoke kindly of his "son" to the merchant and never betrayed the truth. When the Bodhisatta met the slave's wife, he asked how her husband treated her. His only fault, she replied, was his constant complaining. In order to end this arrogance, the Bodhisatta taught her a verse in a language the slave understood but that she did not, and told her to recite it the next time he found fault in his food.

Now feeling safe in his deceit, the slave grew even more arrogant. And one night when his wife spoon-fed him his dinner and he started to complain, she said: "If you speak arrogantly far from home, your visitor will return and spoil everything." Tricked into thinking the Bodhisatta had actually told his wife the truth, he was never anything but humble for the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The slave was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who boasted about his wealthy, noble upbringing. It was later discovered that these stories were all lies. When the Buddha heard other disciples discussing their conceited, dishonest brethren, he told this story so they knew that this disciple had been the same way in the past.

Asilakkhana Jataka (#126)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. The king employed a chaplain who could tell whether swords were lucky or not by smelling them, but he only recommended swords made by people who paid him bribes. One swordsmith knew the chaplain was corrupt, so he put some ground pepper in a sheath. And when the chaplain sniffed this sword, he sneezed so violently he sliced off the tip of his nose. He had a false nose made that could pass for real and continued his work.

The Bodhisatta, who was the king's nephew and only male heir to the throne, and the king's daughter fell in love and wanted to marry, but the king would not allow it because he planned for them to each marry into other royal households to strengthen his power. He stopped the young lovers from ever seeing each other again, but the Bodhisatta was determined to get his beloved out of the palace and back to his house, and he paid a wise woman a pocketful of money to make it happen.

The wise woman convinced the king that his daughter was possessed by a demon and needed to go to the cemetery for an exorcism in a magic circle. The wise woman took her there and laid her in a bed over what everyone thought was a corpse. But it was actually the Bodhisatta under her, and when the exorcism began, he took out some ground pepper and sneezed a few times. Fearing that the revived corpse would kill the first person it could catch, everybody who had gathered at the cemetery ran away in terror. This allowed the Bodhisatta and the princess to sneak off to his home.

Her ruse successful, the wise woman told the king what had happened. Realizing the two went together like ghee in rice porridge, the king's anger vanished and he let the Bodhisatta and his daughter marry and become king and queen.

After he took the throne, the Bodhisatta also employed the sword-sniffing chaplain. One day, while working in the sun, the heat melted the false tip of his nose, and it fell off. The chaplain was embarrassed, but the Bodhisatta found it funny and said, "Sneezing is good for some, but bad for others. Sneezing lost you your nose, but sneezing got me my throne and queen."

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A king employed a chaplain to determine whether newly made swords were lucky or not by smelling them, and he only recommended swords made by men who bribed him. One angry swordsmith put ground pepper in a sheath, and when the chaplain sniffed this sword, he sneezed and cut off his nose.

The Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing what had happened, and he told them this story so they knew that this corrupt chaplain had done the exact same thing in an earlier birth, and that things are not always inherently good or bad, sometimes it depends on the situation.

Kalanduka Jataka (#127)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. On the same day the Bodhisatta's son was born, one of his slaves also gave birth to a son. The two boys grew up together, and the Bodhisatta allowed the slave boy to get an education.

When the slave boy came of age, the Bodhisatta employed him as his private secretary. The slave knew that any mistake he made would not be forgiven—he would be beaten, imprisoned, branded, and fed slave's food—so he came up with a plan to leave the city and live free. He forged a letter to a merchant living out at the border saying he was the royal treasurer's son and had been sent there to unite the two families by marrying the merchant's daughter. Since the letter had the official seal and the slave came in handsome dress and with perfumes and other appropriate gifts, the plan worked. The merchant believed he was the treasurer's son and he gladly gave his daughter to the slave, who then lived a life of luxury.

The Bodhisatta sent a young pet parrot to search for his slave, and eventually he found him. The parrot saw the slave picnicking with his wife on a boat stocked full of fancy food and adorned with flowers and perfumes. The people of that region drank milk with a pungent drug to ward off the cold, and when the slave tasted it, he spit it out on his wife's head.

The parrot, sitting on the bough of a fig tree, saw this and scolded the slave, telling him to remember who he really was and warning him that soon he would be caught. The parrot

flew back home and told the Bodhisatta what he had seen. The Bodhisatta sent his men to bring his slave back, and he was then treated as a regular slave.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The slave was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who boasted about his wealthy, noble upbringing. It was later discovered that these stories were all lies. When the Buddha heard other disciples discussing their conceited, dishonest brethren, he told this story so they knew that this disciple had been the same way in the past.

Bilara Jataka (#128)

The Bodhisatta was once a rat. He lived in the forest and was the leader of a big pack of rats. A jackal came up with a scheme to eat the rats by pretending to be holy and staying near their cave. When the Bodhisatta saw the jackal, he asked his name and why he stood on one leg facing the sun while loudly inhaling air. The jackal answered that his name was Godly, and if he stood on all four legs the earth could not bear his weight, he faced the sun to worship it, and air was his only food.

The Bodhisatta fell for the ruse and began to take all the rats to pay respect to the jackal every morning and evening. And each time the rats left, the jackal lunged down to eat the last one and lick his lips clean before any others could see what had happened. Eventually the rats noticed their group had grown smaller, and they told the Bodhisatta. Hearing this news, he suspected it was the jackal, so the next time they went to worship, the Bodhisatta walked at the end of the line. When the jackal poised to strike, the Bodhisatta yelled out, “So this is your saintliness, you hypocrite and rascal!” and sprang at the jackal’s throat, biting hard into his windpipe and killing him. The other rats came back and devoured the entire body.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha’s disciples who had been exposed as a hypocrite. The Buddha

told this story so the other disciples knew he had been the same way in the past.

Aggika Jataka (#129)

The Bodhisatta was once a rat. He lived in the forest and was the leader of a big pack of rats. One time a forest fire swept through and a jackal did not have time to flee, so he pressed his head against a tree and stood still as the flames approached. The fire didn't kill or injure him, it just singed off all his fur; except for a tuft on the crown of his head, which the tree had covered.

As he drank water from a pond one time, and saw the hair on his head in his reflection, the jackal devised a scheme to eat the rats by pretending to be holy and staying near their cave. When the Bodhisatta saw the jackal, he assumed he was holy because of his hair and went to speak with him. The jackal explained that he was a worshipper of the fire god and he had come here to guard the rats, which he would do by counting them each time they left the cave in the morning and returned in the evening so the Bodhisatta would know if any were missing.

The Bodhisatta believed him and was pleased to accept his help. But each time the jackal counted the rats, he ate the last one in line. Eventually the rats noticed their group had grown smaller, and they told the Bodhisatta. Hearing this news, he suspected it was the jackal, so the next time they passed him, the Bodhisatta walked at the end of the line. When the jackal poised to strike, the Bodhisatta yelled out, "Your topknot comes from greed, not virtue. We are through with you!" and sprang at the jackal's throat, biting hard into

his windpipe and killing him. The other rats came back and devoured the entire body.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been exposed as a hypocrite. The Buddha told this story so the other disciples knew he had been the same way in the past.

Kosiya Jataka (#130)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. He was famous around the world, and the sons of wealthy nobles from far and wide came to study with him. One of his students, who had studied the three Vedas and the eighteen accomplishments, had a wicked wife. She lay about their house claiming to be ill and unable to work, but the moment her husband went out, she was in the arms of her lovers. Not knowing the truth, her husband served her like a slave, bringing her rich foods and sweets, and tried to help her get better.

Because the student took care of his "sick" wife, often he could not visit the Bodhisatta for lessons. When seeing the student again after one long absence, the Bodhisatta, knowing the truth about the woman, told him that he could "cure" his wife by preparing a medicine from five kinds of fruit pickled in cow urine in a copper pot. Then he would tell her she had to either take the medicine or work for her food. If she refused the medicine, he was to threaten to grab her by the hair and drag her around while beating her. The man followed the suggestion, and his wife refused to take the remedy. Realizing that the Bodhisatta knew what she was up to, she repented and became a good wife.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A lay follower of the Buddha had not been to the monastery in a long time. When he visited again, he explained to the Buddha that he was very busy caring for his sick wife who looked healthy but said she was not getting better. The

Buddha knew she was faking illness when her husband was around and jumping into the arms of her lovers when he was gone, and that he and his wife had been through the exact same situation in earlier births. The Buddha told him this story to explain how to stop her wicked behavior.

Asampadana Jataka (#131)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal treasurer. He was close friends with a treasurer, named Piliya, from another kingdom, and both were very wealthy. When Piliya met with misfortune and lost everything, he had to beg. Piliya traveled to the Bodhisatta's home, and when he heard of his friend's terrible situation, the Bodhisatta gave Piliya half of his fortune: money, property, livestock, and slaves. Soon after, the Bodhisatta suffered the same ruin and went to seek help from Piliya, but he only gave the Bodhisatta a bit of rice bran and told him to leave and never return. This led the Bodhisatta's wife to tears.

One of the Bodhisatta's former slaves, who had been given to Piliya, saw his former masters and fell at their feet asking what their problem was. Hearing their story, he took them to his home and prepared meals and baths. He informed the other former slaves what had happened, and they all marched to the palace, demanded to see the king, and told him what their ingrate master had done. The king and his advisor ordered Piliya to give the Bodhisatta everything he owned, but the Bodhisatta insisted on only taking as much as he had previously given.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Piliya was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing Devadatta's ingratitude

and folly, and the Buddha told this story so they knew that Devadatta had been the same way in the past.

Pancagaru Jataka (#132)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince, the youngest of a king's one hundred sons. Once when some private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) were eating at the palace, the Bodhisatta asked them if he would become king someday. They answered that it would never happen in his city. But if he could journey in seven days to Taxila—two thousand leagues away on a route inhabited by ogresses who enchanted men with their beauty and charm, and then ate them—he would become king there. Believing he had the power to resist, and taking a charmed thread and some charmed sand from the private Buddhas, he said goodbye to his family and set out. Five royal courtiers respected him so much that they insisted on joining him, despite stern warnings of the danger.

As they walked, one by one these men were ensnared by the ogresses' temptations, and they lagged behind the others to indulge their pleasures. All five were killed and eaten. One ogress followed the Bodhisatta, telling everyone they passed that they were husband and wife. When the Bodhisatta explained that she was actually a murderous ogress, she replied that he was only saying this because he was angry with her; and because she was so charming, everybody believed her.

When they reached Taxila and the king saw the ogress's beauty, he was so smitten that he ignored the Bodhisatta's warning and invited her to stay in the best room in his palace. That evening he went to be with her. After he fell asleep, she

rushed back to her city and returned with all the other ogres. They devoured every person and animal in the palace, leaving nothing but bones behind. In the morning, when the people broke down the palace doors and saw the carnage, they realized the Bodhisatta had been right and she really was an ogress. Because the Bodhisatta had been the only one to resist her, they knew he must be a noble, steadfast, and wise person. So they made him their king.

The city and palace were decorated like a city of the gods, and when the Bodhisatta took his seat on the jeweled throne, sixteen thousand women danced, sang, and played music. As he took in the spectacle, the Bodhisatta thought about how if he had let himself be snared by the ogresses, none of this would have come to pass. He always remembered the importance of tenacity, and he ruled with righteousness and charity for the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about the time shortly after he reached enlightenment that the daughters of the demon Mara, enemy of all that is good, tried to seduce him, he told them this story so they knew that he had also successfully resisted lust and won a kingdom in a past life.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Ghatasana Jataka (#133)

The Bodhisatta was once a bird. He led a flock living in a giant tree that stretched out over a lake. A naga living in the lake grew so tired of their dung fouling his home that he decided to burn them out. He made the water boil, then smoke and flames shot up. The Bodhisatta told his flock to flee as quickly as they could. Many birds followed his advice, but some stayed behind and died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha had sent one of his disciples out to the forest to meditate during the rainy season. Soon after the disciple arrived, his hut burned down and he was forced to sleep outdoors in great discomfort. He told nearby villagers about the problem, and they promised to build him a new hut, but when the three months were over, nobody had done it and he failed to progress in his meditation because of it.

Upon returning to the monastery, the disciple told the Buddha he had failed and explained why. The Buddha told him this story so he understood that he was a fool for not relocating to a more suitable place, as he himself had once done, even though he was just an animal at the time.

The birds who fled the tree with the Bodhisatta were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Jhanasodhana Jataka (#134)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. His dying words were, “Neither conscious nor unconscious.” His chief disciple explained that this statement meant sorrow can be found in both states and the only way to have true bliss is to strive toward insight, but the other disciples did not believe him. So the Bodhisatta came down from heaven and told them the chief disciple was wise and his explanation was correct. Then he returned to heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta’s chief disciple was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha’s top disciples. Sariputta was skilled at explaining things, and after he had interpreted one of the Buddha’s lessons very clearly, the Buddha told this story so others knew that Sariputta also had this ability in the past.

Candabha Jataka (#135)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. His dying words were, “Moonlight and sunlight.” His chief disciple explained that this statement meant if a person uses the sun and the moon as a subject matter for meditation, they will be reborn in a high heaven between earthly lives, but the other disciples did not believe him. So the Bodhisatta came down from heaven and told them the chief disciple was wise and his explanation was correct. Then he returned to heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta’s chief disciple was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha’s top disciples. Sariputta was skilled at explaining things, and after he had interpreted one of the Buddha’s lessons very clearly, the Buddha told this story so others knew that Sariputta also had this ability in the past.

Suvannahamsa Jataka (#136)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden mallard. He could remember his previous life as a human, when he was married with three daughters, and went to check on his former family. He found that after his death, they had become poor, so he told them that from time to time he would give them a golden feather to sell, and they would no longer need to endure the humiliation and hardship of having to work for hire.

After a while, his family became wealthy again. But the widow worried that the Bodhisatta might stop helping them, and she planned to pluck him clean the next time he came. Disgusted by her greed, the daughters refused to help their mother, though she did it anyway. But, unbeknownst to her, if any feathers were plucked against the Bodhisatta's wishes, they became normal. The widow threw the now featherless and flightless Bodhisatta into a barrel and fed him. Slowly his feathers grew back, but they were white and worthless, so as soon as he was able, he flew away and never returned.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A lay follower of the Buddha had offered his female disciples free garlic; they could come anytime and take a few handfuls. One time four disciples came, but there was no garlic at the house, so the estate manager told them they could pick some from the field. One of the women (the Bodhisatta's widow in an earlier birth) was greedy and carried off a big load, which angered both the manager and the other three disciples (who

had been the Bodhisatta's daughters in earlier births). After this, they were no longer welcome to come and get garlic.

When the Buddha heard what this disciple had done, he rebuked her and told this story so the other disciples knew she had also been greedy in the past, and to teach them that it was important to be moderate in desires and be content with what you have, no matter how little it may be.

Babbu Jataka (#137)

The Bodhisatta was once a stone cutter. A wealthy merchant once lived in his village, and because of him, it was a bustling place. But over time, the merchant and his family died, and the village became destitute. The merchant's wife, who loved money very much, was reborn as a mouse and lived amidst the family's abandoned treasure.

The Bodhisatta worked at a quarry in the village, and the mouse, seeing him there often while she went about seeking food, struck up a friendship. Realizing that, as a mouse, she could do nothing with all her money, she started taking coins to the Bodhisatta in her mouth for him to buy lunch for himself and some meat for her, and this became their daily routine.

One day a cat caught the mouse. Just as it was about to eat her, she suggested that rather than eating her and getting only one meal, it could keep her alive and eat some of her daily meat. The cat agreed, and from then on the mouse had to divide her meat into two portions to share. Later, another cat caught the mouse, and to spare her life, she made the same deal. And then again, and again, until the mouse was splitting her daily meat into five portions and only eating one. She was reduced to skin and bone, and when the Bodhisatta noticed it, he asked what the problem was. She told him what had happened, and he said he would solve her cat problem.

The Bodhisatta hollowed out a block of pure, clear crystal so the mouse could sit inside. He told her that when a cat came

by, she should insult and threaten it. When the first cat came and demanded his meat, the mouse called him vile and told him to go home and eat his kittens. Enraged, the cat jumped at the mouse and hit the unseen crystal with such force his chest broke and his eyes popped out of his head. He died instantly. The other three cats came and met the same end. The mouse was so grateful she began to bring the Bodhisatta two or three coins a day and eventually gave him the entire treasure.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A woman left her village to visit her mother, a respected lay follower of the Buddha. After she'd stayed there several days, her husband sent a messenger telling her it was time to come back. The mother, insisting it would be rude to return without a gift, baked a cake to send with her daughter. A disciple on an alms round passed the house, and the mother gave him the cake, then began to bake another. The disciple told one of his companions about the cake, so he passed by the house and also got one. He told a third, and he told a fourth, and both also took cakes home that day. At this point, there was not enough time for her daughter to return, so she stayed one more night. The next day, the husband sent another message telling her to hurry back. But the same four disciples came for cakes again, so she couldn't leave. The husband's third-day message said that if she did not come back right away, he would get a new wife. Again these four disciples returned, and again the wife could not leave. The next message said the husband had already taken another wife, and the daughter wept with sadness.

The mouse and the cats were earlier births of the mother and the four thoughtless disciples. When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing the woman's fate, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time these four had made misery for the mother by eating her food.

Godha Jataka (#138)

The Bodhisatta was once a lizard. A deeply respected ascetic lived nearby, and the Bodhisatta visited several times a day to hear him preach. This ascetic eventually moved elsewhere, and a new ascetic moved into his hut. The Bodhisatta gave him the same respect he gave to the previous one. After a rare dry season storm, many ants left their hill. Lizards came to eat the ants, and villagers came to catch the lizards. Someone gave the ascetic one to eat, served with vinegar and sugar, and he thought it tasted so good he wanted to eat the Bodhisatta.

The ascetic prepared his pot for cooking and some condiments for eating, then he sat at the door of his hut with a mallet hidden under his robe, waiting for the Bodhisatta to arrive. When the Bodhisatta went to pay his respects, he noticed that something about the ascetic was not right. Then he smelled the aroma of the ascetic's lizard meal from earlier in the day and knew what he was planning to do. So the Bodhisatta walked past the hut without stopping. When the ascetic saw this, he knew his plot had somehow been uncovered. Not giving up, the ascetic threw his mallet, but it hit just the tip of the Bodhisatta's tail. No worse for wear, the Bodhisatta dashed off into his burrow. He popped his head out a hole other than the one he went in and hurled insults at the wicked ascetic. Now that his true nature was exposed, the false ascetic went away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The false ascetic was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been exposed as a hypocrite. The Buddha told this story so the other disciples knew that the hypocritical disciple had been the same way in the past.
The good ascetic who came before him was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Ubhatobhattha Jataka (#139)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. A fisherman got his hook snagged in a sunken tree and thought it was a giant fish. He didn't want to share the catch, so he sent his son back to the village to tell his wife to create such a huge commotion that nobody would come there and see him reel the fish in. Fearing the line would break, he took off his clothes and walked into the water to grab his fish. As he groped about the muddy water, branches of the tree that snagged his line poked his eyes, blinding him. And then a thief stole his clothes.

His wife, meanwhile, stuck a palm leaf behind her ear, painted one eye black with soot, and started nursing a dog. One of her neighbors told the wife she was crazy. The wife replied that she would not tolerate such slander and demanded the village headman fine her neighbor eight coins. Instead, he ordered the wife to pay eight coins to the neighbor, and she was tied up and beaten to make her pay. After all this happened, the Bodhisatta exclaimed to those listening that the fisherman had failed twofold: in the water and on land.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The fisherman was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One time the Buddha's disciples were discussing how Devadatta had a twofold failure in life by missing out on the comforts of lay life and also not receiving any benefit from his time as a disciple. The Buddha

told them this story so they knew that Devadatta also had a twofold failure in the past.

Kaka Jataka (#140)

The Bodhisatta was once a crow. A mischievous crow sat on the archway of the city gate, and when he saw the king's chaplain he decided to defecate on his head. The chaplain, who had just bathed in the river and was wearing his best clothes, was furious, and a deep hatred of crows was born.

At this same time, a slave guarding a granary fell asleep, and a shaggy goat came around and started to eat rice. The slave woke up and shooed it away, but each time she dozed off, the goat came back to eat more. Wanting the goat to stay away, the slave pretended to fall asleep; and when it returned, she hit it with a torch. The goat's hair caught fire, and it ran into a shed and rolled in the hay, setting the building ablaze. The flames spread, and the nearby royal stables caught fire, severely injuring many elephants. Their injuries were so bad that the king's veterinarians did not know what to do, so the king sought the chaplain's advice.

Seeing an opportunity for vengeance, the chaplain recommended crow fat as a cure. The king ordered all crows killed, but even though no fat was found, the slaughter continued until there were piles of dead crows around the city. The Bodhisatta lived as the leader of eighty thousand crows in a large cemetery, and when he heard the news, he knew he was the only one who could stop the killing; and he would do so with kindness. He flew to the palace and reminded the king of the principle that leaders should rule by wisdom, not passion, and should only set a course of action after knowing all the facts. He then explained that crows have

no fat because they live in constant fear of humans, and the chaplain was motivated to lie about the crows for revenge, not for the benefit of the king or the elephants.

The king was so impressed by the Bodhisatta that he seated him on a golden throne and offered to have him lead the kingdom. But he rejected the offer and just preached to the king, urging him to protect all living creatures. The king granted immunity to all animals, and from then on delivered six bushels of delicately flavored rice daily for the crows to eat, plus a separate special portion of the king's own food for the Bodhisatta.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha knew an exceptionally wise advisor, and he told this story as a lesson on the importance of being thoughtful and careful before making decisions.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Godha Jataka (#141)

The Bodhisatta was once an iguana. He lived in a massive burrow with hundreds of other iguanas who followed his leadership. His young son was close friends with a chameleon, and the Bodhisatta disapproved because chameleons are low-class creatures, and mingling with them would bring misery to their entire iguana clan. Though ordered to end the friendship, his son refused. Anticipating danger from the chameleon, the Bodhisatta dug a new tunnel out of their burrow to use in case of an emergency.

The iguana grew large, while the chameleon stayed small. Eventually their hugs began to hurt the chameleon and he realized they would soon kill him. So he ended their friendship and wanted to help a hunter kill all the iguanas.

One time after a thunderstorm, the chameleon saw an iguana hunter walking through the forest with his spade and dogs, and he led them to his former friend's burrow. He told the hunter where to start a fire to smoke the iguanas out, and the plan worked. As the iguanas fled the fire, the hunter smashed as many as he could with a big stick and let his dogs catch the rest. As the slaughter took place, the Bodhisatta escaped through his secret tunnel. Knowing this must be the work of the chameleon, he remarked that "bad company can never end in good."

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The disobedient young iguana was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been persuaded by a friend to skip his morning alms rounds and eat fancy meals at the monastery of Devadatta (the chameleon was an earlier birth of him), a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. The Buddha told this story to the traitorous disciple and those who had reported his misbehavior so they knew that not listening to wise people can have bad results for an entire group.

Sigala Jataka (#142)

The Bodhisatta was once a jackal. There was a festival in the city, and at midnight some men ran out of meat, but they still had plenty of liquor. One of the men said he would capture a jackal for them to eat. He snuck out of the city via the sewer and went and lay down in the charnel ground, pretending to be dead.

Soon after the man arrived, a pack of jackals led by the Bodhisatta came to eat corpses. He saw this man and could tell by sight and scent that he was alive and guessed what he was up to. So the Bodhisatta wanted to make him look like a fool. He walked up and pulled at the man's club with his teeth; the man, not being very bright, tightened his grip. Then the Bodhisatta stepped back and told the man he had betrayed himself by holding onto the club. The man jumped up and threw his club at the Bodhisatta, but missed. The Bodhisatta told him, "You have missed me with your club, but you will not miss the torments of hell." The man went back to the city empty-handed, and the jackals went about their business.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The foolish man was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he heard Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also unsuccessfully tried to kill him in the past, and it had made him look like a fool.

Virocana Jataka (#143)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. One day he met a jackal in the forest, and being unable to escape, the jackal threw himself at the Bodhisatta's feet and said he would be his servant if he spared his life. The Bodhisatta agreed and they made an arrangement that the jackal would find elephants, horses, buffalo, or other animals to eat, then the lion would kill them and they would share the meat. The jackal was ordered to say, "Shine forth in thy might, Lord," each time they hunted.

The jackal grew large with this arrangement and got arrogant, wanting to kill an elephant by himself and have the Bodhisatta tell him, "Shine forth in thy might, jackal." The Bodhisatta replied that no jackal could kill an elephant, but when the jackal insisted, he let him pursue his folly. When the time came, the jackal lunged at the elephant, but missed and landed at its feet. The elephant stomped his head, crushing the skull into powder, and defecated on the corpse. The Bodhisatta commented that this showed the jackal's true might.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. He left the Buddha's sangha with many disciples to set up his own order and declared that he too was a Buddha. The real Buddha sent two of his top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, to preach to those wayward disciples; and while Devadatta was asleep,

most of them returned to the Buddha's fold. This so angered Kokalika, a disciple of the Buddha who became one of Devadatta's most devoted followers, that he kicked Devadatta in the chest and caused him to spit up blood.

The Buddha told this story to let his disciples know this was not the first time Devadatta had imitated him and suffered for it.

Nanguttha Jataka (#144)

The Bodhisatta was once a devout worshipper of the fire god. When he came of age, his parents asked if he was going to take his birth fire into the wilderness to worship it devoutly or live as a married man in town. He chose the religious life and lived by himself in the forest.

One day someone gave the Bodhisatta an ox, and he walked it back to his home, where he planned to sacrifice it. Finding he was out of salt and feeling certain the god would not eat the meat without it, he went back to the village to get some. While he was gone, a band of hunters saw the ox, killed it, ate some for dinner, and carried away most of the rest, leaving behind only the tail, shanks, and hide. When the Bodhisatta returned, he was disgusted at the fire god for not protecting his ox: “If this god cannot protect its special offering,” he thought, “how can it look after me?” So he doused his fire and set off to become an ascetic. And because he did so, he won the knowledges and attainments during his life and was reborn in heaven after death.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Several naked ascetics did their penances, such as squatting on their heels, reclining on thorns, and burning themselves with fire, behind the Buddha’s monastery. Some of the Buddha’s disciples asked him whether any good resulted from these things, and the Buddha told them this story to explain that there was absolutely no benefit whatsoever.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Radha Jataka (#145)

The Bodhisatta was once a parrot. He and his brother lived in the home of a brahmin who treated them like his own children. Unfortunately, his wife was a thoroughly wicked woman, and when he had to go away on business, the brahmin asked his parrot pair to stop her if she did something bad. They said they would if possible; otherwise they would stay quiet.

During her husband's absence, the wife had a steady stream of lovers come to the house. The Bodhisatta's brother wanted to say something to her, but the Bodhisatta told him they couldn't stop her and ordered him to say nothing. When the brahmin returned, they told him what his wife had been up to, and then said that, because they had informed on her, they could no longer safely live in the house. They flew away to the forest.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's junior disciples always received poor food (lumpy gruel with stale or rotting ingredients and dried or burnt sprouts) and he did not get enough to stay healthy. He started to return each morning to the wife he left behind, and she gave him delicious rice with sauce and curry. This made him miss his former life, and with her encouragement he decided to leave the sangha.

The brahmin and his wife were earlier births of this disciple and his former wife. The Buddha reminded this disciple that it is impossible to keep watch over a woman in order to stop her from doing bad things. Then he told this story so the disciple knew that he had tried and failed to control his wife in the past. This convinced him to remain a disciple.

The Bodhisatta's brother was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kaka Jataka (#146)

The Bodhisatta was once a spirit of the sea. A pair of crows, husband and wife, went to the seashore to eat and found an offering of food and drink that some people had just given to a naga. They ate until full and drank until drunk, then went to play in the ocean. Without warning, a fish swam up and ate the wife, and her husband burst into tears.

Other crows heard his wailing and came to see what had happened, and they too were devastated. They all tried to drain the ocean with their beaks to rescue her. They worked, mouthful by mouthful, until their throats and eyes ached from the saltwater and they grew weary. Seeing that their task was impossible, they quit trying and praised the deceased's beauty, proclaiming the sea stole her because she was so wonderful. The Bodhisatta, hearing them talk nonsense, made a hideous spirit appear out of the ocean to frighten them away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The flock of mourning crows, including the husband, were earlier births of a group of wealthy elderly men who decided to give away all their belongings to their families and live out their final years as disciples of the Buddha. However, they were not serious in their practice. They lived together at the monastery so they could socialize, did not gain any understanding of dharma, and instead of taking alms, they usually went to eat food at their wives' and children's homes. After getting food from their families, they all gathered at one

particular house where the wife (the crow eaten by the fish was an earlier birth of her) treated them very well and provided delicious meals. When they learned she had died, they all wailed in sadness, and other disciples came to see what had happened. Shocked at their inappropriate behavior, the other disciples sat around discussing it. And when the Buddha came by, he told them this story so they knew that these men had acted similarly in the past.

Puppharatta Jataka (#147)

The Bodhisatta was once a spirit of the air. A poor couple planned to attend their city's large, elaborate night festival, and the wife was upset they had only old, coarse clothes. She wanted to wear safflower-dyed cloth, but there was no way for poor people like them to afford it. The wife didn't care what it took, she demanded safflower, telling her husband to sneak into the royal park to steal some. They knew this was a very foolish, dangerous thing to do, but the man could not convince his wife to be happy with what they had. And since he loved her very much, he agreed to do it.

Under cover of night, the man broke down a fence and got into the park. But the guards heard him and took him away in chains. Brought before the king the next morning, he was sentenced to death and led out of the city to the execution grounds, where he was impaled. As he slowly died in intense agony, with crows pecking out his eyes, he muttered to himself that his greatest pain was not being able to see his wife in beautiful new clothes. Then he died and was reborn in hell. The Bodhisatta saw all this happen.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began longing for his wife from his lay life. The husband and wife seeking the safflower-dyed clothes were earlier births of this disciple and his wife, and the Buddha told the disciple this story from his past so he knew that his wife was harmful to him and he should not crave her.

Sigala Jataka (#148)

The Bodhisatta was once a jackal. He came upon a dead elephant out in the forest, but it was too tough to eat—except for the anus. He ate his way from there into the belly, then continued to dine on the kidneys, heart, and the rest, and he drank blood instead of water. He was so content, he decided to live inside the elephant, eating away day by day. When he had devoured all the meat and needed to leave, he found that the sun had shrunk the elephant's skin, and his rear entrance had closed up. He rushed around, heaving his body against the skin trying to escape, but he could not break out. Then a storm came and the rain moistened the skin, stretching it just enough to reopen his path. The Bodhisatta backed into the head and ran at the hole as fast as he could, just barely squeezing through. It was so tight that all his fur got scraped off. Now smooth as a palm stem, he knew that this misfortune was his own fault and he vowed to never again be greedy or climb inside an elephant carcass. And for the rest of his life, he never did.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred wealthy friends, sons of merchants, renounced the world and became disciples of the Buddha. One night the lusts and desires they had renounced suddenly returned. The Buddha divined what had happened and felt he should talk to them straightaway rather than waiting until morning. Realizing that if he only aroused these five hundred men their shame of having been discovered would prevent their

understanding, he had every disciple in the monastery woken and brought to an assembly.

The Buddha preached the importance of avoiding the three evil thoughts (lust, hatred, and cruelty) because they can grow and cause destruction. Desire must be shunned and feared, like an itch, or Indra's thunderbolt; and if desire arises, it needs to be expelled like a raindrop rolling off a lotus leaf. Then he told them this story so they knew that he himself was once filled with desire and it led to a bad result. Hearing the truth, the five hundred struggling disciples won arahantship.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Ekapanna Jataka (#149)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. One rainy season, needing salt and other necessities, he left his Himalayan home and went to the city. The king, impressed by his demeanor, invited him to live under his care in the royal park until it was time to return home.

The king had a bad-tempered, uncontrollable son, reviled by all, and none of the king's family, councilors, or chaplains could reform him. So the king asked the Bodhisatta to talk to the boy. They took a walk in the park, and when they came upon a tree seedling, the Bodhisatta told the young prince to chew one of the leaves. The taste was so terrible that he cursed and spit it out. In such a small plant the poison was mild, but the boy knew that when the tree grew large, it would become deadly. So he pulled the seedling out of the ground and crushed it. Then the Bodhisatta explained to the prince that the people of the kingdom felt the same way about him, and they would never allow someone so fierce and hot-blooded to take the throne. Eventually someone would "uproot" him and force him into exile. The lesson entered the prince's heart, and his attitude changed immediately for the better. He became humble and kind, and after his father's death he was a wise and charitable king.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The prince who tasted the poisonous leaf was an earlier birth of a young prince who was cruel and uncontrollable, like an enraged snake. Nobody in the palace could make him better,

so the king took him to hear a lecture from the Buddha. The Buddha told the prince that people who acted like he did were loathed by all and have misery on earth and then again in hell after death; and this cycle of suffering would repeat for many lifetimes. But people who show kindness and do good deeds need not fear hell. The Buddha's words were so persuasive that the prince was humbled and his heart filled with kindness and love; he was forever after as gentle as a snake with drawn fangs, as a crab with broken claws, and as a bull with broken horns.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing his incomparable teaching ability, he told them this story so they knew that he had also tamed this boy in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sanjiva Jataka (#150)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. One of his students, who he'd taught a spell for raising the dead to life, came across a dead tiger while he was out gathering wood in the forest with fellow students. Wanting to show off, the learned student told his companions he could bring the tiger to life again. After the others climbed a tree for safety, the student spoke his spell and hit the tiger with a piece of broken pottery. The tiger immediately lunged for the student's throat, killing him instantly. Then the tiger suddenly dropped dead again.

The other students went back and told the Bodhisatta what had happened. He explained to them that you always bring misfortune on yourself when you help the wicked.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The student killed by the tiger was an earlier birth of King Ajatasattu, who supported Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and took the throne by killing his virtuous father. After the earth swallowed Devadatta, sending him to hell, the king feared he would suffer the same fate, and he could not put his mind to rest. He wanted to ask for guidance from the Buddha, but was afraid to go because of what he had done. Then one night at a festival, he saw Jivaka, the Buddha's doctor, and thought he could muster the courage to approach the Buddha if Jivaka introduced him. So he sat down amidst the group of men and asked all of them which religious teacher they respected.

Jivaka praised the Buddha and urged the king to meet him. Feigning ignorance, King Ajatasattu agreed.

The king listened to the Buddha explain the path of righteousness and then, finally feeling peaceful again, returned to the palace. The Buddha, knowing everything King Ajatasattu had done, told his disciples that had the king not done such terrible things in his life he would have attained the first path of understanding, but because he followed Devadatta, he was destined to further misery.

The next day, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the great karmic cost of King Ajatasattu's patricide, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time the king had suffered for helping the wicked.

Rajovada Jataka (#151)

The Bodhisatta was once the King of Varanasi. He was righteous and wise, and all his subjects were happy. The Bodhisatta always sought to improve himself, and he asked people to tell him his faults so he could correct them. But nobody, from his closest advisors to ordinary citizens living outside the city gates, would share any criticisms. Assuming people were too afraid to speak openly to the king about such matters, he left the city in disguise so he could get honest answers. Still, he heard nothing but praise from the people he met, even out in the border region.

Heading home, the Bodhisatta's carriage met another head-on at a spot where the road was too narrow for them to pass, and both drivers told the other to move aside. The other carriage, it turns out, carried the King of Kosala, who was also entirely honorable and was out in the country doing the exact same thing as the Bodhisatta with the exact same result.

The two drivers compared their respective kings to determine who was the superior, deserving the right of way, and who would have to move aside. But both were of the same age and lineage, and both kingdoms had the same size, power, wealth, and glory. So they discussed their master's virtues. The King of Kosala, his driver said, does good to good people and bad to bad people. The Bodhisatta, on the other hand, bestowed good to everybody and so was the better man. The King of Kosala acknowledged this as a fault and had his driver pull his carriage aside to let the Bodhisatta pass. The

Bodhisatta advised the King of Kosala to change his ways, and upon returning to his city, he followed the advice.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day the King of Kosala, a supporter of the Buddha, came to visit him much later in the day than usual. The Buddha asked him why he was late and the king answered that he had just presided over a complicated court case, which took a long time. The Buddha said judging people with justice and impartiality is the way to reach heaven. He then told this story so the king knew it was no great feat for him to judge fairly because he was ruling in the lifetime of a perfect Buddha; it was much more impressive to have done the same thing in a past life without the benefit of a living perfect Buddha, like he himself had done.

The King of Kosala, his driver, and the Bodhisatta's driver were earlier births of Ananda, Moggallana, and Sariputta, three of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sigala Jataka (#152)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. He lived with his six younger brothers and one sister in a golden cave. One day a jackal saw the sister and fell in love at first sight. He waited patiently until her brothers went out to hunt and she was home alone, then went to tell her, “O Lioness, I am a four-footed creature, the same as you. Please be my wife, and we will love each other forever.” She was so disgusted that a vile, low-caste animal would speak to a regal species such as her, she decided to kill herself by holding her breath. Since it would be wrong to do this without telling her brothers the reason, she waited for them to return home. She did not acknowledge the jackal in any way. Understanding her true feelings about him, the jackal went home to his crystal cave and lay down in misery.

When the first of her brothers returned home with some meat for her, she told him she would not eat and why. The angry brother went to kill the jackal for his terrible behavior. The lion did not realize the jackal lived in a perfectly transparent crystal cave (he assumed the jackal was floating in the sky), so he leaped in attack and his body smashed against the wall. His heart burst into pieces and he fell dead at the foot of the mountain. One by one the Bodhisatta’s other five brothers returned and died in the same way.

When at last the Bodhisatta returned home and heard his sister’s story, he set out with the same purpose as his brothers, but he guessed correctly that the jackal was in a crystal cave. He approached the mountain and saw his six

dead brothers and knew they died because they were foolish and impulsive. Instead of attacking the jackal, the Bodhisatta roared three times so loudly his voice was heard in heaven, and this frightened the jackal so much that his heart burst and he died. The Bodhisatta laid his brothers in a grave and then comforted his sister.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The barber who did all the hairdressing, braiding, and shaving for the royal family took his son to work with him one day, and the boy fell in love at first sight with one of the palace women. As they left, the boy told his father he must have her, or he would die. His father and all his friends and other family explained to the foolish son that she was out of his class and he should stop thinking of her. But the son grew so depressed that he stopped eating and died.

When the funeral was over, the barber visited the Buddha, who asked why he had not been around for such a long time. The barber told him what had happened, and then the Buddha told him this story so he knew that his son had once before died from wanting what he could not have.

The jackal and the lioness were earlier births of the barber's son and his palace crush, and the six other lions were earlier births of some of the Buddha's elder disciples.

Sukara Jataka (#153)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. While drinking from a lake after having just eaten some big game, he saw a boar and thought he would make a good meal some other day when he was hungry again. Knowing that if the boar saw him, he might not return to the lake, the Bodhisatta tried to creep away silently. But the boar did see him and was such a fool he thought the Bodhisatta slunk away out of fear, so the boar challenged him to a fight. The Bodhisatta answered that he would come back to fight the boar in a week.

Excited about his forthcoming fight, the boar told all his friends and relatives. They managed to convince him that he was stupid and was surely going to die—and the Bodhisatta would probably kill all of them as well. They told him he could get out of the fight by going over to the camp of the wilderness ascetics who lived near the lake and rolling around in their feces for the next seven days; then on the day of the fight, moisten himself in the morning dew and stand downwind of the Bodhisatta's approach.

The plan worked. When the Bodhisatta arrived, he complimented the boar on his clever trick and said he would not touch such filth, so he spared his life. The boar boasted of his "victory," but the rest of the herd feared the Bodhisatta would return, and they all moved away to another place.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One evening at the Buddha's monastery, the elder Moggallana asked the elder Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples, various questions about dharma, and many people, both disciples and laity, sat enthralled listening to his clear answers. An elderly disciple who was going senile wanted to impress everyone by stumping Sariputta. But his query—"Give me a decision in discrimination or in undiscrimination, in refutation or in acceptation, in distinction or in counter-distinction."—was utter nonsense.

Embarrassed for the man, Sariputta felt this was a good time to end the night's assembly, and without addressing the elderly disciple, he got up and went to his room. Moggallana did the same. Many people in the audience were furious at this disciple for causing the discussion to end, and they approached him. He ran away from the mob and fell into a cesspool, getting completely covered in feces. When the people saw this, their anger changed to pity, and some of them woke the Buddha and told him what had happened.

The boar was an earlier birth of the failing disciple, and the Buddha told them all this story so they knew that this was not the first time the elderly disciple had challenged a superior and ended up covered in feces.

Uraga Jataka (#154)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. There was a large festival in the city and both men and deities came to celebrate and have fun. While watching the goings-on, a naga put his hand on the shoulder next to him, not noticing it was a garuda (these two types of beings are arch enemies) standing there. When he saw what he had done, the naga fled in fear, and the garuda gave chase.

Outside the city, the naga spotted the Bodhisatta bathing in the river, and he took the form of a jewel and attached himself to the Bodhisatta's clothes, which were lying on the bank. The garuda saw the naga hide there, but out of respect for the holy man, he did not attack. He did, however, tell the Bodhisatta what had happened and said he wanted to eat the naga. The Bodhisatta asked the garuda not to do it and invited them both to sit in his hut and listen to him preach about loving-kindness. They accepted, and from then on the pair lived in peace and harmony.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The naga and the garuda were earlier births of two high-ranking soldiers who hated each other and spoke rudely every time they met. Neither the king nor their friends and family could set them right. One day the Buddha divined that these two men were close to having a spiritual breakthrough, so the next morning he went out collecting alms at their houses. While sitting with them, the Buddha preached about loving-kindness and dharma so eloquently that they both

became disciples. The two soldiers forgave each other and were harmonious from then on.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how he had humbled the two soldiers, he told them this story so they knew that he had also reconciled the same two men in previous lives.

Gagga Jataka (#155)

The Bodhisatta was once a brahmin's son. One day while traveling, he and his father arrived at a city after the gates had been shut, and the only building they could spend the night in was haunted. The goblin king Vessavana, in thanks for twelve years of serving him, had given a goblin permission to eat people who entered this building if they failed to give a "Long life to you!" blessing after a sneeze.

After the Bodhisatta and his father settled in, the goblin raised a cloud of fine dust, causing the father to sneeze. The Bodhisatta said nothing, so the eager goblin crawled down from the rafters to eat him. But the Bodhisatta saw him coming and guessed the reason, so he told his father, "I pray that you live one hundred years and twenty more," successfully thwarting the goblin's attack. But the father did not return the blessing, so the goblin headed toward him. When the father saw this, he said, "I pray that you also live one hundred years and twenty more," saving his own life.

No longer in danger, the Bodhisatta asked the goblin to tell him his life story. He explained to the goblin that his miserable, cruel life resulted from his bad deeds in previous lives. But if he stopped killing people, he could break the cycle and avoid the same fate in the future. The goblin was humbled by this lesson and became a docile creature. The next day, after hearing how the goblin had been subdued, the king made the Bodhisatta his commander-in-chief and the goblin a tax collector.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while the Buddha was talking with some of his disciples, he sneezed. Everyone sitting before him cried out, “Long life to the Buddha!” in response, and their loud noise interrupted the conversation. The Buddha mocked their superstition and enacted a rule prohibiting them from speaking blessings after a sneeze. From that point on, anytime the disciples sneezed, laypeople still gave them a long-life blessing, but the disciples followed their new rule and did not respond. This annoyed the people. The disciples explained this to the Buddha, and he relaxed the rule for the sake of politeness, allowing his disciples to answer sneeze blessings with, “The same to you.” The disciples asked the Buddha when people began this habit, and the Buddha told them this story.

The father and king were earlier births of Maha Kassapa and Ananda, two of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Alinacitta Jataka (#156)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Before this lifetime began, an elephant living free in the forest got a large splinter in his foot. The wound got infected and caused him great pain, so he limped into a logging camp inhabited by a group of carpenters who cut and shaped the wood that they would later use for building houses. The injured elephant lay down and the men saw the swollen foot, pulled out the splinter, and cleaned the wound. Soon after, the elephant was healed. The elephant was so grateful to them for saving his life that he stayed at the camp to work for the carpenters: pulling trees, rolling logs, and fetching tools. In return, the carpenters treated the elephant well, sharing their food with him at mealtime.

When this elephant reached old age, he brought his son, a magnificent white elephant, to the camp to replace him so he himself could retire. The son got along with the carpenters and their families just as well as his father. Being a noble creature, this young elephant never defecated in the river. But, after a flood, some of his dried dung washed into the water and floated down to the capital city where it got stuck in a bush. The king's mahouts had brought five hundred elephants down to the river to bathe, but before they even got in the water they smelled the noble dung and ran off. The mahouts figured there must be something in the river causing this behavior, and after searching, they found the dung. They mixed it with water in a jar and sprinkled some on each of their elephants, who after getting a splash immediately went down and got in the river as usual.

The mahouts reported this to the king and advised him to go upriver and get this noble elephant. He took their advice, and the carpenters agreed to give the white elephant to the king, but he wouldn't budge until the carpenters were fairly compensated. The king gave them six hundred thousand coins, but the elephant insisted they deserved more, so the king added a set of clothes for each man, woman, and child there. Finally satisfied, he said goodbye to his friends and left.

The king led his new state elephant on a solemn procession around the city, then took him to his fully decked-out stable. The king treated the elephant like a friend and an equal, and soon, blessed by his arrival, the king became ruler over the whole of India.

It was at this glorious time that the Bodhisatta was conceived. Shortly before the queen gave birth, the king died. Not wanting the elephant to be upset, nobody told him. Soon after, a neighboring king took advantage of the disarray and besieged the city. A message was sent telling the invading king that if their own queen's baby was a girl, they would surrender, and if it was a boy, they would fight. The king agreed to their request to wait a week before attacking. Seven days later, the Bodhisatta was born and the battle began. The city's defenders fought hard, but without a leader they did not fare well. The royal advisors told the queen that defeat seemed inevitable and suggested they tell the elephant about the current situation.

The queen agreed, and she took the baby Bodhisatta along with her when she and the men of the royal court went to the elephant's stable. There she laid the Bodhisatta at his feet and told him about the king's death, his son's birth, and the kingdom's looming defeat, ending with, "Either kill the boy yourself, or win the kingdom back for him!" The elephant, moaning with grief, picked up the Bodhisatta with his trunk, raised him over his head, laid him in the queen's arms, and vowed victory.

The elephant was fitted with armor and led out the city gate where he trumpeted majestically, scaring the invading army into retreat and saving the kingdom. He chased after the rival king and carried him by his topknot back to the palace, dropping him in front of the Bodhisatta.

Some men moved in to kill this king, but the elephant stopped them, saying he was going to grant a pardon. But before he let the king walk away, the elephant warned him that though their prince was young, the kingdom was strong, and underestimating them again would be a grave mistake. The Bodhisatta was crowned king at age seven, and not a single foe could defeat him during his entire reign.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples spent a rainy season in the forest. He built a leaf hut and eagerly began to meditate. But after three months he had no success reaching insight, so he quit trying and returned to the monastery, content to progress no further than the moderate level of understanding

he had already achieved. The white elephant was an earlier birth of this quitter disciple, and when the Buddha learned that he had given up on the quest for salvation, he told him this story of his successful past life to motivate him to not quit in this one.

The queen and the white elephant's father were earlier births of the Buddha's birth mother and Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Guna Jataka (#157)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. One day while out hunting, he pursued a deer that was eating grass on the muddy shore of a lake. Rabbits, deer, and other animals could walk over the thick mud, but the large and heavy lion sank in so deep he was trapped. He remained stuck for seven days with no one who could help him passing by until a jackal out hunting saw him. The jackal ran off in fear, but the Bodhisatta called out to be saved and explained his situation. The jackal said he would not help because he would just get eaten once the Bodhisatta was free. But the Bodhisatta said he would not kill him, and promised to reward the jackal if he got him out. So the jackal started digging. He removed mud from around all four legs and then walked under the Bodhisatta's body and pushed up with his head. The strength of the two working together freed the Bodhisatta.

The Bodhisatta cleaned himself in the lake and then killed a buffalo to eat, sharing the flesh with the jackal. The lion invited the jackal to move into a cave next to his own, and the pair became friends, regularly going out hunting. Their wives and children also grew close and lived happily together. Then one day, completely out of the blue, the lioness was stricken with jealousy over the she-jackal, imagining that something was up between her and the Bodhisatta. When the men were away hunting, she and her children went over and threatened the jackals, telling them they should leave. The she-jackal assumed the message, though delivered by the wife, was coming from the Bodhisatta, and she was terrified that they would be killed. When her husband returned, she told him

what had happened and pleaded to return to their former home.

The jackal told the Bodhisatta he understood they had overstayed their welcome and were ready to leave, but it would have been much more polite to tell him directly rather than threatening his wife. But the Bodhisatta denied there was any issue between them, and he set his wife right by telling her how he befriended the jackal. He then ordered her to never disrespect the jackal family ever again, and peace was restored. The children remained friends after their parents died, and the friendship between the families continued unbroken through seven generations.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. When a king received one thousand splendid, expensive robes, he gave one to each of his five hundred wives, and they, in turn, gave them to Ananda, who was their dharma teacher. The next morning when they had breakfast, the king asked his wives why they were not wearing their beautiful new clothes. When they told him, the king figured Ananda was secretly making money by selling them, and he got angry, so he went to confront him.

He asked Ananda why he took five hundred robes when the Buddha's rules forbid his disciples from having more than three. Ananda explained that though he accepted the gift, he did not keep it; instead he gave robes to other disciples who needed new ones. Then, to explain to the king that no

offerings were wasted, he told what happened to old robes when disciples got new ones. First they were turned into cloaks, which were later sewn into shirts, which then became bed sheets, then mats, then towels, then finally the worn fabric was chopped up into bits and mixed into mortar for building houses. The king was pleased with what he learned and gave Ananda the other five hundred robes.

Ananda passed on this new batch to a young disciple as a thank you for all the support he gave him—things like sweeping his room, serving him food and drink, cleaning the bathroom—and let him distribute them to other young disciples. Some disciples asked the Buddha if it had been proper for Ananda to give such a large gift to someone inferior to him. The Buddha explained that Ananda's gift was acceptable because it was given out of gratitude: it was simply a matter of one good deed deserves another. Then the Buddha told them this story so they knew that in the past he himself had once rewarded someone of lower status for being helpful.

Suhanu Jataka (#158)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. When buying horses, the king used to follow the Bodhisatta's advice and let the dealers set their own prices. But the king was greedy at heart and decided to stop being generous like this. He replaced the Bodhisatta with another man and had a savage horse of his released among the horses for sale. This beast ran around attacking and biting the other horses, as the king knew it would; then he demanded the dealers reduce their prices since the horses were injured. The dealers were very angry and informed the Bodhisatta what had happened. He told them to bring a horse of similar nature with them the next time they came to the city to sell.

When the dealers returned, the king again released his vicious horse among theirs, but this time it went right to the dealers' savage horse and the pair stood licking each other, paying no attention to the other horses. The Bodhisatta explained to the upset king that they were friendly because they were so similar in personality: "Birds of a feather flock together." The Bodhisatta used this as a lesson that the king should control his greedy nature, and from then on he once again paid the horse dealers a fair price.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The savage horses were earlier births of two violent, hot-tempered disciples, one who lived in the city and the other in the country. When the country disciple came to the town one time, some of the Buddha's young disciples thought it would

be entertaining to watch the two quarrel, so they brought him to the quarters of the city disciple. But when they met, they embraced, and were friendly and affectionate to each other.

When the Buddha heard what had happened, he told the young disciples this story so they knew that these men had similar temperaments in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mora Jataka (#159)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden peacock. For safety's sake, he lived in the remote Dandaka Forest. Every morning at sunrise, and again at sunset, the Bodhisatta sat on a hilltop and recited two protection spells, one in worship of the sun and the other in honor of past Buddhas.

One night, one of the king's wives dreamed of a golden peacock preaching, and the next day she told the king she wanted to hear it in real life. The king consulted his chaplains, who confirmed such birds existed, and then he sent a hunter out to capture one. The hunter set snares around the feeding grounds, but the Bodhisatta was protected, and even when he stepped into one it wouldn't close. For seven years the hunter failed, and the queen died of grief over her wish going unfulfilled. This so upset the king that he wrote an inscription on a golden tablet telling people that a golden peacock lived in the Dandaka Forest and anyone who ate its flesh would be forever young and immortal.

The king's successor read the inscription and sent a hunter to the forest, but the quest for a golden peacock proved equally futile for him, and also for the following four kings. But the hunter sent by the next king was quite clever. When he saw that snares would not close on the Bodhisatta's legs, he came up with a new plan. He caught a peahen and trained it to dance when he clapped his hands and cry out when he snapped his fingers, then he took it to the forest. First thing in the morning, before the Bodhisatta chanted his spells, the hunter snapped his fingers. Desire rose in the Bodhisatta's

heart when he heard the peahen and he went off to find her; and when he did, he got caught in the hunter's net.

The hunter brought the golden peacock to the delighted king, who sat down to talk with the Bodhisatta before killing him. The Bodhisatta learned why he had been captured, and that he was about to die, but he told the king his special golden color was not an enchantment and eating him would not give immortality since he himself was not immortal. He explained that he had once been the king of this same realm, and after living in heaven he was reborn on earth as a peacock due to some sin. But he got a gorgeous golden hue because when he had worn the crown, he faithfully kept the five precepts and made his subjects do the same.

The king was astounded and wanted proof, so the Bodhisatta said his jeweled chariot lay buried in the royal lake. The king had the lake drained and found the carriage, just as the Bodhisatta had said he would. The king, now knowing the truth, sat to listen to a sermon from the Bodhisatta, and from then on his heart was filled with peace and he kept the precepts. The king even offered his kingdom to the Bodhisatta, but he refused and flew back to his forest home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began lusting for a woman he saw wearing beautiful clothes, and he could no longer focus on studying dharma. The Buddha told this story so the disciple knew it was very easy to be led astray by women, and it had even happened to himself in the past.

The king who met the Bodhisatta was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Vinilaka Jataka (#160)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Out in the forest lived a goose king who had two sons. One time they asked their father why he went to the town so often, and he explained that he had once mated with a crow and had another son living there. The goose sons did not want their father traveling to dangerous areas, so they went to pick up their half-crow half-brother and bring him to the forest.

They carried a stick between them in their beaks for their brother to ride on. As they flew, they saw the Bodhisatta's carriage on a road down below being pulled by four milk-white horses. The half-crow commented that he was just like the king, and his goose brothers were like the horses. This insult angered the geese, and upon landing they told their father about it. He too was angry about his son's air of superiority and told him to go back home. At their father's order, the goose brothers took the half-crow not to his tree, but to the city's dunghill.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The half-crow son was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. The goose king was an earlier birth of Ananda and the goose brothers were earlier births of Sariputta and Moggallana, three of the Buddha's top disciples. One time after Sariputta and Moggallana visited Devadatta, the Buddha asked what had happened at their meeting. They answered that Devadatta had tried to act equal to the Buddha by having them sit at his

side while he preached, but he had failed to impress and most of his disciples left to come back to the Buddha's monastery. The Buddha told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time Devadatta had suffered a rebuke after acting like him.

Indasamanagotta Jataka (#161)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers living and studying with him in the Himalayas. One of the ascetics adopted a baby elephant whose mother had died and kept it as a pet. The Bodhisatta told him that when young elephants grow up, they always become deadly, so he should let it go. But the man was stubborn in all things and told the Bodhisatta he loved the elephant dearly, and he kept it.

Years later, after the elephant had grown enormous, the ascetics went out into the forest for a few days to gather roots and fruits. While they were away, the south winds began to blow and the elephant fell into a frenzy. He decided to smash his master's hut and kill him. The elephant hid in the forest waiting for the ascetics to return, and when they came back he ran up to his master, lifted him with his trunk, and smashed him to death on the ground. Then, trumpeting madly, he ran off into the forest. When the other ascetics told the Bodhisatta what had happened, he used it as a lesson to remind them not to associate with bad people and to be obedient when given advice.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The ascetic with the pet elephant was an earlier birth of a disobedient and impatient disciple of the Buddha who tended to ignore the instruction of his teachers and fellow disciples. The Buddha told him this story of his past so he knew that his failure to follow advice had once led to his death.

Santhava Jataka (#162)

The Bodhisatta was once a devout worshipper of the fire god. When he came of age, his parents asked if he was going to take his birth fire into the wilderness to worship it devoutly or live as a married man in town. He chose the religious life and lived by himself in the forest in a hut made of branches and leaves.

One day the Bodhisatta received alms of rice and ghee and offered them to his sacred fire. He dropped them into the fire and the oil made a fierce flame shoot up and engulf his hut. He ran to safety and watched his home burn. Upset about having given himself to a wicked god, he doused the fire with water, renounced his faith, and set off deep into the mountains to become an ascetic. There he saw a deer licking the face of a lion, a tiger, and a panther and understood the importance of friendship. He fully embraced the true religious life and won the knowledges and attainments, and was reborn in heaven after death.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Several naked ascetics fed their sacred fire behind the Buddha's monastery. Some of the Buddha's disciples asked him whether any good resulted from this, and the Buddha told them this story to explain that there was absolutely no benefit whatsoever.
The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Susima Jataka (#163)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal chaplain's son. For seven generations his family had managed the king's elephant festival, and this made them very wealthy. When the Bodhisatta was sixteen years old, before he had studied elephant lore or the three Vedas, his father died. With the time for the festival coming soon, some brahmin priests, greedy for money, convinced the king that the Bodhisatta was not prepared to lead it, so they must take over the job. Soon after, the Bodhisatta's mother heard the festival was happening in just four days and she wept and wailed. The only qualified teacher lived in Taxila, two thousand leagues away, so she was convinced that her family would lose their occupation and become poor. But the Bodhisatta was determined, and the next morning he set out early, making the long journey to Taxila in a single day.

The Bodhisatta found the master teacher and explained his urgent predicament, saying that he must learn everything in just one day. The master agreed to start teaching him immediately, and after one day and one night, the Bodhisatta had learned everything by heart. The Bodhisatta advised the master about a few ways that he could teach better, then he rushed back home.

The next morning, one hundred elephants were dressed in gold trim and the excited brahmins stood in the palace courtyard wearing their gala dress. When the king arrived in all his splendor, the Bodhisatta approached him and asked if he was really giving his ancestral right away to the other

brahmins. When the king said he had no choice because he had been told the Bodhisatta did not have the required knowledge, the Bodhisatta proclaimed that nobody in all of India knew the three Vedas and elephant lore better than he; and he challenged anyone there to prove him wrong. The Bodhisatta spoke with such confidence that nobody challenged him, and so that morning he conducted the ceremony.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The citizens of a city collected items to donate for alms. Some people wanted to donate to heretical teachers, but the majority wanted to donate to the Buddha, and so they did. That evening the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how great he was because he got the offering instead of the heretics. The Buddha told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time followers of heretics had tried unsuccessfully to take what was rightfully his.

The king and the teacher were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples, and the Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother.

Gijjha Jataka (#164)

The Bodhisatta was once a vulture, and he cared for his mother and father. One day a powerful storm blew over their mountain home, and all the vultures flew to the city to escape freezing to death. A merchant saw the miserable vultures near the city wall shivering from the cold, so he built a fire and brought them some meat. When the storm was over, the vultures flew back home. They held a meeting and agreed to repay the merchant's kindness. Whenever one of them saw clothes or jewelry, they would swoop in, snatch it, and drop it in the merchant's courtyard. The merchant just laid all these gifts aside.

People informed the king that vultures were plundering the city, and he told his men to catch one of them so he could get to the bottom of the problem. Traps were set around the city, and the Bodhisatta was caught. The merchant saw people taking a vulture to the palace and went with them to make sure it would not be harmed. The king interrogated the Bodhisatta, who said they were doing it because the merchant saved their lives and one good turn deserves another. The merchant confirmed he had gathered all these things and said he would return them. Then the Bodhisatta was set free.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The parents of one of the Buddha's disciples had been reluctant to let their son adopt a religious life, but he begged them and they agreed. After five years, he fully mastered

dharma, so he went out to live alone and meditate in the forest to reach spiritual insight. But after twelve years of striving, he still had not achieved it. One day another disciple visited him at his hut and told him that his parents had fallen into ruin. With no children around to protect them, their servants and workers had stolen everything, and they were now homeless beggars, clothed in rags. The son began to cry, and realizing he had labored in vain for the past twelve years, he decided to leave the sangha and return home to care for his parents.

The depressed disciple went to listen to the Buddha preach one last time before returning home. The Buddha divined this disciple's situation and made his morning talk about the virtues of parents. Listening to the sermon, the son realized that, though it would be difficult, he could remain a disciple and still support his parents, and he resolved to do so. He took up abode near their hut, and from then on he made two daily alms rounds: one for them and a second for himself. He usually got little food for himself, and some days he got none, so he grew pale and thin.

When some other disciples learned what he was doing, they told him that sharing alms with people who are not disciples was an offense, and they reported him to the Buddha. The accused disciple was summoned back to the monastery, where he admitted sharing the alms he collected with his parents. But, to the surprise of the other disciples, the Buddha praised the caring son instead of rebuking him. He then told this story to explain that caring for others was

always a good thing, and that in the past he himself had supported someone who wasn't even his family.

The king and the merchant were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Nakula Jataka (#165)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. Near his hut, a mongoose lived in an anthill and a snake in a hollow tree. The two animals were always quarreling, so the Bodhisatta preached to them about the value of harmony and the pettiness of arguing, and they began to get along. One day, when the snake had gone out, the Bodhisatta saw the mongoose sleeping in the entrance of his burrow with his mouth open and asked why he was still afraid of the snake. The mongoose answered that he no longer despised the snake, but he still mistrusted him. The Bodhisatta assured him he had nothing to fear anymore, so the mongoose stopped being suspicious.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The snake and the mongoose were earlier births of two high-ranking soldiers who hated each other and spoke rudely every time they met. Neither the king nor their friends and family could set them right. One day the Buddha divined that these two men were close to having a spiritual breakthrough, so the next morning he went out collecting alms at their houses. While sitting with them, the Buddha preached about loving-kindness and dharma so eloquently that they both became disciples. The two soldiers forgave each other and were harmonious from then on.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how he had humbled the two soldiers, he told

them this story so they knew that he had also reconciled the same two men in previous lives.

Upasalha Jataka (#166)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived deep in the Himalayas. A brahmin who was getting old told his wise son that when he died his body should be burnt in a place where no untouchables had ever been cremated. The son knew such an uncontaminated spot would be very hard to find and told his father to choose it himself. So the two of them walked up into the mountains and the father pointed out a spot between three hills, near where the Bodhisatta lived.

As they descended back to home, they met the Bodhisatta walking up the mountain and stopped to talk. The father and son explained what they were doing, and the Bodhisatta told them to follow him back up and he would tell them whether the chosen spot was truly pure or not. When they pointed out the place, the Bodhisatta told them a great many people had been burnt in that very same spot, including the brahmin in fourteen thousand of his previous lives. He then explained the path of kindness, honesty, justice, moderation, and self-control to them.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The brahmin and the son from the Bodhisatta's time were earlier births of a brahmin and his son (who both followed beliefs contrary to the Buddha's teachings) in the Buddha's time. As the brahmin grew old, he told his wise son that when he died his body should not be cremated in a cemetery where any untouchables could be burnt. But the son did not know of any uncontaminated places and told his father to

choose it himself. So the two of them walked up into the mountains and the father pointed out a spot between three hills.

The evening before this, the Buddha had divined that these two men were ripe for a spiritual breakthrough, so the next morning he waited for them at the bottom of the mountain. When the father and son came down, the Buddha greeted them and asked what they had been doing. They explained, and the Buddha asked to see their chosen location. They went back up the mountain, and when the son pointed out the place, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time the father had chosen this particular cremation spot. The Buddha then explained dharma to them, and they accepted it.

Samiddhi Jataka (#167)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived deep in the Himalayas. One morning, after having wrestled in the spirit all night long, he bathed himself in a lake. While he was drying off, wearing just his undergarment, a nymph saw him and fell in love at first sight. She tried to tempt him by saying he should enjoy a life of pleasure first, then live out his later years religiously. But the Bodhisatta replied that nobody knows when they will die, and he would not take the risk. When she heard the Bodhisatta's answer, the nymph left.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One morning, after having wrestled in the spirit all night long, one of the Buddha's disciples took a bath. While he was drying off, wearing just his undergarment, a nymph saw him and fell in love at first sight. She tried to tempt him by saying he should enjoy a life of pleasure first and live out his later years religiously. But the disciple replied that nobody knows when they will die, and he would not take the risk. When she heard the disciple's answer, the nymph left.

The disciple told the Buddha about his encounter, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past he himself had once been similarly tempted by an earlier birth of the same nymph.

Sakunagghi Jataka (#168)

The Bodhisatta was once a quail. He, as his ancestors had done, got food from farm fields, hopping over the clods left behind after plowing. One day he decided to try a new feeding ground and flew off to the edge of a forest. While he picked up food there, a falcon flew in and grabbed him. As he was being carried away, the Bodhisatta cried out, “How stupid am I. Seized on someone else’s patch. If only I had kept to my own feeding ground, then the falcon would have been no match for me.” The arrogant falcon told the Bodhisatta he could catch him anywhere and released his grip. The quail flew back to his field and stood atop an immense clod, calling out, “Come on, falcon!” The falcon swooped down as fast as he could, and at the last moment the quail rolled over, causing the falcon to smash into the dirt and die.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day at assembly, the Buddha told his disciples to stick to their own districts when collecting alms so they did not succumb to temptation. He told them this story as an example of the benefits of being in your own place and the dangers of leaving it.

The falcon was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis.

Araka Jataka (#169)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers studying with him in the Himalayas. He taught them the importance of being kind and generous, and explained that doing so would allow them to be reborn in heaven. The Bodhisatta reached enlightenment and was born into the heaven of Brahma where he lived for seven eons before reaching nirvana. [1]

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha gave a sermon to his disciples about charity, explaining that practicing it fully can result in producing the eleven blessings: sleeping in comfort; waking in comfort; not having bad dreams; being valued by humans; being valued by non-humans; [2] being guarded by the gods; not being harmed by fire, poison, or weapons; being able to quickly enter a state of concentration; having a serene facial expression; dying without distress; and entering heaven after death without needing deep insight. And when practicing charity, he said, show kindness and sympathy to all creatures without exception. Doing this leads to rebirth in heaven. To further emphasize his lesson, the Buddha told them this story.

The Bodhisatta's fellow ascetics were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Kakantaka Jataka (#170)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Kakantaka Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day, while King Vedeha and the Bodhisatta were walking in the royal park, a chameleon came and lay down in front of the king. The Bodhisatta told the king it was paying respect. Pleased by this, the king ordered one of his men to deliver meat to the chameleon every day, and he did. One holy day (when no killing is allowed), the man could not buy any meat, so he drilled a hole in a half-anna coin and hung it around the chameleon's neck. This made the creature feel so proud and rich that he did not come and bow the next time he saw the king. The king asked the Bodhisatta what was in the chameleon's mind, and he explained it. The king sent for the man who delivered the meat and he confirmed that the Bodhisatta was right. Impressed, he gave the Bodhisatta the tax revenue earned at the four city gates. And, angry at the chameleon, the king wanted to stop sending meat, but the Bodhisatta told him it was unfitting of a king to break a promise.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them

talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another.

Kalyana-Dhamma Jataka (#171)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy merchant. While he was out paying his respects to the king, his mother-in-law dropped by the house. She asked her daughter how their marriage was going and if her husband treated her well. The daughter replied that he was more decent and virtuous than most ascetics, but the mother-in-law was hard of hearing and only caught the word ascetic. She yelled out, “Oh dear, why has your husband become an ascetic!” and made a loud fuss that all the neighbors heard. They did not hear the daughter’s calm correction, and the gossip spread quickly.

As the Bodhisatta walked back home, a man greeted him and told him about the rumor going around and that his family was in tears over the news. Believing that one must act on lucky words, the Bodhisatta immediately returned to the palace and asked the king’s permission to become an ascetic. Then he left the city and lived out his days in religious bliss in the Himalayas.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While a nobleman who devoutly followed dharma was visiting the Buddha’s monastery to pay respect and listen to a sermon, his mother-in-law dropped by his house. She asked her daughter how her marriage was going and if her husband treated her well. The daughter replied that he was more decent and virtuous than most ascetics, but the mother-in-law was hard of hearing and only caught the word ascetic. She yelled out, “Oh dear, why has your husband become an

ascetic!” and made a loud fuss that all the neighbors heard. They did not hear the daughter’s calm correction, and the gossip spread quickly.

As the nobleman walked back home, a man greeted him and told him about the rumor going around and that his family was in tears over the news. Believing that one must act on lucky words, the nobleman returned to the monastery and was ordained immediately.

Later, when the Buddha heard other disciples discussing this event, he told them this story so they knew that he himself had once done the same thing in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Daddara Jataka (#172)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. One day the lions of his pride were playing and having fun, roaring loudly as lions do. A jackal that lived nearby wanted to join in, and it let out a howl. The lions were all embarrassed and stopped playing. The Bodhisatta's cub asked his father why the other lions fell silent, and he answered that jackals are vile creatures and all lions loathe them.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of a dimwitted disciple of the Buddha who was completely unaware how stupid he was. He had made it known to other disciples that someday he wanted to recite scripture at assembly, and he was invited to do it. That evening he took his seat in the jeweled pavilion in front of the others, and just as he was about to begin speaking, he grew nervous and ashamed. He got the first verse out, but could not remember the second, so he left and went to be alone in his quarters.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the incident, he told them this story so they knew that this empty disciple had also betrayed himself by speaking in the past.

The Bodhisatta's cub was an earlier birth of the Buddha's son.

Makkata Jataka (#173)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He had lived in the Himalayas with his young son ever since his wife died. One day during heavy rain, a wet and cold monkey saw them in their leaf hut, staying comfortable next to a fire. He knew that if he asked to come in and warm himself, he would be shooed away, so he took the clothes from a dead ascetic and sat by their hut, hoping to trick them into inviting him in.

When the son saw him, not knowing he was a monkey, he told his father there was an old ascetic there and they should let him sit by the fire. The Bodhisatta took a look and explained to his son that humans do not have faces like that; this was a monkey. And monkeys were not allowed in because they defile their homes. The Bodhisatta threw a log at the monkey, and he fled into the forest.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who claimed to dedicate himself to seeking salvation, but was known by other disciples to be dishonest. The Buddha told them this story so they knew that this disciple had also been deceitful in the past.

The Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of the Buddha's son.

Dubhiya-Makkata Jataka (#174)

The Bodhisatta was once a brahmin. It was the custom in one town for locals drawing water from a well to make merit by pouring some water into a trough for animals. One day, when the Bodhisatta stopped at the well to drink, he saw a monkey sitting and watching him, then he noticed the water trough was empty. He filled it and sat down under a tree to watch the monkey.

After it had a drink, the monkey grimaced to try to frighten the Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta called the ungrateful monkey wicked and said he was not bothered by just making a face. The monkey replied, “Do you think that’s all I can do? Next, I am going to take a dump on your head.” Hearing this, the Bodhisatta got up to leave. But the monkey was quick, and he jumped into a branch and did as he said he would before running off into the forest shrieking loudly. The Bodhisatta washed off the dung and went his way.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day some of the Buddha’s disciples were discussing Devadatta’s ingratitude and treachery, and the Buddha told this story so they knew that Devadatta had been the same way in the past.

Adiccupatthana Jataka (#175)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers studying with him in the Himalayas. They spent one rainy season living in leaf huts down in a village. While they went out to collect alms, a mischievous monkey would come into their camp, knocking things around and smashing water jugs. When it came time for the ascetics to return to the wilderness, the villagers announced that the next morning they would provide plenty of alms for their long journey.

The monkey heard about the large almsgiving and tried to trick the villagers into giving him some food too. In the morning, he stood near the ascetics and acted like a holy man worshipping the sun. The villagers were impressed and praised the monkey's virtue, believing he had learned by watching the ascetics. But the Bodhisatta told the people they did not know the monkey's real character and explained why he deserved no praise. Hearing what he had done, the people threw sticks and clods of dirt at the monkey.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who claimed to dedicate himself to seeking salvation, but was known by other disciples to be dishonest. The Buddha told them this story so they knew that this dishonest disciple had also been this way in the past.

The Bodhisatta's fellow ascetics were earlier births of the Buddha's disciples.

Kalaya-Mutthi Jataka (#176)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One time a rebellion broke out in a border region, and the troops stationed there requested assistance from the king to put it down. Though it was the rainy season, he mustered soldiers to go fight. While in camp before the army departed, the horses were eating steamed peas, and a monkey jumped down from a tree and filled his mouth and hands from the horse's trough before climbing back up. As he ate, a pea dropped from his hands, and he tossed away all the others to go get it. But he couldn't find it and so returned to the tree empty-handed. He sat there and sulked.

The king had watched the monkey do this and asked the Bodhisatta what he thought about it. "This is what greedy fools do," he replied. "They spend a pound to win a penny. And we are about to do the same." The king accepted the Bodhisatta's wisdom and called off the campaign. But news about the king's battle plans had already reached the border region, and when the outlaws heard more troops were coming, they stopped fighting and fled.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One rainy season there was a rebellion in a border region. The king's troops stationed there had fought a few battles, but were not victorious, so they requested assistance. Despite the difficulty of travel on the wet roads, the king mustered troops to go fight. But then he began to doubt himself, so he consulted the Buddha. When the king told the

Buddha where he was going and why, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that he should cancel the journey. The outlaws, however, had already fled because they heard that reinforcements were on the way.

The king of the past was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Tinduka Jataka (#177)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. He lived in the Himalayas and was the leader of a troop of eighty thousand. The residents of a nearby village sometimes traveled away, leaving the village empty. There was a massive Malabar ebony tree in this village, and if the people were gone during the fruiting season, the monkeys went there to eat.
One day a scout monkey brought word that the tree's branches were bending from the weight of the fruit, but the people were there. The Bodhisatta said they could not go because humans are dangerous, but the other monkeys wanted the fruit very badly and suggested eating at midnight when everybody was sleeping. The Bodhisatta agreed to this plan, so that night the whole troop crept silently into the village and feasted.

During the night a man woke up and stepped outside his house, and when he saw the monkeys he shouted an alarm. The other villagers, all armed with bows and arrows, swords, sticks, rocks, and other weapons, rushed out and surrounded the tree. The monkeys were terrified, but the Bodhisatta promised them everything would be okay and told them to keep eating. Had the Bodhisatta not spoken these reassuring words, the monkeys would have died of heart attacks right then and there.

The Bodhisatta's nephew had not woken up when the other monkeys went to the tree, and he arrived in the village while they were in their situation. Determined to save them, he found an old woman sleeping outdoors next to a fire. He

grabbed a burning log and set some houses ablaze. When the people rushed to put out the fires, the monkeys escaped, each taking a fruit to give to the nephew.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time when the Buddha heard some of his disciples praising his perfect wisdom, he told them this story so they knew that he was also very wise in the past.

The nephew was an earlier birth of Mahanama, the Buddha's cousin and one of his leading lay followers. The other monkeys were earlier births of some other followers of the Buddha.

Kacchapa Jataka (#178)

The Bodhisatta was once a potter. The lake where the Bodhisatta got his clay was connected to a river during the rainy season, but when the water receded in the hot season, the lake and river split off from each other. Fish and turtles have mystical knowledge of the weather, and knowing a drought was coming they swam into the river; except for one stubborn turtle who did not want to leave the place where he was born. When the lake dried up, he dug a hole and buried himself in the mud to wait for the rains to return.

One day, when the Bodhisatta came to get clay, he dug his spade into the soil and cracked the turtle's shell. The turtle, dying in agony, told the Bodhisatta that he regretted staying behind when all the had others left. The Bodhisatta took the dead turtle back to the village and told the residents how and why he met his demise, explaining the peril of cravings and desires. He preached with the skill of a Buddha, and not only did his neighbors accept the advice, but people retold his lesson across the whole of India for seven thousand years.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A disease broke out in a family's home and the parents told their son to make a hole in the wall of their home (so he would not be seen coming out the door by the spirits causing the disease) and escape to safety. When the disease had run its course, the son returned to the now-empty home and dug up the family treasure to start a new life. One day he took offerings to the Buddha, and when he told him how he had

escaped death, the Buddha told this story so the son knew he had done a wise thing.

The turtle was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Satadhamma Jataka (#179)

The Bodhisatta was once an untouchable. One time while out on a journey, he met a brahmin and they traveled together. When breakfast time came, the Bodhisatta stopped to eat and noticed the brahmin had not brought any food. The Bodhisatta offered him some, but the brahmin refused to eat the food of a low-caste person. When the Bodhisatta was done with his rice they continued walking, and the brahmin ate nothing all day.

When they stopped for dinner, the Bodhisatta did not offer the brahmin anything to eat, but he was so hungry he asked for some rice, and the Bodhisatta gladly shared. The brahmin tossed away the outer layer, which had been defiled by contact, and ate the rest. But as soon as he finished eating, he was overcome with remorse for having shamed his family this way and he vomited up the food, as well as some blood. Despondent, he ran off into the forest where he died of grief.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

There was a time when many of the Buddha's disciples got alms in the twenty-one prohibited ways, such as doing work in exchange for food or sharing alms so each disciple did not need to go out seeking food every day. When the Buddha heard about this, he called the disciples together and told them to stop breaking these rules. Those who continued, he said, would be reborn in hell and return to earth as goblins or ghosts. Food received this way is like a piece of red-hot iron, deadly poison, or the leftovers of untouchables and would

make misery for anyone who ate it, just like that which befell the brahmin who broke his own rule. Then he told them this story to explain.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Duddada Jataka (#180)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. One rainy season he and his fellow ascetics went down to the city to get salt and seasoning, and they stayed in the royal park. On their first morning there, they collected alms in a village outside the city walls. The following day they collected alms inside the city, and the residents there donated together as a group. One man told the Bodhisatta that some people gave a lot and some gave a little. The Bodhisatta replied that no gift was too small and anyone who gave was a good person.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Two friends arranged a collection of alms for the Buddha and his disciples. When presenting the offerings to them, the eldest friend explained that some people gave a lot and some gave a little. The Buddha replied that everyone who gave something did a good deed. Then he told this story so they knew that in the past people also gave alms as they were able.

The Bodhisatta's fellow ascetics were earlier births of the disciples with the Buddha during this alms ceremony.

Asadisa Jataka (#181)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. He studied the three Vedas and the eighteen accomplishments in Taxila, and mastered them all; especially archery. When his father, the king, was on his deathbed, he announced that he had chosen the Bodhisatta to replace him. But the Bodhisatta had no interest in power or glory and he refused the throne, so his younger brother became king instead. Later, some slaves convinced the king that the Bodhisatta had changed his mind and now wanted to rule, so the king sent some of his men to arrest him. Word of this reached the Bodhisatta, so he cursed his brother and fled to safety in another kingdom.

Based solely on reputation, this other king hired the Bodhisatta as an archer for one hundred thousand coins per year. One day, while relaxing in his royal park, the king spotted a cluster of mangoes high up in a tree and he told some of his archers to shoot it down. Annoyed at the high salary given to the Bodhisatta, they suggested the king call him to do it so they could see if he was actually any good. The king took their advice and summoned the Bodhisatta to the park.

The Bodhisatta put on a fancy outfit of red cloth and golden armor, then asked the king if he wanted the arrow to bring down the fruit with an upward shot or by the arrow dropping down from above. The intrigued king said he had never seen a falling arrow bring down a target, so he requested this. The Bodhisatta told the king his arrow would soar up to the Heaven of the Four Great Kings, so he must be patient. He let

the arrow fly and then shot a second, faster arrow that struck a feather of the first, turning it back down toward the earth. It fell so fast it made the sound of thunder, scaring all the bystanders, and cut right through the mango stalk. The Bodhisatta caught the arrow in one hand and the mangoes in the other. The king and all the onlookers were so astonished they showered the Bodhisatta with riches worth tens of millions.

Meanwhile, seven other kings had learned that the Bodhisatta had left his home, so they set out to conquer the kingdom. The Bodhisatta's brother was terrified, knowing that without the help of his older brother, his kingdom would fall and he would die. He sent men to beg for the Bodhisatta's help, and he agreed. When he returned, the Bodhisatta assured his brother that everything would be fine. Then he wrote a message—"I have returned home and will kill all of you with a single arrow. Those who wish to live should escape now."—on an arrow and shot it onto a golden dish at the dinner table where all seven kings were eating. When they read the message, they were half-dead with fright and all fled back to their realms.

The kingdom saved, the Bodhisatta renounced the world to live as an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while talking to his disciples about the Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment, the Buddha told them this story so they knew

that he had also forsaken the throne for a religious quest in the past.

The Bodhisatta's younger brother was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Samgamavacara Jataka (#182)

The Bodhisatta was once a mahout. He worked for a king who was determined to conquer another. He led his troops to besiege the other king's city and demanded he surrender or fight. The other king chose to fight and sent his soldiers up atop the walls and into the towers. The invading king mounted his state elephant and charged into battle, but when the elephant saw rocks being shot from catapults and boiling mud being poured down from the walls, he got scared and would not go forward. The Bodhisatta told the elephant it was shameful for him to be afraid and that he should go break through the city gate. The elephant immediately did as he was told and forced his way into the city, allowing the Bodhisatta's king to win the battle and conquer his rival.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The elephant was an earlier birth of the Buddha's younger half-brother, Nanda, who became a disciple of the Buddha. Soon after joining the sangha, his love for his wife made him feel sad and regret his decision. The Buddha made a plan to show him that becoming a disciple was the right choice. He took Nanda by the hand and they flew through the air to see the beauty of the Himalayas, and then to see the heavenly home of Indra, king of the gods. The Buddha told Nanda to have a good look at the five-hundred dove-footed nymphs, famed for their beauty. The Buddha asked Nanda if they were more beautiful than his wife, and he answered that they were far more beautiful. The Buddha then promised Nanda that if

he lived as an ascetic he would win one of these nymphs for himself after death. So Nanda remained a disciple.

Several of the chief disciples heard about this, and they shamed Nanda for being a disciple for the wrong reasons. Nanda then had a change of heart and started to truly develop his spiritual insight. Eventually he became an arahant and released the Buddha from his promise.

When the Buddha overheard some of his disciples discussing how Nanda had been set on the right course by the advice of wise elders, he told them this story so they knew that Nanda had also been quick to follow good advice in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Valodaka Jataka (#183)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One time after the king returned from putting down a rebellion in a border region, he had his men feed the five hundred war horses some grape wine because they were exhausted. They all drank it and then went to their stalls and stood quietly. The horses made a lot of droppings and the stable boys asked the king what they should do with it all. He told them to mix the dung with water, strain it, and give it to the donkeys who had pulled the wagons with the horses' food. This wretched stuff made the donkeys drunk, and they ran around the palace grounds braying loudly. The king asked the Bodhisatta why thoroughbreds that drank strong alcohol were calm and quiet, while the weak drink made the donkeys go wild. The Bodhisatta answered that the low-born lack self-control.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A group of five hundred people became dedicated lay followers of the Buddha, and they all lived together. Each of them had a servant who ate their masters' leftover food. While the lay followers were always quiet and peaceful, the servants would run around wrestling and shouting.

The horses and donkeys were earlier births of these disciples and servants respectively, and the Buddha told this story so people knew that both groups had been the same way in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Giridanta Jataka (#184)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king's warhorse started to limp, so the king sent doctors to examine it and they found there was nothing physically wrong with its leg. Then the king sent the Bodhisatta to investigate. He saw that the horse was imitating its trainer, who was disabled and walked with a limp. "It's a case of bad company," he told the king. "Get a good trainer, and the horse will be as good as ever." The king replaced the horse's trainer, and the problem went away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The horse was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been persuaded by a friend to skip his morning alms rounds and eat fancy meals at the monastery of Devadatta (the trainer was an earlier birth of him), a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. The Buddha told this story to the traitorous disciple and those who had reported his misbehavior so they knew that this disciple also kept bad company in the past.

Anabhirati Jataka (#185)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. One of his students mastered the three Vedas and could repeat them beautifully word for word by memory. Eventually he married and settled down. Later, the Bodhisatta visited his former student and asked if he still had mastery of all the verses. The student said that after he started a family, his mind became clouded and he could no longer repeat them. The Bodhisatta told him a clouded mind is like muddy water; things cannot be seen clearly through them.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The student was an earlier birth of a brahmin who had mastered the three Vedas and used to teach them to others. When he got married and settled down into family life and was preoccupied with wealth, livestock, and children, he could no longer reliably repeat the verses by memory.

One time he took some flowers and perfumes to give to the Buddha and sat down to talk with him. After he told the Buddha that he could no longer remember the verses word for word, the Buddha said this is what happens when your mind is obscured by passions and desires. He told the brahmin this story so he knew that the same thing had happened to him in the past.

Dadhi-Vahana Jataka (#186)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. Four brothers lived together as ascetics in the Himalayas. When the eldest died, he was reborn as Indra, king of the gods, and he used to visit and assist his brothers who were still down on earth. One day Indra asked each of them what they wanted most. One wanted fire, so Indra gave him an axe that would go cut firewood and return to build a fire. The next brother did not like elephants, and there were many around their camp, so Indra gave him a drum that when struck on one side would cause enemies to run away, and when struck on the other would cause enemies to become his friends and serve as an army. The third brother wanted curds, so Indra gave him a bowl that released a river-sized flow of curds when turned over.

Elsewhere, a wild boar living in a ruined village found a magic jewel, and as soon as he picked it up in his mouth, he began to fly. Soaring through the air, he saw an island in the ocean and went to live there. Later, a troublemaker who had been kicked out of his home by his parents was shipwrecked on this island. This wicked man saw the boar sleeping under a mango tree, stole the jewel, and when he found himself rising into the air he landed in the tree. He wanted to eat the boar before flying away from the island, so he dropped a twig down on the boar's head. When the boar awoke and noticed his jewel was missing, he got agitated. Then seeing the man in the tree, he ran headfirst into the trunk and died. After cooking and consuming the boar, the wicked man flew off through the sky.

From up above, the troublemaker saw the three ascetics' camp and stopped in for a visit, spending a few days staying with the eldest. When he heard about the axe, the man suggested exchanging it for his flying jewel, and the ascetic agreed. Once he got the axe, the man commanded it to smash the ascetic's skull and bring the jewel back to him. He then stayed with the second and third ascetics and got the drum and bowl in the same way.

Now possessing immense power, the man flew to the city and told the king to fight or surrender. The king chose to fight, so the man beat his drum and was surrounded by a large army, turned over his bowl and drowned the king's troops in a river of curds, and ordered the axe to fetch the king's head. With nobody able to stop him, the man crowned himself king. After this, he settled down and ruled righteously.

One day the new king was fishing in the river with a net and snared a huge, wonderful golden mango that had floated down from a holy Himalayan lake. The king had his gardener plant its seed in the royal park, and he gave the tree his full attention: it was irrigated with milk, perfumed with scented oils, decorated with wreaths and garlands, surrounded by a cloth, and lit by a lamp kept burning next to it at all times. Three years later, it bore fruit as sweet and delicious as the original.

The king sent these mangoes as gifts to other kings, but first he pricked the spot where the seeds would sprout so they could not be planted. One king was very upset by this, so he

sent his own gardener to sabotage the special mango tree. This man got hired as the gardener's assistant. Soon after, because he was able to force fruits and flowers to grow out of season, the king fired his gardener and put this infiltrator in charge. At this point, he planted vines and neem trees around the mango tree, and as their roots intertwined, they turned the mangoes bitter. His work done, the rogue gardener took off and returned home.

When the king tasted one of the tainted mangoes, he spit it out and asked the Bodhisatta what had happened. The Bodhisatta saw the cause and had all the vines and neem trees cut down and their roots pulled up. Then he replaced the soil around the tree, and eventually the mangoes became sweet again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha was discussing the harm that comes with keeping bad company, and he told this story as an example.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Catumatta Jataka (#187)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. Two young geese who lived in the mountains always perched in his tree to rest when they came to his forest looking for food. They became friends with the Bodhisatta and used to discuss religion before returning home. One day as they talked with the Bodhisatta, a jackal stopped below the tree and asked the geese to come down to the ground so he could join their conversation. The geese were disgusted and immediately flew back home. The Bodhisatta told the jackal that the geese were beautiful creatures worthy of talking to, while the jackal was not, so he should leave and go back to his den.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of an elderly disciple who lacked manners, and the geese were earlier births of Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples. One time while Sariputta and Moggallana sat discussing dharma with each other, the elderly disciple walked up without being invited and tried to join their conversation. But the elders were disgusted by his intrusion, so they got up and left.

After this, the people who had been listening to Sariputta and Moggallana speak went to see the Buddha, and he asked why they had come so early. When they explained the reason, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that the same thing had happened between the three disciples in the past.

Sihakotthuka Jataka (#188)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. He mated with a jackal and the cub looked like his father in every way, but he sounded like his mother. One day the lions of his pride were playing and having fun, roaring loudly as lions do. When the Bodhisatta's half-jackal cub tried to roar, out came a jackal's howl and all the other lions fell silent. One of the Bodhisatta's other cubs asked his father who the strange-sounding lion was. The Bodhisatta told him this was his half-brother, the son of a jackal. Then he told his half-jackal son not to speak again, or the rest of the pride would know what he really was. The cub took the advice and never tried to roar again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The half-jackal cub was an earlier birth of a dimwitted disciple of the Buddha who was completely unaware how stupid he was. He had made it known to other disciples that someday he wanted to recite scripture at assembly, and he was invited to do it. That evening he took his seat in the jeweled pavilion in front of the others, and just as he was about to begin speaking, he grew nervous and ashamed. He got the first verse out, but could not remember the second, so he left and went to be alone in his quarters.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the incident, he told them this story so they knew that this empty disciple had also betrayed himself by speaking in the past.

The Bodhisatta's other cub was an earlier birth of the Buddha's son.

Sihacamma Jataka (#189)

The Bodhisatta was once a farmer. A traveling salesman used a donkey to carry his wares; and when it was not needed, he draped a lion skin over it and set it loose in barley and rice fields. People were usually too afraid to shoe the “lion” away, so they just let it eat their crops. When the salesman came to the Bodhisatta’s village, a watchman gave the alarm about a lion, and all the villagers came out shouting, blowing conchs, and beating drums. The donkey got scared and let out a hee-haw. The Bodhisatta then realized it was a donkey in disguise, and when he announced this, the villagers ran up and clubbed it to death. When the salesman returned, he remarked that his donkey was too stupid to keep its mouth shut.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The donkey was an earlier birth of a dimwitted disciple of the Buddha who was completely unaware how stupid he was. He had made it known to other disciples that someday he wanted to recite scripture at assembly, and he was invited to do it. That evening he took his seat in the jeweled pavilion in front of the others, and just as he was about to begin speaking, he grew nervous and ashamed. He got the first verse out, but could not remember the second, so he left and went to be alone in his quarters.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the incident, he told them this story so they knew

that this empty disciple had also betrayed himself by speaking in the past.

Silanisamsa Jataka (#190)

The Bodhisatta was once a spirit of the sea. A devoutly religious man was traveling by ship with his companion, a barber. The religious man had promised the barber's wife he would look after him on the journey. After sailing the ocean for a week, the ship wrecked and the pair, hanging on a plank, floated to a deserted island. The barber killed and cooked some birds and offered them to his friend, but he did not eat them. Instead, he focused all his attention on the blessings of the three jewels (Buddha, dharma, and sangha), which was the only thing that could save them.

A naga king who had been born on the island saw the religious man was in trouble and transformed his body into a magnificent ship with planks of gold, ropes of silver, and masts of sapphire. The Bodhisatta was the pilot, and he invited the religious man on board, but said the barber could not come because he was a heathen. But the religious man was intent on looking after his companion and he bestowed all the merit he had earned from his generosity, virtue, and mental powers to the gracious barber. The Bodhisatta then accepted the barber on board, and he took them on the rest of their journey. On arrival, the Bodhisatta gave them each a bundle of valuables and told them to remember the lesson of their shipwreck: always keep company with wise and good people.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

On his way to visit the Buddha, one of his devout lay followers walked up to the riverbank, where he planned to board a ferry to the other shore. But all the ferry pilots were away at that moment, and the man's mind was so absorbed with delightful thoughts of the Buddha that, since he did not see a boat, he just kept walking right into the river. His feet did not sink below the water, and he was halfway across when he finally noticed what he had done. Distracted from his thoughts, he began to sink; but he focused his mind again on the Buddha and got across.

Arriving at the monastery, he sat down to talk with the Buddha, who asked if he'd had any mishaps on the way. The man explained how he had walked over the river and almost fallen in. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past other people had been kept safe by thinking of the Buddha's virtues.

The naga king was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Ruhaka Jataka (#191)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He gave his chaplain a horse with exquisite tack. When he rode it through the city for the first time, the people he passed all praised the horse's beauty. After returning home, the chaplain told his wife about it, and she, being a wicked woman, said he misunderstood the situation: They were actually admiring the horse's beautiful tack. If he wore the saddle and harness himself and pranced down the street, the people and the king would all heap praise on him.

Being a fool and not realizing his wife was out to embarrass him, the chaplain did what she suggested. After people laughed at him, he rushed home to confront his wife, but she left through a side door and hid at the palace for a few days before the king learned she was there. The king summoned his chaplain and suggested he forgive his wife because all women are full of faults, though they can be fixed. The chaplain, however, decided it would be easier to replace her, so he sent her away and took another wife.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The chaplain was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples. Because he was new, his food was poor (lumpy gruel with stale or rotting ingredients and dried or burnt sprouts) and he did not get enough to stay healthy. He started to return each morning to the wife he left behind, and she gave him delicious rice with sauce and curry. This made

him miss his former life, and with her encouragement he decided to leave the sangha.

The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that this same woman had been wicked when she was his wife in an earlier birth, and now she was harming him again, this time by taking him off the path to salvation. After talking to the Buddha, the disciple gained new understanding and chose to continue his religious life.

Siri-Kalakanni Jataka (#192)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Siri-Kalakanni Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. A boy cursed with bad luck had gone off from the Bodhisatta's city to study with a famous teacher in Taxila. The teacher had a daughter as beautiful as a nymph come of age right at the time the student completed his studies, so the teacher gave her to him. The student didn't want to marry her, but did so out of respect for his teacher. Since good luck cannot mate with bad luck, he avoided her as much as possible, including sleeping on the floor at night. Then, when they traveled back to his city, the student climbed a tree to eat some ripe figs. His wife asked for some and he told her to climb up and pick her own. After she went up the tree, he quickly climbed down and piled thorns around it so she could not leave. Then he ran off alone.

When King Vedeha later rode his elephant past the fig tree and saw the entrapped woman, he fell in love at first sight. Since she had been abandoned, the king claimed the woman as his own, consecrating her as Queen Udumbara ("Fig") the moment they reached the palace.

The next day, the king took his new chief consort to the royal park, and the man who had deserted her was among the people cleaning the road ahead of them. When Queen Udumbara saw him, she could not restrain feeling triumphant

at her good fortune and she smiled in happiness. The king did not believe that the man she smiled at was her former husband and he drew his sword to kill her for flirting. She begged him to consult his advisors first. Senaka, the chief advisor, said he did not believe any man would leave such a beautiful woman. The Bodhisatta, however, explained that good luck and bad luck can never be together. The king was relieved and thanked the Bodhisatta for saving his precious queen from the foolish advice of Senaka. The king gave him one thousand coins as a reward, and the queen became a loyal supporter of the Bodhisatta.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another. Senaka was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha.

Culla-Paduma Jataka (#193)

The Bodhisatta was once a crown prince. He and his six younger brothers faithfully served their father, the king. But the king was paranoid and suspected that one of his sons would kill him to take the throne, so he banished them all from the kingdom, not to return until after he died. The sons were sad, but agreed. They took their wives and set out with no destination in mind, eventually entering a forest where they could find no food or drink. When the suffering became too much, they killed the youngest brother's wife, sliced her into thirteen parts (one for each person), and ate her. The Bodhisatta and his wife shared one part between them and saved the other. They did the same for another five days until the Bodhisatta's wife was the only woman left alive. On the seventh day it was time to kill and eat her, but the Bodhisatta gave his brothers the portions of flesh they had saved, and they ate this instead.

That night the Bodhisatta and his wife fled. When she grew tired, he carried her on his shoulders, and when she grew thirsty, he cut his right knee with his sword and let her drink his blood. Eventually they reached the Ganges River, where they revived themselves with fruit and water and built a simple hut to live in.

While the Bodhisatta and his wife lived there, a convicted thief who'd been punished by having his hands, feet, nose, and ears cut off was sent drifting down the river in a small boat. As the thief floated by their home, the Bodhisatta heard his groans of pain and took pity on him. He brought him to

their hut and treated his wounds, saving his life. While they all dwelled together in the hut, the wife fell in love with the thief and began an affair with him, having trysts while the Bodhisatta was collecting fruit. As her passion grew, the wife wanted the Bodhisatta dead and she pushed him off a cliff. But, unbeknownst to her, he fell into the top of a fig tree and survived.

The Bodhisatta couldn't climb up or down, so he stayed put and survived on figs. An iguana who came daily to eat from the same tree eventually struck up a conversation with the Bodhisatta. After hearing his tale of woe, the iguana took him on his back and carried him down the cliff and out of the forest.

The Bodhisatta found a village and stayed there until he heard of his father's death, then he returned to take the throne. As king, he ruled righteously and generously, putting money for his subjects in six alms halls every day.

The wife, meanwhile, had carried her lover out of the forest on her shoulders, and through pity they were able to get plenty of food as beggars. Later, people told her she should put her husband in a basket and go to the capital where the new king would surely show mercy and give them great riches. So they went, and lived comfortably from the alms halls.

One day the Bodhisatta, while riding his elephant through the streets giving alms to the poor, saw his wife, though she did not recognize him. He summoned her and told the assembled

citizens who she was and what she had done to him. He declared that she deserved to die, but he would spare her life. Instead, he had the basket with her lover tied so tightly to her head that she could not remove it and banished them from his kingdom.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, while out on a morning alms round, saw a woman so beautiful he fell in love at first sight. The lovesick disciple became lean as a wild deer and could no longer concentrate on his studies or meditation. The Buddha told this story to remind him that women are vile and ungrateful and only bring misery.

The six brothers were earlier births of six of the Buddha's elder disciples, and his wife was an earlier birth of Cinca-Manavika, a woman who had falsely claimed the Buddha impregnated her. The thief and iguana were earlier births of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Manicora Jataka (#194)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Before taking the throne, he was just an ordinary householder with a beloved wife of perfect virtue and divine beauty. One time they traveled from their village to see her parents in the city. As they entered the city gate, the king, riding his splendid elephant, saw her walking behind the wagon and became enamored. He sent someone to find out if she had a husband, and when he learned that she did, the king decided to get rid of him.

The king gave a jeweled crest to a man and told him to drop it in the Bodhisatta's wagon. The king then yelled out, "I have lost a jeweled crest!" and ordered the city gates shut. He sent his men to find the thief, causing an uproar in the city. When the crest was found in the Bodhisatta's wagon, the king's men beat and kicked him and dragged him in front of the king, who ordered, "Off with his head!" The Bodhisatta was led through the city, whipped and tormented at every street corner, and then taken out through the south gate for execution.

His wife, weeping and wailing all the while, wished that because she had lived a life of absolute righteousness, some spirit would intervene to save her husband. Her sorrow caused the throne of Indra, king of the gods, to become warm. And when he divined the cause, he came down from heaven and switched the Bodhisatta and king's places just before the axe fell. Then Indra materialized and consecrated the Bodhisatta and his wife as king and queen, causing

everyone to call out with joy at the death of their wicked king. The Bodhisatta reigned with justice and generosity.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried and failed to kill him in the past.

The Bodhisatta's wife and Indra were earlier births of the Buddha's wife and Anuruddha, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Pabbatupatthara Jataka (#195)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king found out that one of his most valuable servants had slept with a woman of his harem who he liked very much. He was uncertain what to do about it, so he asked the Bodhisatta for advice. Not wanting to speak directly, the king told him, "A jackal had used a happy lake even though it knew a lion carefully watched over it." But the Bodhisatta understood the meaning behind the question and advised that, "All creatures drink from a mighty river, and yet it remains a mighty river. If she is dear, be patient." The king accepted the advice and forgave both of them, along with a warning to never sin like that again. Ashamed, they both ceased.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When the king learned that one of his servants had slept with a woman of his harem, he asked the Buddha what to do about it. The Buddha asked whether the king found the servant valuable and whether he loved the woman, and the king answered yes on both accounts. The Buddha replied that you should not harm valuable servants or beloved women, and then he told this story to illustrate the point. The king, who was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, took the advice and forgave both of them.

Valahassa Jataka (#196)

The Bodhisatta was once a flying horse. Five hundred merchants were shipwrecked and landed ashore near a city of she-goblins. Whenever castaways arrived, these goblins would take human form and bring them food. Wanting them to think theirs was an ordinary town of humans, they also magically made new arrivals see herds of cattle, men plowing, and similar sights in order to lure them in. After feeding these five hundred men and asking about their ordeal, they told them that three years ago their husbands had sailed off on a ship and never returned, and they offered to be wives to these castaways. Not knowing who these women really were, the men agreed. The she-goblins brought their new husbands to the city and cast all the husbands they had previously lured there into the house of torment.

That night, as their new husbands slept, the she-goblins snuck out of their homes and ate the men they had just imprisoned. The eldest merchant embraced his new wife when she returned home, and he felt that her body was cold. Now knowing that she was a goblin, he was sure all the others were too. The next morning he warned the men from his ship that they would be eaten by these she-goblins when another ship wrecked. Half of the men escaped right away, but the others did not believe it and stayed.

That morning the Bodhisatta happened to be flying near the fleeing men, and he had some climb onto his back, while the others took hold of his tail or stood to the side saluting respectfully. They all rose into the sky, and the Bodhisatta

took them safely home. Those who stayed behind were soon replaced and eaten.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A disciple of the Buddha had his passions aroused by a beautifully dressed woman, and he no longer took joy in his studies or meditation. The Buddha told the disciple this story to remind him that women tempt men with their beauty and trickery, and once they have power over men, they ruin them with their evil ways, just like she-goblins. The way to avoid such misery is to follow the advice of the Buddha.

The two hundred fifty merchants who fled were earlier births of some of the Buddha's followers.

Mittamitta Jataka (#197)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. Against the Bodhisatta's advice, one of the other ascetics living in his group adopted a young, orphaned elephant. When it grew large, the elephant killed its master and ran off into the forest. After this, the other ascetics asked the Bodhisatta how to know whether someone is friend or foe. He answered that foes do not smile or act friendly and they have a negative attitude.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The ascetic and the elephant were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and the disciple's teacher respectively. The disciple took a piece of cloth from his teacher without asking and made a shoe bag from it. The teacher later asked why he had taken it without asking, and the disciple answered that he was sure he would not be angry. The teacher flew into a rage and hit the disciple.

When the Buddha heard other disciples discussing the incident, he told them this story so they knew that the inconsiderate disciple had also not thought about the feelings of others in the past.

The rest of the band of ascetics were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Radha Jataka (#198)

The Bodhisatta was once a parrot. He and his brother lived in the home of a brahmin who treated them like his own children. Unfortunately, his wife was a thoroughly wicked woman, and when he had to go away on business, the brahmin asked his parrot pair to keep watch over her and report if she brought any men to the house.

During the brahmin's absence, his wife had a steady stream of lovers come to the house, both day and night. Despite the Bodhisatta warning against doing it, his brother asked her why she did bad things. She hid her anger and feigned remorse so she could get near the brother—then she wrung his neck and threw him into the oven. When the brahmin returned, he asked the Bodhisatta whether his wife had had sex with other men. The Bodhisatta refused to answer, explaining that he did not want to end up dead like his brother. Then he said he could no longer live in the house and flew away to the forest.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began lusting for a woman he saw wearing beautiful clothes, and he could no longer focus on studying dharma. The Buddha reminded this disciple that women are inherently wicked and told him this story so he knew that even women who are watched carefully will betray their husbands. This convinced him to remain a disciple.

The Bodhisatta's brother was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Gahapati Jataka (#199)

The Bodhisatta was once a householder. His wife was a wicked woman, and he had heard she was having an affair with the village headman, but he didn't have proof. A short time earlier, most people's grain had been washed away by heavy rains, and famine hit the village. The people got together and told their headman they would pay him for food in two months when their crops were ready to harvest, so he gave them an old ox to eat.

One time when the Bodhisatta was away, the village headman visited the wife at her house. The headman was still there when the Bodhisatta returned to town, and his wife saw him approaching. The headman trembled in fear, but the wife quickly devised a plan. She told him to stand in the middle of the room angrily demanding payment for the ox meat while she stood in the empty granary crying because she had nothing to repay him with.

When the Bodhisatta entered the house, he wasn't fooled at all. He told the headman that not even half a month had passed since he'd given them two months' time to repay, so he had no reason to come asking. The Bodhisatta told his wife she knew full well the granary was empty, so she had no reason to get in it. He seized the headman by his hair and pulled him into the courtyard where he beat him to the brink of unconsciousness before tossing him out of the house. Then he pulled his wife by her hair and threw her to the ground threatening her with a memorable punishment if she ever did any such thing again. From that day forward, the

headman avoided the Bodhisatta's home, and the wife never again misbehaved.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A disciple of the Buddha no longer took joy in his studies or meditation. The Buddha, in helping him find his way again, told the disciple that women can never be kept right; they always sin and trick their husbands in some way. Then he told this story to illustrate his point, which helped the disciple get back on track.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Sadhusila Jataka (#200)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. A father had four daughters and they had four suitors, one handsome, one old, one virtuous, and one from a noble family. The father could not decide which man to give his daughters to, so he asked the Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta answered that all four qualities were good, but virtue is the best measure of a man. So the father gave his daughters to the virtuous man.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A father had four daughters and they had four suitors, one handsome, one old, one virtuous, and one from a noble family. The father could not decide which man to give his daughters to, so he asked the Buddha. To answer the question, the Buddha told this story from one of the father's earlier births when he faced the exact same situation.

Bandhanagara Jataka (#201)

The Bodhisatta was once a poor man. When his father died, he supported his mother. Shortly before she died, she forced the Bodhisatta into a marriage against his will. Not long after this, the Bodhisatta decided to renounce the world and live as an ascetic. But when he told his wife she needed to find a job and earn her own living, she revealed that she was pregnant and asked him to wait until after his child was born. He agreed.

After the birth, the Bodhisatta announced that he was leaving, but his wife asked him to stay until their child was weaned, and again he agreed. But soon after this, she conceived again, and the Bodhisatta knew she would ask him once more to stay behind for his second child, so he fled in the middle of the night without telling her. He tricked the city guards and got out through the main gate and went to the Himalayas. Joyful at having broken his family bonds, leaving love and desire behind, he reached supernatural attainment and was later reborn in heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Thirty disciples from the countryside visited the Buddha at his monastery. The next morning as they did their alms round, they passed a prison and saw thieves and murderers bound in chains and in great misery. They asked the Buddha if there was any bond greater than this. He answered that the bond of craving wealth, food, and family is a thousand times stronger, and then he told this story to illustrate his point.

The Bodhisatta’s father, mother, wife, and son were earlier births of the Buddha’s father, birth mother, wife, and son.

Keli-Sila Jataka (#202)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. The king was a cruel man, and he was disgusted by everything old. If he saw an old cart, he would have it destroyed; if he saw an old woman, he would hit and frighten her; and if he saw an old man, he would belittle him somehow, such as making him roll around on the ground like an acrobat. And the king's friends did the same. So when people in the kingdom grew old, they went away to live in a remote border region, beyond the king's reach. And since people could no longer care for their aging parents, they went to hell when they died.

The Bodhisatta noticed the population of heaven was shrinking, and when he learned the reason, he came up with a plan to humble the king. He took the form of an elderly man wearing rags and drove a crazy old cart, pulled by old oxen, past the king. The king, making a solemn procession around the city upon his bedecked royal elephant, saw the Bodhisatta and ordered his men to remove the cart. But the Bodhisatta had made himself visible only to the king, so the men could not intervene. Then the Bodhisatta smashed two jars of buttermilk on the king's head.

While the king was humiliated and distressed, the Bodhisatta took his proper form, floating in mid-air clutching a thunderbolt. He rebuked the king with sharp words for being dumb and cruel and threatened to slice off his head if he did not stop this behavior. He then spoke of the great importance of parents and the value of respecting old age. The humbled king stopped his behavior immediately and forever.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The cruel king was an earlier birth of Lakuntaka, one of the Buddha's top disciples and most renowned preachers. He was very small, like a dwarf kept for amusement. Once, thirty disciples from the countryside came to pay respect to the Buddha at his monastery. On the way in through the gate they saw Lakuntaka and, thinking he was just a novice, they pulled on his nose, ears, hands, head, and robe, and shook him about roughly and rudely.

When their conversation with the Buddha finished, these disciples asked him if they could meet Lakuntaka, who they had heard so much about. When the Buddha explained who he was and that they had already met him, the disciples asked why a man of such devotion and achievement was so insignificant. Then the Buddha told them this story to explain that it was a punishment for his misbehavior in a previous life.

Khandha-Vatta Jataka (#203)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic with many followers. There were lots of snakes around their remote forest home, and many of his fellow ascetics died from snakebites. The Bodhisatta called an assembly and told the others that if they showed kindness to the four royal races of snakes, no snakes would harm them. Then he reminded them they should love all creatures on earth; two feet, four feet, more, or none. The other ascetics followed the Bodhisatta's advice, and all snakes around their home departed.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

While one of the Buddha's disciples sat in his quarters chopping sticks, a snake crawled out of a rotten log and bit him on the toe. He died instantly. The Buddha told other disciples that if this unfortunate disciple had shown kindness to the four royal races of snakes, he would not have been bitten. Then he told this story to illustrate the point.

The Bodhisatta's followers were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Viraka Jataka (#204)

The Bodhisatta was once a crow. He lived in the forest alongside a pond. When famine arose, men living in the city could not spare any food to feed crows or make offerings to goblins and snakes. As a result, many crows left the city and went to live in the forest. One day a pair of city crows took up residence at the Bodhisatta's pond and saw him catch a fish. Deeply impressed, one of the crows told the Bodhisatta he wanted to be his servant and the Bodhisatta agreed. From then on, when he caught a fish, the Bodhisatta ate only what he needed and gave the rest to his servant, who ate only what he needed and gave the rest to his wife.

Eventually the servant figured that if the Bodhisatta could fish, then he could too since they were both crows with the same eyes, beaks, and feet. The Bodhisatta warned him that they were not of the same tribe, and if he tried it, he would die. But the servant did not listen, and he walked into the pond where he got entangled in weeds and drowned.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The servant crow was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. He left the Buddha's sangha with many disciples to set up his own order and declared that he too was a Buddha. The real Buddha sent two of his top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, to preach to those wayward disciples; and while Devadatta was asleep, most of them returned to the Buddha's fold. This so angered Kokalika, a disciple of the Buddha who became one of

Devadatta's most devoted followers, that he kicked Devadatta in the chest and caused him to spit up blood.

The Buddha told this story to let his disciples know this was not the first time Devadatta had imitated him and suffered for it.

Gangeyya Jataka (#205)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy, and he witnessed the following. Two fish, one from the Jumma River and the other from the Ganges, met at the confluence, and they complimented each other on their beauty. This turned into a quarrel about who was the most beautiful. Unable to settle the matter, they saw a turtle and asked him to decide. The turtle answered that both fish were beautiful, but he himself was more beautiful than either. This non-answer upset the fish.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The fish were earlier births of two young disciples of the Buddha. They regularly bragged about their looks, and one time they debated which of them was the most handsome. They asked an elder (the turtle was an earlier birth of him) to settle the matter, and he said he was more beautiful than either of them. This non-answer upset the young men, and they sulked off.

When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing how the elder had shamed the vain young disciples, he told them this story so they knew that these two men had also been full of themselves in the past.

Kurunga-Miga Jataka (#206)

The Bodhisatta was once an antelope. He lived in a forest near a lake and was close friends with a woodpecker and a turtle. One night he got caught in a noose trap, and his friends came to help. The turtle started gnawing through the leather straps and the woodpecker went to the hunter's home to buy them extra time. Knife in hand, the hunter left his house at dawn, and the woodpecker uttered a cry and flew into his face. Taking this as a bad omen, the hunter went inside and lay down for a while. Then he tried to outsmart the bird by going out through the back, but the woodpecker had predicted this and struck him in the face again.

The hunter didn't try to leave again until after the sun had risen. Upon seeing him, the woodpecker took off to let the others know the hunter was on his way. Just before the hunter arrived, the turtle snapped through the strap and the Bodhisatta took off into the forest. But the turtle, his mouth smeared with blood, was too weak with exhaustion to move, and the hunter put him in a bag.

To save his friend, the Bodhisatta pretended to be weak and let the hunter see him. The hunter took chase, following the slow-moving Bodhisatta through the forest. Once he was far enough away, the Bodhisatta took off at full speed back to his friends. He ripped open the bag and let the turtle out. When the hunter returned, all three animals were gone.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past.

The woodpecker and turtle were earlier births of Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Assaka Jataka (#207)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. The queen was charming, graceful, and nearly as beautiful as a goddess, and the king loved her very much. When she died, the king became deeply depressed. He had her body washed with oil and ointment and put her under his bed, where he lay crying for seven days. He wouldn't eat, and nobody could cheer him up.

From his abode at the foot of the Himalayas, the Bodhisatta divined what was happening and resolved to help the king, so he flew to the royal park. A young man came in and sat down to greet the Bodhisatta. They began to talk about the king and his present frailty, and the man suggested the Bodhisatta try to free him from his grief since family, friends, priests, and all others had failed. The Bodhisatta answered that if the king came to visit him, he could take him to see where his queen had been reborn into flesh again, and they could talk.
The young man went to tell the king this news, and he was overjoyed. The king went to his park and greeted the Bodhisatta, asking if what he had been told was true. The Bodhisatta assured him that it was. He explained that the queen had been so vain that she did few virtuous acts during her life and so was reborn as a dung beetle. The king was incredulous, but he followed the Bodhisatta and they encountered two dung beetles rolling a lump of cow dung.

The Bodhisatta called them forward and gave the former queen the power of speech. She confirmed who she'd been before, and then expressed undying love for her present

husband, saying if she could, she would kill the king and cover her dung beetle husband's feet with the blood flowing from his throat. This encounter revived the king's spirits, and he thanked the Bodhisatta. He returned to the palace, had his queen's body removed, eventually remarried, and continued to rule in righteousness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began longing for his wife from his lay life. The king and queen were earlier births of him and his wife, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that she had previously caused him great misery, and he should not crave her now.

The young man who talked with the Bodhisatta was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sumsumara Jataka (#208)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. A pair of crocodiles lived near him. The female crocodile got an intense urge to eat the Bodhisatta's heart and told her mate to get it for her, or she would die. He promised he would, and went to talk to the Bodhisatta, asking why he didn't eat the delicious fruits so abundant on the other side of the Ganges River. When the Bodhisatta answered that he had no way to get there, the crocodile offered to carry him over on his back, and the Bodhisatta accepted the ride.

As he swam, the crocodile sank down, plunging the Bodhisatta into the water. "What are you doing?" he asked, and the crocodile explained his wife's request and the real reason for carrying him. The Bodhisatta told the crocodile his plan was flawed because monkeys remove their hearts when they jump through treetops, otherwise they would get knocked to pieces. "Well, where do you keep it?" he asked, promising that if he showed him the place, he wouldn't kill him. The Bodhisatta pointed out a nearby fig tree with red, ripe fruit in it. The crocodile took the Bodhisatta to the tree, where he climbed up to safety and mocked the crocodile for being so stupid. The miserable crocodile sulked back home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The male crocodile was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that

Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past but couldn’t even make him afraid.

The female crocodile was an earlier birth of Cinca-Manavika, a woman who had falsely claimed the Buddha impregnated her.

Kakkara Jataka (#209)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy, and he witnessed the following. A hunter searching for birds went into the forest with a decoy. He followed one bird, but it flew off a short way each time the hunter drew near. So the hunter covered himself with twigs and branches and continued his pursuit. The bird, wanting the hunter to feel ashamed, mocked him for being dumb and then flew off to another place.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The clever bird was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who took very good care of his health, never eating anything too hot or too cold and rarely going outside so he'd avoid high and low temperatures. One time the Buddha heard other disciples discussing the healthy disciple's attention to himself, and he told them this story so they knew that this disciple had also cared for himself well in the past.

The hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis.

Kandagalaka Jataka (#210)

The Bodhisatta was once a woodpecker living in a grove of acacia trees. A woodpecker friend of his who lived amidst fruit and cotton trees came to visit, and the Bodhisatta pecked out insects to give him. The friend figured that if the Bodhisatta could get food from acacia wood, then so could he since they were both woodpeckers. The Bodhisatta warned him that they were not of the same tribe and this hardwood was dangerous for him. But the friend did not listen, and on his first peck, his beak snapped off, his eyes fell out, his head split, and he fell down to the ground dead.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The woodpecker friend was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. He had left the Buddha's sangha and tried to start his own, but failed. The Buddha told this story so people knew that Devadatta had also tried to imitate him in the past and had come to ruin because of it.

Somadatta Jataka (#211)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. His parents were poor and relied on the Bodhisatta to support them. When one of his father's oxen died, he could no longer plow his fields, so he told the Bodhisatta to ask the king for a new ox. The Bodhisatta answered that it would be inappropriate for him to ask and told his father to do it. But the father was too bashful, he said; and with more than three people present, he couldn't speak clearly. The Bodhisatta offered to teach his father to do it, and they practiced saying, "Long live the king! I used to have two oxen to plow fields, but one has died. Can you please give me another?" in front of tufts of grass standing in for the king and his court.

After one year of training, his father was finally ready, and the Bodhisatta took him to meet the king. After getting introduced, he said, "Long live the king! I used to have two oxen to plow fields, but one has died. Can you please take the other?" Knowing it was a mistake, the king smiled and jokingly told the Bodhisatta, "You have plenty of oxen at home, I suppose." "If so, great king," the Bodhisatta replied, "they are your gift!" The king appreciated this answer and gave the father sixteen oxen and a village to live in. The Bodhisatta told his father that practice is pointless for dimwitted people, and his father replied that any time any person asks for something, they are taking a risk.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's father was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was quite stupid and bashful, and often said one thing when he meant another. One time some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing Laludayi, and the Buddha told them this story so they knew that he had also been incredibly bashful in the past.

Ucchittha-Bhatta Jataka (#212)

The Bodhisatta was once a street-begging acrobat. One day while a brahmin was away from home, his wife's lover came over. Before her lover left, she served him some rice with curry. The wife kept watch at the door while he was eating and she saw her husband heading home. She rushed her lover down into the storeroom and piled some new rice on his plate, pretending it was a meal waiting for her husband. But he noticed it was hot on top and cold below and asked his wife what was going on. She did not speak a word in reply. The Bodhisatta, who had been sitting outside the house the whole time, knew what was happening, so he told the brahmin about the man in the storeroom. The brahmin berated and beat his wife and her lover and warned them to never do it again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began longing for his wife from his lay life. The brahmin and his wife were earlier births of this disciple and his wife, and the Buddha told him this story from his past so he knew that she had previously been wicked and caused him misery, and he should not crave her now.

Bharu Jataka (#213)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had five hundred followers studying with him in the Himalayas. One time they went down to a city to get salt and seasoning, and they resided under a banyan tree by the north gate. When half a moon had passed, another band of ascetics arrived and took up abode under a banyan tree at the south gate. Not long after, they all returned to the wilderness.

Both bands of ascetics returned to the city the next year. The other group came first this time, and when they found that the tree by the south gate had died, they made their camp under the northern tree. When the Bodhisatta arrived, he went to what he considered his tree and demanded the other ascetics leave. The two bands quarreled and, when unable to resolve things themselves, went to the king who listened to both sides and granted the space to the ascetics who had come first.

The Bodhisatta's band did not want to lose out to the others, so they found the body of a splendid chariot and gave it to the king. He took their bribe, and then ordered that both bands stay there together. The other ascetics responded by giving the king the chariot's jeweled wheels, and he changed his mind again, ordering the Bodhisatta to leave. By this point, both bands of ascetics grew ashamed of their immoral behavior and they all returned home. This made the spirits who lived in the kingdom angry with the king, so they summoned the sea and flooded the kingdom. Because their king was wicked, all the citizens died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha and his disciples were so highly respected that other religious teachers lost many of their followers. Concerned about their decline, leaders of other sects held a secret meeting to discuss the matter. They felt that the reason for the Buddha's success was that his monastery was in the best location, so they decided to work together and make a rival settlement next to it. Knowing there would be opposition to this plan, they gave the king one hundred thousand coins and told him that if the Buddha complained, he should avoid answering. The greedy king readily agreed.

Once construction began, the Buddha sent some of his disciples to tell the king that these men were noisy and it was not appropriate for their monastery to be built there. But the king twice sent his servants to the palace door saying the king was not there. Assuming a bribe had been paid, on the third day the Buddha went to the palace himself, and the king could not resist giving him alms. The Buddha told the king this story as a message about the evils and risks of taking bribes and creating conflict. The king repented and sent some of his men to destroy the rival settlement.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Punna-Nadi Jataka (#214)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. The king fell under the sway of some advisors who were very quarrelsome. They made the king get angry with the Bodhisatta and banish him from the city. Later, remembering the Bodhisatta's virtue, the king regretted his decision. He felt it inappropriate to send a messenger to ask the Bodhisatta to return, so he wrote a poem about crows (because of the superstition about a crow's caw signaling the return of a friend) and had it delivered, along with cooked crow meat, to the village where the Bodhisatta and his family were. Because the Bodhisatta was wise, the king was confident he would understand the message.

That which can drink when rivers are in flood;
That which the grain will cover out of sight;
That which foretells a traveler on the road–
O wise one, eat and read my riddle right.

The Bodhisatta did grasp the meaning, and he assumed that because his return was requested, he would be treated well, so he went. When he got back to the city, the king reinstated him as chaplain, and everything was good again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing his immense wisdom, he told them this story to remind them he was also very wise before becoming the Buddha.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kacchapa Jataka (#215)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king was so talkative that nobody could get a word in. Near the city lived a turtle who had befriended a pair of geese. One day they invited the turtle to visit their beautiful Himalayan home. Though he couldn't get there on his own, if the turtle bit down on a stick, the geese could carry him between them as they flew—all the turtle had to do was keep his mouth shut. As they flew, some excited children yelled out, "Two geese are carrying a turtle by a stick!" The turtle wanted to tell them to mind their own business, and when he started to speak, he fell into the palace courtyard and smashed in two. People were shocked, and the king came up with all his court to see what the commotion was about.

The Bodhisatta surmised (correctly, of course) exactly what had happened and saw this as the opportunity he had long been looking for to teach the king a lesson. He related the circumstances that led to the turtle's demise, and added that those who set no limit on their talking are bound to come to misfortune, as this turtle did. The king figured the Bodhisatta was directing the message at him, and from then on he became a man of few words.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The turtle was an earlier birth of Cula Kokalika, a greedy disciple of the Buddha, and the geese were earlier births of Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples. Sariputta and Moggallana spent one rainy season at Cula

Kokalika's home, with the instruction not to tell the locals they were there. After the three months had passed, they set off back to the Buddha's monastery. Right after they departed, Cula Kokalika boasted to people about who had been staying with him. They quickly gathered food and robes to donate and rushed after the departed disciples to pay respect. Knowing that Sariputta and Moggallana were very frugal and would not accept the gifts, Cula Kokalika followed, expecting that the things would be given to him. But the elder disciples just told the people to keep everything, and this angered Cula Kokalika.

A short time later, Sariputta and Moggallana led a thousand disciples on an alms pilgrimage. When they passed through Cula Kokalika's town, the laypeople greeted them enthusiastically and donated many robes and other things. Again, Sariputta and Moggallana gave nothing to Cula Kokalika, and this time he was so furious he began insulting them for being greedy and selfish. So the disciples left the town. People begged them to stay, but could not change their minds. The angry people told Cula Kokalika to fix the problem he had created; and if he could not convince Sariputta and Moggallana to return, he would have to go live elsewhere. Fearful of losing his home, he tried to persuade them. But he failed.

Forced to leave, Cula Kokalika went to the Buddha's monastery. When he got there, he immediately began to tell the Buddha how wicked Sariputta and Moggallana were, not stopping even after being rebuked by the Buddha for his inappropriate words. Moments later, bloody boils erupted on

his body and he fell over in pain. One of his former teachers heard his cries and came down from heaven, encouraging him to make peace with the elders. But Cula Kokalika would not let go of his anger, and he died and went to hell.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing Cula Kokalika's downfall, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time Cula Kokalika's own words had caused his destruction.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Maccha Jataka (#216)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. One day some fishermen caught a large fish and were going to eat it right there on the beach. As they sharpened a spit for cooking, the fish began to cry. The fish was not upset over his impending death; rather he did not want his beloved wife to think he had run off with another fish. The Bodhisatta came down to the river and heard this fish lamenting his fate. Feeling pity for him, the Bodhisatta told the fishermen to release him back into the river.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The two fish were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and the disciple's former wife. When the disciple began to long for her, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that she was ultimately harmful to him (he was caught in the fisherman's net because he was paying attention to her and not to his own safety) and that he had saved him from death in a previous life.

Seggu Jataka (#217)

This story is the same as the Pannika Jataka (#102).

Kuta-Vanija Jataka (#218)

The Bodhisatta was once a judge. A village merchant stored five hundred plow blades at his friend's home in the city. That friend, also a merchant, secretly sold them and told his friend they had all been eaten by mice—he deposited mouse droppings in the storeroom to convince him the story was true. The villager did not get angry at his friend, he just said he understood it was a case of bad luck. Later, the villager said he would take the city merchant's son down to the river to bathe, but really took him to a friend's house and hid him away in an inner chamber.

After bathing, the villager went to the city merchant's house and told him a hawk had seized his son and carried him off. Knowing this was impossible, the father was furious and he took the villager to see the Bodhisatta. After hearing the story from the city merchant, the Bodhisatta directed the villager to respond truthfully about the allegation. He stuck to his story, but also told the Bodhisatta about his plow blades, finishing with, "My Lord, if mice can eat iron, then hawks can carry off boys: either both are true or neither is true." The Bodhisatta was impressed that the villager had scammed the scammer and told the city merchant that if he gave the plow blades back, then he would get his son back, and that's what he did.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The village and city merchants were earlier births of two men who together led a trade caravan to a faraway town and

returned home with a great profit. One of the pair was virtuous and the other was a swindler. When the good man said it was time for them to divide the stock they had brought back, the dishonest man said the celestial alignment was inauspicious, so they would have to wait a while. Really, he was scheming to keep all the goods for himself. He thought, perhaps, because his partner had been roughing it on their caravan trip for so long that, after returning home to civilization, he would overindulge in fine food and die. The good man, however, remained healthy, and two weeks later the men divided their goods.

His business finally completed, the good man visited the Buddha, who asked why he had waited so long to come since returning home. The man explained the issue with his partner: then, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that his partner was also a terrible person in the past.

Garahita Jataka (#219)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. A forester caught him in the forest and gave him as a pet to the king. He lived in the palace for a long time, dutifully doing tricks whenever asked. Pleased with the Bodhisatta's service, the king later had the forester take him back to the spot where he was captured and set him free.

Upon his return, the Bodhisatta told all the other monkeys where he had been, and they asked to hear what life was like in the realm of humans. The Bodhisatta said he did not want to discuss it, but the other monkeys insisted. So he explained that humans are blind fools who do not grasp the impermanence of things and always cry out, "Mine, mine." They hold gold as precious but ignore religion. One of the masters of each house lacks a beard, but has long breasts, pierced ears, and braided hair and plagues everyone who lives there. The monkeys covered their ears, telling the Bodhisatta to stop. They were so horrified by such a life that they abandoned the place where they heard about it.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A disciple of the Buddha could not conquer his passions, and he grew depressed. The Buddha told him this story to help him overcome his problem.

The monkeys who listened to the Bodhisatta were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Dhammaddhaja Jataka (#220)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. The king was righteous, but his commander-in-chief took bribes and cheated people. One time a victim of the commander-in-chief's corruption left court after losing his case and saw the Bodhisatta. He fell at the Bodhisatta's feet and begged him to tell the king the truth about the commander-in-chief. The Bodhisatta pitied the man and so took him back to the courthouse and judged the case himself, finding in the man's favor. The king heard loud applause burst from the courtroom, and when told the reason for it, he appointed the Bodhisatta as judge.

Suddenly unable to demand bribes, the commander-in-chief decided to kill the Bodhisatta. He told the king that the Bodhisatta wanted to take the throne; and seeing how much the people loved him, the king believed it. The pair knew that the Bodhisatta would never do anything wrong that would deserve the death penalty, so they gave him an order they knew he could not follow and then they would execute him for his failure. The king told the Bodhisatta he had grown bored with his current royal park and needed him to make a new one by tomorrow, or else he would die.

The Bodhisatta knew that the greedy commander-in-chief must have turned the king against him, and he didn't know what to do about it. While the Bodhisatta lay on his bed at home pondering the problem, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm, and he divined that the Bodhisatta was in trouble. Indra went to the Bodhisatta's house and asked

how he could help. After hearing what the king was up to, Indra created a royal park on par with those in heaven. The king was surprised when, the next morning, the Bodhisatta brought him to see the magnificent new park. The commander-in-chief devised another impossible task; creating a lake possessing the seven precious jewels by the next day. And again, Indra came to earth to save the Bodhisatta by building a heavenly lake with a thousand islands and blooming lotuses of five colors. Next, the schemers asked for a house made of ivory, and then for a jewel suitable for the house. Again, Indra created both.

At this point, the commander-in-chief realized the Bodhisatta was getting divine assistance of some sort, so they adjusted their strategy. The Bodhisatta's next task was to find a park-keeper who had all four virtues,1 something not even a god could just make. The Bodhisatta was dejected because he was sure that Indra could not complete this task for him. He felt it would be better to die a lonely death out in the wilderness than to die at the hands of a man, so he walked away from the city. Eventually he took a seat under a tree and reflected on goodness while waiting to die.

This time Indra came disguised as a forester and struck up a conversation. He told him of a craftsman who was completely virtuous, and the Bodhisatta returned to the city to meet him. He listened to the Bodhisatta explain why he had come, and agreed to go discuss the job with the king. The king was skeptical and asked the craftsman to explain how he came to grasp the four virtues, so he told stories about events from four of his past lives that made him renounce evil ways.

- Once when I was a king, the craftsman said, I was faithful to my wife, but she was not faithful to me. When my chaplain (who was the Bodhisatta in the Bandhanamokkha Jataka (#120)) refused her seduction, she schemed to have him killed and lied to me, saying the chaplain had demanded sex and beat her when she refused. I had him sentenced to death, but then I discovered the truth, and he convinced me to forgive her and her many lovers. And from that point on, I have been free of envy.

- Once when I was a king, I always ate meat and drank lots of liquor. One holy day, when animals could not be slaughtered, some dogs ate the meat that had been prepared for my dinner the day before. The queen told the cook that I was so fond of my young son that if I held him while I ate, I would not notice that it was a meatless meal. She placed my son on my lap, and the cook brought my dishes. But my queen was wrong and I did notice. In a drunken rage, I broke my son's neck and threw his body in front of the cook, telling him to prepare me some meat. Out of fear of me, he did it, and I ate my own son's flesh. The next morning, I learned what I had done, and from that point on, I have abstained from alcohol.

- Once when I was a king, some fortune-tellers told me that my newborn son would someday die from a lack of water. Because of the prophecy, I had water tanks built around the city and water jars kept full at all crossroads

and public squares. One day, while going to the park, my son saw many people paying respect to a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others). Out of jealousy for seeing attention given to the holy man and not to himself, he dismounted his elephant and threw the private Buddha's food onto the road and stepped all over it, crushing it into the dirt. The private Buddha flew away to his cave in the Himalayas, and my son burst into flames. All the water nearby dried up, and he died and went to hell. I was overcome with grief, and I realized that it only arose because I loved my son. Without passions, I would feel no pain. And from that point on, I have withheld affection.

- Once when I was an ascetic (who was the Bodhisatta in the Araka Jataka (#169)2) I practiced charity for seven years, and then after death I lived in heaven for seven eons. After this, I have never surrendered to anger.

After hearing these tales, the king's entire court rose up in raucous protest against the commander-in-chief for his wickedness against the Bodhisatta, and a mob dragged him out of the palace and beat him to death, tossing his body on a dunghill. From this point on, the king renewed his righteous rule.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The commander-in-chief was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he

was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past but couldn't even make him afraid.

The craftsman was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kasava Jataka (#221)

The Bodhisatta was once an elephant, and a herd of eighty thousand followed him as their leader. A man who sold ivory to craftsmen in the city started to wear the yellow robe of a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) and would stand alongside the Bodhisatta's elephant herd as it walked place to place. He then killed the last elephant in line.

Eventually the elephants noticed their numbers were declining, and they informed the Bodhisatta. He suspected that the private Buddha they passed regularly was the culprit, so the next day the Bodhisatta walked at the end of the line. And when the man drew his weapon and charged, the Bodhisatta was ready to pick him up in his trunk and smash him dead on the ground. But out of respect for the sacred yellow robe, he changed his mind and instead rebuked the man for his disrespect and deception. The Bodhisatta finished his talk by warning the man that if he ever showed himself again, he would be killed for sure. After hearing these words, the man never returned.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The elephant hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One time a traveling merchant brought a magnificent perfumed yellow robe to give as alms, and he let the people of the city choose who to give it to. Although the elder Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, was staying near the city at that time,

they voted to give it to Devadatta since he lived there full-time.

Later, when visiting the Buddha, some of his disciples told him they had seen Devadatta wearing the mark of a saint, and the Buddha told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time Devadatta had worn a yellow robe without deserving it.

Cula-Nandiya Jataka (#222)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. He and his brother led a troop of eighty thousand living in the Himalayas. Their mother was blind and depended on the pair to take care of her. One time, while they were out gathering wild fruit, they sent some back to their mother, but the monkeys they'd given it to did not deliver it. Unable to eat, she withered away to skin and bone. After this, the two brothers decided to give up their rule and leave the wilderness so they could better care for her.

A hunter who was harsh, cruel, and violent—and had been warned by his former teacher that he faced destruction if he did not change his ways—lived near the Bodhisatta's new banyan tree home, and when he saw the Bodhisatta's mother, he came to shoot her. The Bodhisatta climbed down and begged for his mother's life, "Don't shoot my mother! Kill me instead!" And he did. When the hunter turned his bow back toward the mother, the Bodhisatta's brother came down from the tree and also offered his life in exchange for hers. The hunter shot the brother, and then killed the mother too.

He put all three bodies on a pole and headed back to his village. At that moment, a lightning bolt struck his home, and his wife and two children died in the fire. When he arrived at his scorched house, one of its poles fell down and smashed his head, then the earth opened up and swallowed him into the flames of hell.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how wicked and cruel Devadatta was, he told them this story so they knew that he was also this way in previous lives.

The Bodhisatta's brother and the hunter's teacher were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples, and his blind mother was an earlier birth of the Buddha's foster mother.

Puta-Bhatta Jataka (#223)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king feared his son and so banished him to a distant village. When his father died, the son was able to return to take the throne. On his way back, someone gave the prince some curry with rice to eat, telling him to share it with his wife. But he ate it all himself, which upset her greatly. Back at the palace, he made her his queen consort, but from that point on, the king completely ignored her and took his pleasure with other women.

The Bodhisatta felt that the queen deserved some respect because she was a good woman, and he decided to get it for her. His plan began by asking her why she did not give food or cloth to the men of the royal court. "What can I give you," she asked, "when my husband gives me nothing? Even when we traveled back here, he would not share his food." The Bodhisatta told her that he was going to confront the king about this misconduct, and she needed to give the same direct, honest answer to this question in his presence.

Later that day, the Bodhisatta again asked the queen why she was cruel and did not give the men of the court any food or cloth, and she gave the same answer about not receiving anything from her husband, not even a portion of rice when traveling. The king admitted to the Bodhisatta this was true. Then the Bodhisatta told the queen that loveless marriages bring misery and she should leave. After listening to the Bodhisatta, the king gave his queen everything she deserved, and they lived together happily.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and queen were earlier births of a landowner husband and wife who had traveled from the city to the country to collect a debt. The debtor could not pay, and this angered the landowner greatly, so he immediately turned around and set out for home without taking time to eat. Some people saw the landowner on the road, clearly famished, and gave him some food. They told him to share it with his wife, but he walked behind her and ate it all. When he finished, he showed her the empty pot and said it was all that the people had given him. She did not believe him, of course, and was very annoyed.

Since the Buddha's monastery was along the way, they stopped for some water. The Buddha divined that they were ready for a spiritual breakthrough and was waiting for them. He asked the wife if her husband was kind and loving. "I love him," she answered, "but he does not love me. For example, today he did not share any of his food." The Buddha told them this story so they knew that in the past she had been equally loving and kind, and he had mistreated her like this. And after hearing the Buddha's words, the husband stopped his selfish behavior.

Kumbhila Jataka (#224)

This story is the same as the Vanarinda Jataka (#57).

Khanti-Vannana Jataka (#225)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. One of his best assistants was sleeping with a woman in the royal harem. When this assistant heard that one of his own servants was sleeping with his wife, he brought the servant to the palace and asked the Bodhisatta to suggest a punishment. The Bodhisatta replied that he also had a misbehaving servant, but because he was so valuable he forgave his indiscretions. The assistant understood these words were about him, and he ceased his fling. And his servant, having been exposed, also stopped.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When the king learned that one of his assistants had slept with a woman of his harem, he did not say anything because the assistant was very valuable. When the king told the Buddha about this, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that he himself had once done the same thing. And word got around to the assistant that the king knew of his affair, so he ceased.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Kosiya Jataka (#226)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One time the king set off for war during the rainy season. At his camp, an owl flew into a bamboo thicket to hide from some crows. The crows surrounded the owl and, determined to kill it, sat waiting it out. The impatient owl did not wait until the evening to try and escape, and when it flew away, the crows pecked it to death.

The king had watched this happen and asked the Bodhisatta why the crows attacked the owl. He answered, "Those who leave their home before the right time are bound to fall into misery. The wise who do things in the correct manner will have success over their foes." The king accepted the Bodhisatta's wisdom and returned home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One rainy season there was a rebellion in a border region. The king's troops stationed there had fought a few battles, but were not victorious, so they requested assistance. Despite the difficulty of travel on the wet roads, the king mustered troops to go fight. But then he began to doubt himself, so he consulted the Buddha. When the king told the Buddha where he was going and why, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that he should cancel the journey. The outlaws, however, had already fled because they heard that reinforcements were on the way.

The king of the past was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Gutha-Pana Jataka (#227)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy, and he saw the following occur. A dung beetle walked past a caravan way station out in a border region and drank some liquor that had spilled on the ground. He was drunk when he returned to his lump of dung to sleep. The dung was still a bit moist, and when he lay down, it gave way. He thought this happened because of his great strength. At that very moment, an angry elephant walking by smelled the dung and turned around in disgust. But the impaired dung beetle believed the elephant had fled in fear of him and challenged him to a fight. The elephant came back saying, "I will not fight you with my feet, hands, or tusks. I will use what is appropriate for you—dung." Then he dropped a large dung ball on the beetle, and urinated on him too. The dung beetle died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The dung beetle was an earlier birth of an obnoxious lout who used to bother the Buddha's disciples so much when they went collecting morning alms that they stopped visiting his village. One day a new disciple (he was the elephant in an earlier birth) asked about this village, and when told about the insufferable man there, he said he would stop him from pestering people.

When this lout saw the disciple, he rushed up and started asking questions; but the disciple told him he would not answer until after he finished collecting alms. The man waited, and when the disciple was done, he led the man

outside the village. When the man asked his first question, the disciple hit him in the head, knocked him to the ground, beat him, threw dirt in his face, and told him that if he ever asked another disciple any questions he would come back and do it again. After this, the man fled any time he saw one of the Buddha's disciples.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this incident, he told them this story so they knew that the pair had a similar encounter in the past.

Kamanita Jataka (#228)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. He became aware of a greedy king and wanted to shame him. He took the form of a young brahmin and told the king there were three prosperous cities that, with his help, could be conquered easily by just a small army. The king liked the brahmin's plan, and they agreed to head off to battle early the next morning. The Bodhisatta, however, returned to heaven. And when the king's men could not find him, the king called off his march to war, and this made him depressed. Soon he had a high fever and bloody diarrhea, and his personal doctors could not cure him.

A few days later, the Bodhisatta returned to see the king, this time posing as a doctor. The king's doctors were the most renowned around, and at first the king refused to see the Bodhisatta. But when told he was offering his assistance for free, the king let him in. After showing respect to the king, the Bodhisatta asked him what had caused his sickness. The king described his encounter with the young brahmin and said his disease arose from his greed. The Bodhisatta answered that he would cure him with knowledge, not medicine, and he preached about how desire is the root of all evil. After listening to the Bodhisatta, the king was suddenly well again. And with a newfound fear of hell, the king became a righteous and generous ruler.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The greedy king was an earlier birth of a brahmin who began felling trees on a riverbank so he could cultivate the land. That same morning, the Buddha divined that the brahmin was destined for a spiritual breakthrough, so while collecting alms, he went out of his way to chat with him. And the Buddha returned to talk again at each step of the growing process: clearing the roots, plowing, planting, and so on. The brahmin figured the Buddha came by so often because he wanted some of the grain after it was harvested, and he promised to give him some. The night before the brahmin was going to harvest his field, heavy rain flooded the river and swept away the entire crop. The brahmin was devastated and lay in bed crying.

The next day, the Buddha went to comfort the brahmin. He explained that there's no reason to grieve for what is lost because nothing can change the past. After hearing this lesson, the brahmin reached a new level of understanding.

Back at the monastery, the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about what he had just done, and he told them this story so they knew that he had also cured the man's grief in the past.

Palayi Jataka (#229)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Another king marched his huge army to capture the Bodhisatta's kingdom, but when he arrived and saw the massive towers on the city gate, he grew nervous and asked if it was the king's palace. When the invading king heard that these were just the city gate towers and that the palace was as large and grand as the heavenly palace of Indra, king of the gods, he realized he could never defeat such a glorious king, so he fled back home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king who intended to attack the Bodhisatta was an earlier birth of a wandering ascetic who loved to debate but found few people who would engage him. Once after arriving in the Buddha's city, he asked if there was anyone he could debate, and the people told him to ask the Buddha, who nobody in all of India could surpass. Their descriptions of his perfection did not dissuade the traveler, but when he saw the massive gate towers of the Buddha's monastery, he lost all confidence and went away.

The people who came to see the debate cheered and went to let the Buddha know what had just happened. He told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time this man had fled at the sight of the gate to the Buddha's home.

Dutiya-Palayi Jataka (#230)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Another king marched his huge army to capture the Bodhisatta's kingdom, and when he reached the city gate he declared that his army was so large it was undefeatable. A calm and confident Bodhisatta appeared atop the fortifications and told his rival, "Fool, stop your futile babble; I will destroy you and your army like an elephant crushing a thicket of reeds." The invading king was filled with fear at the glorious sight of the Bodhisatta, so he fled back home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king who intended to attack the Bodhisatta was an earlier birth of a wandering ascetic who loved to debate but found few people who would engage him. Once after arriving in the Buddha's city, he asked if there was anyone he could debate, and the people told him to ask the Buddha, who nobody in all of India could surpass. Their descriptions of his perfection did not dissuade the traveler, but when he entered the hall where the Buddha sat preaching and saw a majestic figure on par with Brahma, he turned right around and ran off saying, "Who could overcome a man like this?"

When people told the Buddha what had just happened, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time this man had fled at the sight of him.

Upahana Jataka (#231)

The Bodhisatta was once a mahout. He taught a young villager how to work with elephants, holding back none of his knowledge, which is how all Bodhisattas teach. When he finished his studies, the student wanted to work for the king, so the Bodhisatta went to the palace to get him hired. The king said he would pay the student half the rate the Bodhisatta earned. The student answered that he would only take the job if he earned the same as the Bodhisatta because he had learned all his knowledge. So the king said that if the student could demonstrate equal skill he would get equal pay, and an elephant-handling exhibition was set for the next day.

A large crowd had gathered at the palace to see the master and the student show their skills. The student did well, but the Bodhisatta had spent the previous night teaching his elephant new commands so that all actions were reversed from the words. The elephant lay down when it heard "Stand!" and picked something up when it heard "Drop it!" When it heard "Go on!" it backed up, when it heard "Back!" it walked forward, and so on.

The crowd was impressed by the Bodhisatta and angry with the student for disrespecting his master by claiming to be equal, so they pelted him to death with sticks and clods of dirt. After this, the Bodhisatta addressed the king, telling him that most men benefit from learning, but for this boy it brought destruction. For him, knowledge was like an ill-made shoe that caused pain because it did not fit. When the

Bodhisatta was done with his sermon, the king heaped honors upon him.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The student was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing how Devadatta had repudiated the Buddha, and he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had been ungrateful and done the same to him in the past.

Vina-Thuna Jataka (#232)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. When it came time for one of his sons to marry, the Bodhisatta chose the daughter of a wealthy family. To celebrate the engagement, her family gave honor to a right royal bull, a ceremony she had never seen before. When she later saw a hunchback walking down the street, she figured that since the best cow had a hump, he must be a great man. So she gathered her valuables and ran off with him. They walked away from the city throughout the night. In the morning, he was overcome by stomach pain and lay down alongside the road. The Bodhisatta was traveling to the city to get his son's bride-to-be and saw her sitting next to the road with the ailing hunchback. He was able to persuade her to come with him for the marriage.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The bride-to-be was an earlier birth of a young lady whose family honored a right royal bull at their home, a ceremony she had never seen before. Later, she saw a hunchback and figured he must be royal like the bull, which also had a hump on its back. So she gathered her valuables, put on a disguise, and eloped with him.

News of this spread around the town, and one day the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing it. He told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time she had fallen in love with a hunchback.

Vikannaka Jataka (#233)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. While he relaxed along a lake, the fish and turtles gathered near him to watch his dancers and singers perform. His advisors told him they were coming to offer their assistance if needed. Pleased by this, the Bodhisatta ordered that from then on, they were to be regularly fed rice. To avoid rice being wasted if fish did not come to eat, the Bodhisatta had the feeder bang a drum before tossing the rice in the water.

Eventually a crocodile figured out that the sound of the drum meant an easy meal and he'd come eat some of the gathered fish, so the Bodhisatta ordered it to be captured with a harpoon. When the crocodile returned, the fish feeder struck it in the back, but the crocodile was able to swim away. The feeder yelled out that no matter where it went, it could not escape its punishment for greed. And soon after, the crocodile died from its wound.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples became distracted by desires and could no longer concentrate on his studies or meditation. The Buddha explained that desire is like a barbed arrow; once it gets stuck in you, it's very difficult to remove and it can kill. He then told this story as an example.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Asitabhu Jataka (#234)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. As the crown prince's pomp grew ever more magnificent, the king began to fear a coup from his son and banished him. He and his wife left the realm and lived in a leaf hut near the Bodhisatta. One day the prince saw a woodland fairy and became enamored with her. He ignored his wife and chased after the fairy through the forest, hoping to marry her. His angry wife decided that if he was going to treat her like that, then she was through with him. She went to discuss the holy life with the Bodhisatta, and by staring into a mystical object, she made rapid progress toward insight.

Her husband returned to their hut unsuccessful and alone, having not found the fairy. His wife rose into the air and told him she had found bliss and no longer suffered from desire. She thanked him for unintentionally putting her on a new path through life by his bad behavior, then she flew away to a new place. The prince lamented that his greed and lust had lost him his wife, and he lived there alone until his father died and he returned home to take the throne.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The prince and princess were earlier births of a beautiful and cheerful young woman and the man she had been married off to by her family. He was often away from home and largely ignored her. This woman spent her days studying dharma with some of the Buddha's top disciples and

eventually got her parents' permission to become a disciple herself. Soon after, she became an arahant.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing her achievement, he told them this story so they knew that she had once before sought the highest attainment.

Vaccha-Nakha Jataka (#235)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. One time he left his Himalayan home and visited the city to get salt and seasoning, and he slept in the royal park. The next day, he met a rich man who was very impressed by him and agreed to provide food and anything else the Bodhisatta needed for as long as he stayed in the city. The two became close friends.

The rich man assumed an ascetic's life was unhappy and tried to persuade the Bodhisatta to give it up by reminding him that a regular life in a house has many luxuries and one can have all the good food and drink he wants. And he offered to give the Bodhisatta half of his wealth if he renounced the ascetic's life and came to live with him. The Bodhisatta replied that the rich man's ignorance had made him greedy. It was actually the worldly life that was bad because people can never have peace and they must lie and cheat to get ahead of others.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The rich man was an earlier birth of a friend of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. One day he invited Ananda to visit him at his home. He served Ananda excellent food and tried to convince him to leave the sangha and come live with him, offering to give Ananda half of his wealth. But Ananda refused, explaining that desire breeds suffering.

When Ananda returned to the monastery and told the Buddha what had happened, the Buddha told him this story

so he knew that his friend had tried to do the same thing to he himself in a previous life.

Baka Jataka (#236)

The Bodhisatta was once a fish. He was the leader of a large school, and one time they came upon a crane sitting peacefully, wings outstretched, on the edge of a pond. The fish were impressed by the crane's demeanor and assumed it was a pious bird. But the Bodhisatta told them cranes are tricksters, and it was really trying to lure them in close enough to catch and eat them. So the fish all splashed in the water and drove the crane away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crane was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been exposed as a hypocrite. The Buddha told this story so the other disciples knew he had been the same way in the past.

Saketa Jataka (#237)

Both the circumstances that suggested the story and the story itself have already been given in the Saketa Jataka (#68).

Ekapada Jataka (#238)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. One day his young son asked what one word encompassed many ideas about how to be successful. The Bodhisatta answered that the word for this was “skill,” and then said “virtue” and “patience” should be added to it. His son followed this advice throughout his life and was very successful.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man’s son asked him to explain the Door Question, which is about how to begin the path to enlightenment. The father said only the Buddha could do this, so they went to his monastery to ask him. The Buddha told the father this story so he knew that his son had been an equally inquisitive boy in an earlier birth and had asked him this question back then, but had forgotten the answer due to rebirth.

Harita-Mata Jataka (#239)

The Bodhisatta was once a frog. A water snake out feeding came upon a wicker fish trap and crawled in, expecting an easy meal. But the fish attacked the snake, biting him until he crawled out covered in blood and lay at the river's edge. Just then, the Bodhisatta took a long leap and accidentally landed in the trap. The snake asked him whether he approved of the fish's behavior or not. He answered that since the snake ate fish when they went to his place, it was certainly appropriate that they eat him when he went to theirs. Hearing this approval from the Bodhisatta, the fish rushed out of the trap and killed the snake.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The snake was an earlier birth of King Ajatasattu. The king was a devoted supporter of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and at Devadatta's insistence, had murdered his own father because he supported the Buddha. Soon after this, King Ajatasattu's mother, the queen, died of grief. Her brother, King Pasenadi, the righteous ruler of an adjacent realm and a devoted supporter of the Buddha, was full of hatred for King Ajatasattu. King Pasenadi wanted to take back a village that had been part of the dowry given with his sister when she married King Ajatasattu's father, so he started a war. Whenever King Ajatasattu won a battle, he marched triumphantly back to the capital city; but when he lost a battle, he returned without any fanfare.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing King Ajatasattu's behavior after battles, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time he had been happy when he won and miserable when he lost.

Mahapingala Jataka (#240)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. His father was a cruel king hated by everyone, including his family, and there was great joy throughout the kingdom when he died. They burned his body with a thousand cartloads of logs and doused the pyre with a thousand jars of water.

The Bodhisatta, on the other hand, was beloved by all, and his coronation was a big, festive celebration. Everybody was happy except for one of the palace's gatekeepers, who the Bodhisatta saw crying. He wondered if his father had been kind to this man for some reason and asked him why he wept. The gatekeeper explained that he did not cry out of sadness for the king's death, but for fear that he would return. Every time the former king entered and exited the palace, he would punch his head hard eight times. The gatekeeper feared he would do the same to Yama, the gatekeeper of hell, who would judge him too cruel for the underworld and send him back to earth. The Bodhisatta answered that he need not fear this. Karma is the only thing that determines when a being leaves hell, and people do not return in the same form as their previous lives.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The cruel king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. After the earth opened up and swallowed Devadatta into the flames of hell, people, gods, and creatures across all of India rejoiced. The Buddha told his disciples this

story so they knew that people had also felt wonderful about Devadatta’s death in the past.

Sabbadatha Jataka (#241)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. He was an expert at magic, and one day he went deep into the forest, where no person would hear him talking, to practice reciting the very powerful Subduing the World Spell. But a jackal lying in a hole near the Bodhisatta heard him and memorized the spell. As the Bodhisatta got up to leave, the jackal jumped up and yelled out, "I have learned the spell better than you!" and ran off. The Bodhisatta, knowing this could lead to trouble, chased after the jackal, but to no avail.

The jackal found a she-jackal he liked and performed the spell on her. Suddenly, this female was his consort, and thousands of other four-footed animals—jackals, elephants, horses, lions, tigers, wild boars, deer, rabbits, and more—came to serve him. The new king of the forest rode around standing on the back of a lion that stood on the backs of two elephants. The jackal became so arrogant he decided to become the ruler of people too. He marched his four-footed army to the kingdom's capital and surrounded it many kilometers deep, then he sent a message to the king: surrender or fight.

The king and everybody else was alarmed, except for the Bodhisatta, who told the king he could defeat the jackal. The Bodhisatta climbed up one of the towers on the city wall and asked the jackal how he planned to conquer the city. The jackal told him he would make all the lions roar, and this would frighten people so much that they would not fight. So the Bodhisatta announced by the beat of a drum that

everybody needed to fill their ears with flour; and the people did so. Then the Bodhisatta returned to the tower and again asked the jackal what his strategy was. Getting the same answer, the Bodhisatta told him he did not believe lions would follow the order of a lowly jackal. As a demonstration of his power, the jackal tapped the lion he stood on and it let out a mighty roar. The sound terrified the two elephants, so the jackal fell to the ground and was crushed to death under their feet. And in the mass panic that followed, every animal, except for the lions, died from being trampled or wounded.

The kingdom saved, the Bodhisatta threw open the city gates and told people to go collect the carcasses. They ate as much fresh meat as they could, but there was so much remaining that they invented the process of drying meat to preserve it.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Devadatta had previously had a good reputation and much support, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta also had short-lived success in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sunakha Jataka (#242)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy man. A man in the city had raised his dog on rice, so he grew fat and content. A villager bought the dog and took him home, tying him up in his hut. The Bodhisatta had been in the forest doing some errands, and when he saw the dog, he told him to stop being a fool and chew through his leash and escape. The dog answered that he wasn't dumb, he was just waiting for the right time. That night, when everyone was asleep, the dog gnawed himself free and returned to his original master's home with great happiness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A stray dog lived around the gate to one of the Buddha's monasteries. He had been born there and was fed by various water carriers until he grew very large. One day a villager bought the dog from the water carriers. The man tied a chain around his neck, and together they walked toward his home. The dog made no resistance, walking right next to the man at all times on the long journey. Figuring the dog was fond of him, the man eventually took the chain off, and immediately the dog ran all the way back to the monastery. Some of the Buddha's disciples saw the dog back at the gate, and having guessed what had happened, they praised him for being so smart.

When the Buddha heard the disciples talking about the dog's escape, he told them this story so they knew that an earlier

birth of this dog had also made a clever escape back to his home.

Guttila Jataka (#243)

The Bodhisatta was once a musician; the greatest in all of India. Some merchants were away on holiday, and after buying food and perfumes they hired a musician named Musila to play for them. He began to pluck his lute, but the men showed no pleasure. He tuned it down to a middle tone, thinking perhaps they preferred this, but they still sat indifferently. And when he loosened his strings further, their attitude did not change. Finally, Musila asked them why they did not like his playing. “You’re playing?” they asked. “We thought you were just tuning.” Upset, Musila asked if they knew any better musicians, and they told him the greatest musician of all lived in their city. So when they returned home, Musila went with them, hoping to study with the master.

Musila was shown to the Bodhisatta’s home, and he walked right in and started playing the Bodhisatta’s lute. The Bodhisatta’s parents were blind, and when they heard the sound, they cried out, “Shoo, shoo! Rats are gnawing at the lute!” Musila introduced himself and, without playing any more music, waited for the Bodhisatta to return home. When he returned and heard what Musila wanted, the Bodhisatta refused because he divined from Musila’s face that he was a bad person. But not only did Musila implore him to change his mind, his parents did too. So the Bodhisatta agreed to be his teacher.

Despite his reservations about the situation, the Bodhisatta held nothing back during his lessons. And after Musila had

learned everything, he wanted to work for the king, so the Bodhisatta went to the palace to get him hired. The king said he would pay him half the Bodhisatta's rate, but Musila said he would only take the job if he was paid the same as the Bodhisatta because he had learned all his knowledge. The king said if Musila could demonstrate equal skill he would get equal pay, and an exhibition was set for seven days hence.

Worried about his old age, the Bodhisatta lost confidence in himself and believed death was better than the shame he would face if he lost the competition, so he walked alone into the forest to die. But soon after, he changed his mind and returned home. For the next six days the Bodhisatta could not decide what to do, and he went back and forth between his home and the forest so often the grass died along his path. The throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm and he divined the Bodhisatta's suffering. Indra went down to earth and told the Bodhisatta he would make sure he won the contest because it was not right for a student to rival a teacher.

A large crowd gathered at the palace to see the master and the student compete. The two began playing the same song together, brilliantly, to raucous applause. Then Indra, floating invisibly above the crowd, told the Bodhisatta to break one of his strings. But, because of Indra's magic, the string's sound remained as beautiful as if still whole. Then Indra broke one of Musila's strings, and it made no sound. Then another of the Bodhisatta's strings broke, then another, and on and on until all seven strings were gone. But playing with just the body of his lute, the sound still came out. The crowd cheered

and waved their handkerchiefs. The Bodhisatta then threw three dice into the air, just as Indra had told him to, and nine hundred nymphs descended from heaven and began to dance.

The crowd shouted angrily at Musila for disrespecting his teacher by claiming to be his equal, and they beat him to death. The king and the people showered the Bodhisatta with gifts, and Indra brought him to play his lute in heaven. The Bodhisatta said he would only play in exchange for getting to hear what acts of virtue the goddesses did to earn their place in heaven, and Indra agreed.

After playing for a week, his songs even better than those of heaven's own musicians, the Bodhisatta sat down and listened to dozens of the goddesses' stories. One had given a robe to a monk; others had given scented wreaths, flowers, and sweet fruits. One had listened to a sermon, and another had cared for her in-laws without losing her temper. After Indra's charioteer, Matali, sent the Bodhisatta back to his home, he preached to people how much glory could be gained from just a small amount of merit.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Musila was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day some of the Buddha's disciples told Devadatta he ought to show respect to the Buddha since he had taught him so much. But Devadatta insisted he had learned everything by his own power and got nothing from the Buddha. When the Buddha

heard the disciples talking about this, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also repudiated him in the past.

The king and Indra were earlier births of Ananda and Anuruddha, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Viticcha Jataka (#244)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic living along the Ganges River outside a big city. A clever nomadic pilgrim came to town and asked if there was anyone he could debate. People told him to talk with the Bodhisatta, and they followed him to the Bodhisatta's leaf hut to listen. The nomad greeted the Bodhisatta, who asked, "Will you drink the water of the Ganges?" The wanderer thought he could trip up the Bodhisatta and answered, "What is the Ganges? It may be sand, water, the near or far banks." The Bodhisatta replied, "Besides the sand, water, the near and far banks, what other Ganges can you have?" The nomad could not answer, so he walked away defeated.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A wandering ascetic loved to debate, but in the whole of India he could not find anyone to match him. Once after arriving in the city near the Buddha's monastery, he asked if there was anyone he could debate, and the people told him to talk with the Buddha. He asked the Buddha a question and got a correct answer. But he could not answer the Buddha's question in return, so he got up and left. The Buddha told this story to the people who had just watched the short debate so they knew that in the past he had defeated an earlier birth of this same man in the same way.

Mula-Pariyaya Jataka (#245)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famed across the land. He had five hundred students studying the sacred texts, and when they finished their lessons, they believed they were equal to him. In their pride, they stopped coming to see him and doing their chores. One time after these students mocked the Bodhisatta, he asked them a question: “Time consumes all, even time itself. Who consumes the all-consumer?” The students were stumped, and the Bodhisatta rebuked them as being like a jujube fruit; attractive on the outside but lacking inside. He then told them he knew much that they didn’t, and they should ponder the question for seven days.

When the students returned after a week, they still had not figured out the answer, which was arahants. The Bodhisatta told the students they have ears with holes in them, but no wisdom. Now knowing he was right, the students asked forgiveness and again began acting as they should.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The five hundred students were earlier births of five hundred wandering ascetics who, after having studied with the Buddha, believed they had mastered all his teachings. Intoxicated with pride, they considered themselves equals. They stopped serving him and went out to find their own followers. One day the Buddha gave a sermon on the succession of causes, along with the eight stages of knowledge, and the ascetics did not understand any of it.

They now realized nobody was as wise as the Buddha, and they became humble again.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing how he had put the prideful ascetics in their place, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time he had humbled arrogant students.

Telovada Jataka (#246)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. One time, while down in a town to get salt and seasoning, the Bodhisatta went on an alms round, and a rich man amused himself by annoying him. He took the Bodhisatta to his house and served him a meal with fish. When the meal was over, the rich man told the Bodhisatta he had killed the fish especially for him and accused him of doing wrong by eating it. The Bodhisatta answered that only the killing is wrong; it is okay to eat any food given by people.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The rich man who hassled the Bodhisatta was an earlier birth of a prominent ascetic who opposed the Buddha. One time after a general had converted to Buddhism, he offered a large meal to the Buddha that included meat. When the heretic ascetic found out about this, he went around criticizing the Buddha for knowingly accepting and eating the meat.

Later, when he heard some of his disciples discussing this ascetic, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that this ascetic had made the same spiteful, errant attack in the past.

Padanjali Jataka (#247)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. When the king died, his advisors had to choose a new king, and they planned to pick the young prince. But the Bodhisatta did not agree with this decision because the prince was extremely lazy. They decided to test the boy by having him watch a mock trial, and they intentionally made the wrong decision. When they asked the prince if they had judged it correctly, the boy curled his lip. This made the Bodhisatta think he had seen through their ruse and was in fact wise. The next day, they arranged another trial, and this time they did judge it correctly. Again they asked the prince what he thought, and when he made the same lip curl, the Bodhisatta knew he was in fact a blind fool. The Bodhisatta was made king instead.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The lazy prince was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was quite stupid. One time after Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples, had discussed a question, the other disciples praised them. But this foolish disciple thought his knowledge was equal to theirs and curled his lip in scorn.

When the Buddha heard the other disciples discussing Laludayi's disrespect, he told them this story so they knew that he had also shown his foolishness through lip curling in the past.

Kimsukopama Jataka (#248)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He had four sons, and one day they asked the charioteer to show them a flame of the forest tree. First he took the eldest son to the forest, and he saw the tree while the buds were sprouting. The next son went later when the leaves were green, the third went when the flowers were blossoming, and the fourth when it was bearing fruit. Sometime later, when the four brothers were sitting together, somebody asked them what a flame of the forest tree was like. The first brother answered, “Like a burnt stump.” The second said, “Like a banyan tree.” The third, “Like a piece of meat” (because of the red flowers). And the fourth, “Like an acacia tree.” Annoyed by each other’s answers, they went to discuss the matter with the Bodhisatta. He told them they should have asked the charioteer to tell them what the tree was like at times other than when they were seeing it.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Four disciples took meditation topics from the Buddha and went out to their own remote locations for intensive training. One had the subject of the “six spheres of touch,” another the “five elements of being,” the third the “four principle elements,” and the fourth the “eighteen constituents of being,” and each had a breakthrough and became an arahant.

When they returned to the monastery and discussed their experiences with the Buddha, one of the disciples asked how it was that four different modes of meditation led to the same nirvana. The Buddha answered that it was like the sons

who saw the flame of the forest tree, and he told them this story to explain.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Salaka Jataka (#249)

The Bodhisatta was once a grain merchant. A snake charmer used a trained monkey in his show, and when he went to attend a festival, he left his monkey in the Bodhisatta's care. The snake charmer returned a week later and got his monkey, beating him with a bamboo stick right in the Bodhisatta's shop.

Later, when the snake charmer fell asleep, the monkey untied himself and climbed a mango tree. After eating a mango, the monkey dropped the mango seed on the snake charmer's head. The annoyed snake charmer tried to recapture his monkey through sweet talk and told him that from then on he would treat him as though he were his own son. The monkey replied that because of getting beaten, he preferred to live in the forest, and he took off through the treetops. The snake charmer went home greatly upset.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The snake charmer and monkey were earlier births of one of the Buddha's elder disciples and a novice under his tutelage. The elder was very cruel to the novice, so he quit and went back home. The elder pleaded with the boy to return, promising to be kind. Eventually the boy agreed and became a novice again, but the elder's behavior didn't change. The boy quit again, and this time when the elder begged him to come back, the boy refused.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this matter, he told them this story so they knew that the elder was also cruel to the boy in the past.

Kapi Jataka (#250)

This story is the same as the Makkata Jataka (#173).

Samkappa Jataka (#251)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas, eating fruits and roots. One time he went down to a city to get salt and seasoning, and he slept in the royal park. The next morning, the king saw the Bodhisatta out collecting alms and, impressed by his demeanor, invited him into the palace for a big meal. After they talked, the king invited the Bodhisatta to remain in the city and live permanently in his park. The Bodhisatta accepted the offer and stayed there, being fed and cared for by the king, for twelve years.

When the king needed to go put down a rebellion in a border region, his queen promised to look after the Bodhisatta. One morning, the Bodhisatta was late departing to the palace for his meal, so he flew through the air instead of walking. When the queen heard him arrive at her window, she hastily rose to greet him and her robe slipped off. The Bodhisatta saw her naked and was overcome by the sight: his heart filled with lust and his insight vanished. He took his food back to his hut, walking there because he could no longer fly, and remained alone for seven days, continuing to burn with lust.

When the king returned, he went to visit the Bodhisatta. The king saw rotting food covered with flies and was worried that he had taken ill. When the Bodhisatta said he was wounded, the king assumed his enemies had come to do him harm, so he rolled the Bodhisatta over looking for the injury. But the Bodhisatta said he was not wounded by an archer, he had wounded his own heart, and he explained what had happened. Then the Bodhisatta sent the king away and

induced a mystic trance, curing himself of his lust and restoring his insight and ecstasy. He gave a last sermon to the king and returned to the Himalayas.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, while out on a morning alms round, saw a woman so beautiful he fell in love at first sight. He no longer took joy in his studies or meditation and became so depressed that he stopped cleaning himself. The Buddha told the disciple this story to remind him that controlling natural passions takes great effort, even for highly purified people.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Tila-Mutthi Jataka (#252)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher. A king sent his son off to Taxila to study with him. Unlike most students, who worked as the Bodhisatta's servants in lieu of school fees, the prince paid one thousand coins and was treated like a son.

One time, when the Bodhisatta and the prince went to the river to bathe, an old woman was sun-drying white seeds. Without asking, the prince took a handful and ate them. The woman said nothing. The next day, he did it again, and still the old woman remained silent. But on the third day, after the prince took some more, the woman got very upset and yelled out, "The great teacher is letting his students rob me!" She explained to the Bodhisatta what his student had been doing, and he told her to stop crying; he would see to it that she got paid. But she didn't want payment, she said; she just wanted him taught not to do it again. So the Bodhisatta beat the student's back with a bamboo stick three times. The prince was furious and vowed to himself that someday he would murder the Bodhisatta. But for the time being, he remained focused on his studies, and when done, he returned home.

His father was impressed by his son's new knowledge and abdicated so he could see him rule the kingdom. The newly-crowned king had not forgotten his grudge against the Bodhisatta and so invited him to the palace; and then he would kill him. The Bodhisatta suspected the reason for the invitation, so he did not go. But many years later, the

Bodhisatta felt he might now be able to appease his former student, so he finally went to see him.

When they met, the king grew furious and yelled to his advisors, “The spot on my back where my teacher struck me still hurts after all this time. Today he must die!” The Bodhisatta replied that his blows were discipline, not anger; and had he not done it, the prince would have soon started taking fruits and cakes, which would have led to theft and murder, and he would have suffered the appropriate punishments. “All this prosperity you have now is because I struck you on that day,” he said. Upon hearing this, the king realized the Bodhisatta was right, and in gratitude offered to give him the kingdom. The Bodhisatta accepted the king’s forgiveness, but said he had no desire to be a ruler. Instead, the king made him the royal chaplain and treated him like a father for the rest of his days.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The prince was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha’s disciples who was full of bitterness and quick to anger over even the smallest of things. The Buddha told the prince this story so he knew that he had been the same way before and had eventually overcome his passions.

Mani-Kantha Jataka (#253)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He and his younger brother lived near each other in leaf huts on the banks of the Ganges River. One day a naga king took the form of a man, and while walking along the river he came to the younger brother's hut. The two talked together and quickly became close friends, the naga returning frequently. The naga grew so fond of his new friend that one day as he left, he cast off his human form and encircled the Bodhisatta's brother in an affectionate embrace. This terrified the brother so much that, over time, he became thin, jaundiced, and filthy.

One day, the Bodhisatta visited his brother and saw his condition. His brother explained what was happening and said he wanted the naga to stop coming around, but couldn't tell him directly. The Bodhisatta suggested that the next time the naga arrive, he ask to have his precious jewel. Do this three times, he said, and the naga will stay away forever. When the naga next came into his hut, the Bodhisatta's brother did as advised, and the naga left right away. The next day, the brother waited at his door and asked for the jewel as the naga approached the house; again he promptly turned around and left. And the third day the brother requested the jewel right as the naga emerged from the river. Completely fed up, the naga told the brother he was too demanding and would neither give up his jewel nor return to see him ever again.

When the Bodhisatta visited his brother again, he found him depressed at the loss of his friend and in an even more

miserable condition than before. He cheered his brother up with some encouraging words.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Some of the Buddha's disciples needed new quarters, and they were so demanding and persistent that they greatly annoyed the townspeople. Whenever they saw disciples approaching, people would go away. Because of this, Maha Kassapa, one of the Buddha's top disciples, could not get alms when he visited the town. At mealtime, other disciples explained to him why this had happened, and he went to discuss the matter with the Buddha.

The Buddha called an assembly and criticized these thoughtless disciples. He told them this story as an example of how even nagas, who are much wealthier than humans, get annoyed by persistent begging.

The younger brother was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kundaka-Kucchi-Sindhava Jataka (#254)

The Bodhisatta was once a horse merchant. One time, while taking five hundred horses to sell in the capital, he stopped to lodge for a night in what had formerly been the grand estate of a wealthy merchant. But the family had suffered misfortune, and now only one poor old woman lived there. She had a horse she had raised from a foal and loved like a son, but she could only feed him leftovers and grass. Arriving at the estate, the Bodhisatta's horses smelled this special horse and would not enter the grounds. The woman told the Bodhisatta her horse had gone out to graze, but would return soon, so he sat down and waited, knowing that when this special horse was back in the stable his horses would go in.

When the woman's horse returned, the Bodhisatta saw that he was a peerless thoroughbred and wanted to buy him. The woman refused, saying it would be like selling a foster child. But the Bodhisatta said he could provide the horse with a luxurious life: he would eat only refined foods and always have a cloth canopy over him and a rug to stand on. Wanting her horse to be happy, she agreed. The Bodhisatta gave her six thousand coins plus a new dress and jewelry. When the horse saw her like this, he cried tears of joy because she was no longer poor.

When the Bodhisatta continued on his journey, he fed his new horse some ordinary rice gruel as a test to see if he knew how special he was. The horse refused to eat it and told the Bodhisatta that while this ordinary food was good enough coming from the woman, the Bodhisatta had the means to

serve the better food that he deserved. The Bodhisatta asked forgiveness from the horse, explaining that it was only a test; then he gave him the fine food he had promised.

When the Bodhisatta came to the king's courtyard, he kept his special new horse separate from his others, giving him the promised canopy and carpet. The king noticed the horse and asked to see him run. The Bodhisatta climbed on and they raced around the courtyard so fast that everybody there saw a circle of horses without a break. Next, the horse rode over the surface of a pond without even the tips of his hoofs getting wet, and then he stood on the Bodhisatta's outstretched palm. The king was so impressed that he paid the Bodhisatta half of his kingdom to buy the horse.

The king made him his horse of state. He gave him a stable as glorious as his own bedchamber and fed him the same food that he ate. And with the horse's help, the king soon ruled over the whole of India. The king also followed the Bodhisatta's advice to give alms and do good deeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The old woman who raised the horse was an earlier birth of a poor woman who lived in town near the Buddha's monastery, and the horse was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples. When the Buddha returned to his main monastery after being away for the rainy season, the local people wanted to present gifts to him and his disciples, so a ceremony was planned for the next day. This poor woman arrived the next morning after all the disciples and

supporters had already been assigned to each other for the handover of gifts. But the clerk arranging things told her she could give her food to Sariputta, who was at the monastery though not participating in the ceremony.

She waited at the gate for him to leave, and when he came by she led him to her house to give him a meal. Many wealthy families in town who supported the Buddha, including the righteous King Pasenadi, heard that Sariputta was eating at her house, and they sent her a total of one hundred thousand coins. When Sariputta finished eating, he preached to her before returning to the monastery.

The Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Sariputta had eaten this woman's simple food and rescued her from poverty, and he told them this story so they knew that he himself had helped an elderly woman in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Suka Jataka (#255)

The Bodhisatta was once a parrot. He was the leader of many other parrots and had only one son. When the Bodhisatta got old, his eyesight faded (a common problem for parrots because they fly so fast) and he and his wife could no longer leave their nest. They relied entirely on their son to care for them.

One day, while perched on a mountaintop, the son saw a distant island with a mango grove full of ripe fruit. The next day, he flew there and brought a mango home for his parents. As the Bodhisatta ate it, he recognized the flavor and knew where it had come from. He told his son that parrots who go to that island die young, so he must stay away. But the son didn't listen and he soon went back. Flying home over the ocean with another mango in his beak, the young parrot grew tired and fell asleep. He crashed into the water and a big fish devoured him. The Bodhisatta and his wife, with nobody to feed them, soon grew feeble and died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The young parrot was an earlier birth of a disciple who died from overeating. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the death, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time this disciple's indulgence had killed him.

Jarudapana Jataka (#256)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. One time he joined an oxcart caravan, and while in a remote area, they passed an abandoned, dried-up well. They dug at the bottom looking for water, and found jewels and precious metals instead. Though they found a lot, they wanted more and kept digging. The Bodhisatta told the others to stop because greed is the root of destruction, but they did not listen to him. Falling clods of earth caused by their digging disturbed a naga king who lived below the well, and he came out and killed them all, except the Bodhisatta. Then he and some young nagas filled all the carts with even more jewels and drove the Bodhisatta home. For the rest of his life, he used this enormous treasure for almsgiving and was known across India because of it.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Some merchants who were devoted followers of the Buddha, always making donations to him before and after their caravan journeys, once came upon the same abandoned well that had made the Bodhisatta rich. They also dug in it, hoping to find water, and also uncovered treasure. But they were content with what they found and did not dig deeper.

When the merchants returned home, they told the Buddha about their luck, and he told them this story so they knew that following a life of moderation was the right thing to do.

The naga king was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Gamani-Canda Jataka (#257)

he Bodhisatta was once a king. His father died when he was just seven years old, and the royal advisors doubted he was ready to ascend the throne at such a young age. So they tested him by dressing up a monkey in the clothes of three people: a diviner of auspicious building sites, a judge, and a man who respected his father and mother. Since all three times the Bodhisatta recognized that it was a monkey standing before him, not a man, the advisors considered him wise enough to be king and gave him the crown. He ruled with righteousness and wisdom for his entire reign. One notable example of this is the time he cleverly resolved fourteen problems at the same time.

One of his father's servants, Gamani, being quite old, had retired after the previous king's death and moved to a village to become a farmer. Soon after, he suffered an incredible string of bad luck. Gamani borrowed a pair of oxen from a friend, and after plowing his field all day he fed them grass and returned them to their stall. Gamani saw the friend and his wife eating dinner, and since they did not invite him into their home, he left without talking to them. That night someone stole the oxen, and the owner, seeing an opportunity to make money, accused Gamani of not returning them. The man demanded they let the king judge their case, and together they walked to the palace.

On the way, they passed Gamani's friend's house, and he went inside to get something to eat. His friend wasn't there, but his pregnant wife offered to cook him a meal. When she

climbed a ladder to get some grain, she fell down and miscarried. Just then, the friend came in and thought Gamani had struck her, so he also wanted to make a claim in front of the king and joined them on the way to the palace.

As the men walked, a horse started following them. Its keeper told Gamani to throw a rock at it to make it stop. He did, and it broke the horse's foot. So now a third man joined the others.

Fearing his fate, Gamani tried to kill himself by jumping off a cliff. He landed on a basket weaver, killing him but saving himself. The dead man's son became his fourth captor, and the five of them walked together to the palace.
Although he had no more unfortunate incidents along the way, as people heard that Gamani was going to see the king, he got ten requests—from a village headman, a prostitute, a young woman, a snake, a deer, a partridge, a tree fairy, a naga, a group of ascetics, and some brahmin-priest students—to ask the king to explain the causes of their problems. Gamani promised each that he would.

When Gamani was finally brought into the court, the Bodhisatta remembered him fondly and the two discussed what he had been doing since he left the palace. Then it came time for the charges to be heard, and the owner of the oxen made his case first. When Gamani gave his side of the story, the Bodhisatta asked the owner to swear he was telling the truth about not seeing the oxen enter their stall that evening, and he reluctantly admitted he actually had seen them going in. The Bodhisatta faulted Gamani for not

announcing himself when returning the oxen and the owner for lying, so he gave them both punishments: Gamani would pay twenty-four coins, and the owner would have his eyes gouged out by Gamani. The man fell at Gamani's feet and begged forgiveness, telling him to keep the coins he owed and giving him some more before running away.

Next, the Bodhisatta heard about the miscarriage, and Gamani explained that she had fallen, he had not hit her. The Bodhisatta ruled that Gamani had indeed caused the miscarriage, albeit unintentionally, and his friend deserved a son. So he ordered Gamani to take his friend's wife to live at his house until she gave birth to a boy, which he would then give to his friend. The friend fell at Gamani's feet and begged him not to break up his family, and also gave him some money before taking off.

The horsekeeper at first claimed he did not tell Gamani to throw the rock, but under pressure from the Bodhisatta he admitted that he had. Gamani was ordered to pay him one thousand coins for a new horse and could rip out the man's tongue as a penalty for lying to the king. The man refused to take the one thousand coins, gave Gamani some money, and departed.

Finally, Gamani was ordered to have the basket weaver's son and mother move into his house so he could serve as a replacement for the deceased father. But the son did not want his home broken up, so he gave Gamani some money and left.

And thus, through the favor of the Bodhisatta, Gamani was not only given freedom, but had earned some money.

Gamani then told the Bodhisatta about the questions he'd been asked as he walked to the palace, and he answered them with wisdom equal to a Buddha.

- The brahmin-priest students used to remember the passages they were studying with ease, but lately their minds were like leaky jars and they wanted to know what had happened. The Bodhisatta said it was because in the past a rooster woke them regularly before sunrise to study, but their new rooster did not keep regular time, throwing off their schedule.

- The ascetics wanted to know why the fruits where they lived were no longer sweet and delicious. The Bodhisatta said it was because they had gotten lazy in their duties, such as having just some of them go out on the morning alms rounds and sharing the food rather than all going out together.

- The naga asked why the water in his pool changed from being crystal clear to dirty. The Bodhisatta said it was because the naga chiefs had become quarrelsome.

- The tree fairy used to be richly honored and wondered why she no longer got donations. The Bodhisatta said it was because she stopped protecting men who passed through that stretch of forest.

- The partridge could only sing beautifully at the foot of a particular anthill and wondered why. The Bodhisatta said there was a pot of treasure buried below it, and Gamani should dig it up and keep it.

- The deer did not know why it could only eat grass underneath a particular tree. The Bodhisatta answered that there was a large honeycomb in the tree dripping honey onto the grass below. Gamani should take it down and send the best honey to the palace and keep the rest.

- The snake lived in an anthill and didn't understand why when going out to eat, it could only just squeeze out of the entrance, but when returning full from a meal, it came in easily without touching the sides. The Bodhisatta said there was a pot of treasure buried there, and the snake was greedy in keeping it, so leaving was difficult because it worried the treasure would be taken. Gamani should dig up the treasure and keep it.

- The young woman didn't understand why she couldn't live contently with either her husband or her family. The Bodhisatta said it was because her lover lived between her house and her parents' house, and when she was at either of them, she thought of him and wanted to stay there for a few days. The Bodhisatta added that she should dwell at her husband's house, and if she did not heed this advice he would arrest and execute her.

- The prostitute wondered why she no longer made much money from her trade. The Bodhisatta said she used to

stay with one man until he had gotten his money's worth, but men stopped favoring her when she started switching from one man to the next too quickly.

- The village headman wanted to know what caused him to go from being rich, respected, and healthy to poor, miserable, and jaundiced. The Bodhisatta answered that he used to deal proper justice to people, but now he took bribes and his judgments were unfair.

His advice complete, the Bodhisatta gave Gamani valuable presents and made him the leader of his village. Then Gamani returned home, stopping along the way to share the Bodhisatta's advice and collect the treasure and honey.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples praising his extraordinary wisdom. He told them this story so they knew that he had also been wise in the past.

Gamani was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mandhatu Jataka (#258)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He had great riches and supernatural powers. When he clenched his left hand and touched it with his right, jewels would rain down from the sky knee-deep. He was a prince for eighty-four thousand years, co-ruled the kingdom for another eighty-four thousand, and was supreme king for eighty-four thousand more; but still not all his desires were satisfied. He decided to go to the Heaven of the Four Great Kings. There he was met by the four kings and a host of other gods who gave him rule over them.

A long time passed, but the Bodhisatta still felt discontent from unsatisfied cravings and so ascended higher to the heaven of Indra, king of the gods, where another throng of gods greeted him. Indra gave him half his realm and they ruled together until Indra was thirty-six million years old, and then it was time for him to be reborn on earth. Another god became the new Indra, and the Bodhisatta reigned alongside him for his entire lifetime, and then again with others; thirty-six Indras in all.

But even after all this time, the Bodhisatta remained unfulfilled and his passions grew stronger. Wanting to rule the entirety of heaven, he tried to kill Indra, but couldn't. The Bodhisatta's life finally disintegrated due to his greed and he fell from heaven, landing in a park near his former palace. His body was suddenly seized by old age and he was too weary to move.

The present royal family came to see him as he lay dying and asked if he had a final message to share with the people. The Bodhisatta said that even after the tremendous glory he'd had in life, he was now dead: everybody dies eventually.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A disciple of the Buddha out on his morning alms round saw a beautifully dressed woman and fell in love at first sight. The Buddha told him this story as an example of how worldly desires cannot be satisfied and that the only path to happiness is a religious life.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Tirita-Vaccha Jataka (#259)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. The king had gone off to fight a battle in a border region and he lost, so he fled on his elephant to safety in the forest. The next morning, while the Bodhisatta was out gathering wild fruit, the king passed by his hut. He looked for a waterpot, but found none, and there was no bucket or rope at the well. He tied the rope from his elephant to his lower garment and used this to climb down the well, but he could not quite reach the water. He was so exhausted and thirsty that he jumped down, feeling that dying with water was better than dying without.

When the Bodhisatta returned home that evening, he got the king out with a ladder and took care of him for a few days, letting him fully recover his strength before heading back to his city. When the king left, he made the Bodhisatta promise to come visit someday; and six weeks later, he did.

The Bodhisatta slept in the royal park, and the next morning he went to the palace to seek food. The king greeted him warmly and showed him great honor, letting him sit on the throne and share his food. The king built a hut and a covered walkway in the park, provided for all the Bodhisatta's needs, and ordered the gardener to follow his orders for as long as he chose to stay.

The king's advisors felt that the ascetic was unworthy of such honor and took their concerns to the crown prince, who agreed to speak to his father. The king then told them how the Bodhisatta had saved his life and said he could never

repay him enough, even if he handed over his kingdom. Now understanding the reason for the king's support, nobody resented the Bodhisatta anymore.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The grateful king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. When a king received one thousand splendid, expensive robes, he gave one to each of his five hundred wives, and they, in turn, gave them to Ananda, who was their dharma teacher. The next morning when they had breakfast, the king asked his wives why they were not wearing their beautiful new clothes. When they told him, the king figured Ananda was secretly making money by selling them, and he got angry, so he went to confront him.

He asked Ananda why he took five hundred robes when the Buddha's rules forbid his disciples from having more than three. Ananda explained that though he accepted the gift, he did not keep it; instead he gave robes to other disciples who needed new ones. Then, to explain to the king that no offerings were wasted, he told what happened to old robes when disciples got new ones. First they were turned into cloaks, which were later sewn into shirts, which then became bed sheets, then mats, then towels, then finally the worn fabric was chopped up into bits and mixed into mortar for building houses. The king was pleased with what he learned and gave Ananda the other five hundred robes.

Ananda passed on this new batch to a young disciple as a thank you for all the support he gave him—things like

sweeping his room, serving him food and drink, cleaning the bathroom—and let him distribute them to other young disciples. Some disciples asked the Buddha if it had been proper for Ananda to give such a large gift to someone inferior to him. The Buddha explained that Ananda's gift was acceptable because it was given out of gratitude: it was simply a matter of one good deed deserves another. Then the Buddha told them this story so they knew that in the past he himself had once been rewarded by a king because he had done a good deed for him.

Duta Jataka (#260)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He was a fussy eater, demanding only the best, most expensive food, served on a dish that cost one hundred thousand coins. He always dined outdoors in a bejeweled pavilion so his subjects could watch him eat and, he believed, make merit by being so close to such extravagant food.

A greedy man desperately wanted to taste this food, and one day he ran out of the crowd toward the Bodhisatta with his hands up yelling, “Messenger, messenger!” It was the custom of the day to not stop messengers from contacting a king, so he was allowed to approach the table. When he got there, the man grabbed some rice off the Bodhisatta’s plate and ate it. The guard quickly drew his sword to cut off the man’s head, but the Bodhisatta stopped him and told the man to have a seat and join in.

When the meal was over, the Bodhisatta finally asked what news the man had to tell. The man said he was a messenger for his lust and his belly, and their power was so great he could just not control himself: “For their belly’s sake, men will go very far; Oh Lord of chariots, please do not be angry.” The Bodhisatta understood these urges and felt that the greedy man spoke so honestly and beautifully that he gave him one thousand cows and a bull and showered him with honor.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The greedy man was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who was very greedy. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that he had also been greedy in the past. The Buddha also said that there was another time when this disciple had been beheaded with a sword due to his greed.

Paduma Jataka (#261)

The Bodhisatta was once a young son of a wealthy merchant. When a holiday was declared, he and his two brothers wanted to wear floral wreaths and go about having fun. So they went to a pond where lotuses grew and asked the caretaker, who had lost his nose, if they could have some. Trying to flatter him, the first two boys said if he gave them lotuses, his nose would grow back. This lie angered the caretaker, and he gave them nothing. The Bodhisatta, on the other hand, said, “My brothers are fools; noses cannot grow back. I simply ask politely for a lotus?” Pleased with his honesty, the caretaker gave him a bunch.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Some of the Buddha’s disciples who lived in the countryside came to his monastery and wanted to make an offering under Ananda’s Bodhi Tree (explained in the Kalinga-Bodhi Jataka (#479)). They went to Lotus Street in the city to get garlands but could find none. They told Ananda, one of the Buddha’s top disciples, that because of bad luck they were unable to make their offering. Ananda said he would get some lotuses for them and went off to Lotus Street, returning with many handfuls. Then the disciples made their offerings.

When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing Ananda’s success in finding flowers, he told them this story so they knew that he himself had once done something similar in the past.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Mudu-Pani Jataka (#262)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He had previously planned that in the future his daughter would marry his nephew, the crown prince. And when the Bodhisatta died, they would become king and queen. But when they reached marrying age, the Bodhisatta changed his mind and chose to be practical by giving his daughter to another king's family and bringing in a woman from another kingdom to marry his nephew. Knowing the two were in love and planning to wed, he moved his nephew to a house outside the palace.

The nephew immediately started scheming to get the princess out of the palace so they could run away together. He gave one of his fingernails to her servant and told her to discuss the matter with the princess. When they next met, the servant picked insects out of the princess's hair, and while doing so, she scratched her scalp with the prince's fingernail. The princess recognized it, and now knowing that the prince wanted to help her escape, she gave a cryptic message for the servant to pass on to the prince: "A soft hand, a well-trained elephant, and a black rain cloud give you what you want."

Understanding her message, the prince bribed the state elephant's mahout and hired a soft-handed page boy to help him. The next time that rain fell from a thick black cloud, the prince rode the elephant to the palace and waited outside the Bodhisatta's bedchamber. Since changing his mind about the marriage, the Bodhisatta had not let his daughter out of his sight, and she slept on a small bed in his room. Hearing

the rain, she told him she wanted to bathe in it. So the Bodhisatta stood inside the room and held one of her hands while she stepped out onto the balcony. She held out her free hand to the prince, who removed her bangles and put them on the arm of the page boy. Then she put the page's hand in her father's and left with the prince. The Bodhisatta took the boy to the princess's bed, not noticing it wasn't his daughter until the morning. When he discovered he'd been tricked, the king was dejected, but he understood that women cannot be controlled and he forgave the pair, let them marry, and kept his nephew as the crown prince.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples became distracted by desire and could no longer concentrate on his studies or meditation. To get him back on track, the Buddha told him this story to explain that even exceptionally wise men cannot stop women from pursuing their cravings.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Culla-Palobhana Jataka (#263)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He was the king's only child, and from the day he was born he cried anytime he saw a woman, even his mother. So he was cared for entirely by men, with milk given from a breast behind a screen. Nothing changed as the Bodhisatta grew up, and even as a teenager he needed a separate place all his own for meditating, eating, and everything else. His father knew that the Bodhisatta did not want to inherit the kingdom, and when he reached age sixteen, the king did not know what to do with such a useless son. One of the king's enchanting dancers told him she thought she could make the Bodhisatta fall in love with her. The king said if she could do it, he would make the Bodhisatta king and she would be his chief queen.

Beginning her plan, the dancer spent the first day singing in her divine voice outside the Bodhisatta's bedroom, where he could hear but not see her. He requested that she return the next day, and she did. The day after that, he had her sing at the entrance to his room, and then finally he invited her to sing in his presence. For the first time, desire arose in him and he was in love. He didn't want any other man to have her, so he ran wild through the streets with his sword chasing people away. The king banished him from the city along with the dancer.

They took up residence in a simple hut along the Ganges River, living on food that he gathered in the forest. One day, while the Bodhisatta was out looking for fruits, an ascetic from an island in the sea saw smoke from their house as he

flew through the sky, so he came down to see who these people were. The woman invited him to eat, and her charm was so great that he lost his insight and fell in love, remaining at her house all day. When the Bodhisatta finally returned home, the ascetic quickly ran off. Assuming the man was an enemy, the Bodhisatta drew his sword and gave chase.

When the ascetic reached the sea, he jumped up as if to fly, but fell into the water. Seeing this, the Bodhisatta understood that this man was an ascetic who had lost his powers. The Bodhisatta called out that all women are cunning and deceitful and men should stay away, or they'd burn up like fuel in a fire. Hearing these words restored the ascetic's powers, and he rose up in the air as before and returned to his island home. The Bodhisatta took his own advice and sent the dancer back to the palace while he stayed in the forest, living out his life happily alone as an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples became distracted by desires and could no longer concentrate on his studies or meditation. In helping him recover, the Buddha told him this story to explain that women's wiles can sidetrack even highly advanced beings like himself.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Maha-Panada Jataka (#264)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. When Prince Maha Panada was born, the people rejoiced, bringing coins to his father, King Suruci, so the prince would never lack anything. He was raised amidst the utmost splendor and was perfect in every way. When the prince reached age sixteen, the king decided to pass the crown to him and wanted to build a new palace for the occasion. After the king sent men out to find the best location, the Bodhisatta's throne grew warm. When he saw the reason, he sent Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, to join them. Vissakamma told the others to go eat breakfast; then when he was alone, he struck the earth with his staff, causing a massive palace to rise.

Prince Maha Panada's consecration ceremony was held alongside the ceremonies for his marriage and palace blessing; and no expense was spared. After seven years of feasting and celebrating, people began to grumble and wanted the festivities to end. King Suruci told them it could not end until his son laughed. So thousands of acrobats and jugglers were brought before him—even one so clever he had himself chopped into bits and reassembled—but none could spark a smile because Maha Panada still remembered the entertainment he'd had in heaven. This made people angry, so the Bodhisatta intervened again, sending down one of his divine dancers. He did the half-body dance—where only one hand, foot, eye, and tooth flick and throb about while the others stay stone still—and this put a little grin on the prince's face. This was sufficient for King Suruci, and he closed the festival, which officially ended his own reign. King Maha

Panada ruled with as much wisdom, generosity, and righteousness as his father.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Divining that he was ready for a religious conversion, the Buddha took an interest in Bhaddaji, the only son of a tremendously wealthy merchant. Bhaddaji had a house for each of the three seasons and moved his family between them with great spectacle every four months. And every time he moved, the town came out to watch.

After living for three months near Bhaddaji's city, the Buddha announced to the townspeople that he and his disciples would be leaving the next day, the same day Bhaddaji would move house. The people prepared a beautiful pavilion and gave magnificent gifts as a departing ceremony for the Buddha. Since everybody went to say farewell to the Buddha, nobody came to look upon Bhaddaji's splendor. When he heard why people weren't there to see him, Bhaddaji went to listen to the Buddha's sermon. He stood with his entourage watching the assembly, and once it was done, he immediately became an arahant. The Buddha told Bhaddaji's father that his son could either become a disciple or immediately enter nirvana; the father said he preferred that his son stay on earth.

The Buddha ordained Bhaddaji, and then set out on an alms pilgrimage. At one village they rode rafts over the Ganges River, and while on the water, the Buddha revealed that Bhaddaji had been King Maha Panada in an earlier birth, and

his enormous palace from that time was in the river below them. Some of the others were doubtful, so the Buddha told Bhaddaji to prove it. He lifted the palace out of the river with just one finger and held it as he floated in the sky. Many of Bhaddaji's family from that past life loved the palace so much that they had been reborn as fish, frogs, turtles, and the like so they could continue to live in it. When they started diving out of the palace, the Buddha told Bhaddaji to put it back into the river.

After reaching the other riverbank, the Buddha took a seat. The disciples wanted to know more about Bhaddaji's past life, so the Buddha told this story about how he got the palace.

Khurappa Jataka (#265)

The Bodhisatta was once a forester. A merchant leading a large caravan hired him to guide them through the forest. While they were in the midst of it, a huge band of thieves armed with swords and bows attacked them, and all the men in the caravan lay down in surrender, except for the Bodhisatta, who charged forward and fought them off all by himself. He got the caravan across the forest safely, and after they set up camp, the merchant rewarded him with a fancy meal of all the best meats and asked why he felt no fear taking on so many thieves. The Bodhisatta answered that he felt a mighty joy staring death in the face and was resolved to die if necessary because being the hero to protect them was his duty then.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples lost his motivation. To help him recover, the Buddha told him this story as an example of how in the past he himself had given his all, even to matters that did not lead to salvation.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Vatagga-Sindhava Jataka (#266)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's state horse. His grooms regularly bathed him in the Ganges River, and while there one day, a donkey saw him and fell in love so deeply that she stopped eating and drinking and became thin and ill. Her son asked what was wrong. At first she was too embarrassed to admit it, but eventually she told him about her infatuation. Her son promised to bring them together.

The next time the Bodhisatta went out to bathe, the son approached him to explain about his mother and asked him to meet her so her health would be restored. He agreed and told the son to have his mother wait for him along the riverbank, and he would join her after he finished bathing. She went to the meeting place, and when the Bodhisatta approached and began to sniff her, she decided she did not want to appear cheap and easy by letting him have his way with her too quickly. To make it seem she was giving in to him reluctantly, she kicked the Bodhisatta and ran away. The kick broke his jaw and injured him severely, so instead of pursuing her, he just left. The donkey felt terrible and lay down in grief. When her son came and asked why she did it, she explained that it's feminine nature.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The donkey was an earlier birth of a beautiful woman who fell in love at first sight with a handsome landowner so passionately that she stopped eating and spent all her time lying down, hugging her bed frame. When she finally

admitted to her friends and servants what the problem was, they said they would try to bring him to meet her; and eventually they persuaded him. Excited by the good news, the lovesick woman put on her best clothes and waited on her bed.

The landowner arrived at the scheduled time and sat down beside her. Then suddenly, not wanting to lose honor by being too cheap and easy, the woman changed her mind. She decided to reject him that day, but give herself freely to him the next. So when the landowner touched her playfully, the woman grabbed his hand and rudely told him to get out. The other women told her she was a fool to send him away, and it turned out they were right. The landowner never returned to see her, and she soon died of a broken heart.

After the landowner heard about her death, he took some flowers and perfumes as offerings to the Buddha, who asked why he had not come to see him for such a long time. The landowner explained what had happened with this woman and said he stayed away because he felt guilty about what he had done. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that the woman had done the same thing to he himself in the past, and the landowner had no reason to feel ashamed.

Kakkata Jataka (#267)

The Bodhisatta was once an elephant. He was mighty and wise and lived deep in the Himalayas. A giant golden crab, as large as a threshing floor, lived in a mountain lake and ate elephants who entered it. One time the Bodhisatta resolved to catch the deadly crab, and he led his herd into the lake. The crab only caught elephants as they left the water, so the Bodhisatta had all the others walk out before him. Then, when the Bodhisatta started to leave, the crab grabbed his leg with his powerful claw.

The Bodhisatta pulled with all his strength, but the crab was stronger and started to pull him down. The Bodhisatta trumpeted in rage, causing such fear in the other elephants that they defecated and ran off. Even his mate began to flee, but he asked her to stay near him. Regaining her composure, she praised the crab as the greatest anywhere. Seduced by her sweet voice, he let go of the Bodhisatta's leg. Immediately, the Bodhisatta lifted his foot and stomped on the crab's back, killing it. The other elephants ran back to the lake in joy and pulled the crab onto the shore, trampling it to little bits.

The golden crab's giant claws broke off and sank into the lake. Later, when there was a flood, they floated out into the Ganges River where some people found them and made them into the mystical Anaka and Alambara drums, the latter taken and used by Indra, king of the gods.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's elephant wife was an earlier birth of a landowner's wife. She was very beautiful and completely devoted to her husband. One time, while they journeyed together collecting debts, they were captured by a band of thieves. Their leader was smitten by the wife and considered killing the landowner so he could take her. She boldly told him that if he killed her husband, she would kill herself; so he set the couple free.

Back home, the pair went to pay respect to the Buddha and told him what had happened, the husband saying he owed his life to her. The Buddha told them this story so they knew that she had once saved his life too.

Arama-Dusa Jataka (#268)

This is the same story as the Aramadusaka Jataka (#46).

Sujata Jataka (#269)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. His mother was a cruel, harsh, unruly woman, but the Bodhisatta felt it would be too disrespectful for him to say anything about it. One time while he walked with her through the palace grounds, a blue jay screeched, and the servants yelled, “What a harsh shriek. Shut up, already!” Later, they heard a cuckoo sing a sweet song and everybody around stopped to listen carefully to its sweet voice, saying, “Sing away, birdie. Sing away!” Now the Bodhisatta saw his opportunity to rebuke his mother’s behavior. He pointed out to her that the beautiful, colorful bird had a harsh voice that annoyed people, while the mottled grey bird was very popular and pleasant to the ear. This showed that being gentle and sweet was the best way to behave. His mother understood his wise advice and completely changed her ways.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, had an arrogant, cruel, and violent daughter-in-law (the king’s mother was her in an earlier birth) who hurled abuse and hard blows to people around the house day and night, and never helped her husband or anyone else in the family. She had absolutely no good qualities.

One day the Buddha and five hundred disciples visited Anathapindika’s home, and while the Buddha was talking, the daughter-in-law could be heard scolding some servants. The

Buddha stopped his discourse and asked what the clamor was about. After hearing about the daughter-in-law's intolerable behavior, he asked to speak with her. The Buddha explained that there are seven kinds of wives and asked which of them she was. The destroyer wife hates her husband and ruins every good thing he does; the thievish wife is only interested in taking money; the high and mighty wife is lazy, greedy, rude, and tyrannical; the motherly wife is compassionate and protective; the sisterly wife is modest, respectful, and obedient; the friendly wife is virtuous and aims to please; and the slavish wife is calm and patient, bending completely to her husband's will. The first three, he added, are destined for hell.

Immediately after hearing the Buddha's lesson, the daughter-in-law asked for forgiveness, saying that from then on, she would be a slavish wife. She stopped her evil ways and started to live a religious life.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing her conversion, he told them this story so they knew that he had also tamed this woman in the past.

Uluka Jataka (#270)

The Bodhisatta was once a goose. Humans, four-footed animals, and fish all had kings, so the birds of the Himalayas decided that they should choose one of their own. After discussion, they selected an owl. But before a final vote could be held, a crow spoke up to object—his reason being, “If his face looks like this now when he’s happy, imagine what sort of face he’ll make when he’s angry. With a face like that, the rest of us will be scattered like sesame seeds thrown on a hot plate.” Then the crow flew up in the air cawing, “I don’t like it! I don’t like it!” and the owl chased after him, beginning their feud. The birds chose the Bodhisatta as their king instead.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

From the first cycle of the world up until the time of the Buddha, crows and owls were mortal enemies. Crows ate owls during the day, and owls bit off the heads of sleeping crows at night. One of the Buddha’s disciples lived on the edge of the monastery, and each morning he had to pick up crow heads (enough to fill seven or eight bowls) that had fallen out of a tree near his room.

One time when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the many crow heads around the monastery, he told them this story so they knew the origin of the feud between crows and owls.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Udapana-Dusaka Jataka (#271)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers. A jackal came each night and fouled their well. One night some of the ascetics surrounded the jackal and caught him. They brought the jackal before the Bodhisatta who asked why he was doing this. The jackal answered that it was the nature of jackals to spoil the spots where they drink (his father and grandfather had done the same), so nobody should be angry with him. The Bodhisatta condemned all jackals as foul beasts and told this one to go away and never return.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal of the past was an earlier birth of a jackal who used to foul a well at the Buddha's monastery. When some novices saw the jackal, they pelted him with clods of dirt, and he never returned. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the incident, he told them this story so they knew that the same jackal had also fouled his well in the past.

Vyaggha Jataka (#272)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. Another tree fairy lived in a tree near him, and a lion and a tiger also dwelled in the forest. For fear of the two big cats, no humans came into the forest to cut down trees.

The lion and tiger killed many animals, and the rotting corpses of their prey lay scattered around the forest. One day the other tree fairy told the Bodhisatta he was fed up with the stench of the carcasses and was going to drive the lion and tiger away. The Bodhisatta told him these two beasts protected their homes from humans and must be allowed to stay, but the other fairy was a fool and did not believe him. He took a terrifying physical form and scared the lion and tiger away to another forest.

Just as the Bodhisatta had said, when people saw that the fierce animals were gone, they began cutting down trees. The Bodhisatta told his foolish friend to go convince the lion and tiger to return. The fairy went to their new forest and begged, but they chose to stay. A few days later, the entire forest had been turned into farm fields and the tree fairies had to go live elsewhere.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The foolish tree fairy was an earlier birth of Cula Kokalika, a greedy disciple of the Buddha, and the lion and tiger were earlier births of Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples. Sariputta and Moggallana spent one

rainy season at Cula Kokalika's home, with the instruction not to tell the locals they were there. After the three months had passed, they set off back to the Buddha's monastery. Right after they departed, Cula Kokalika boasted to people about who had been staying with him. They quickly gathered food and robes to donate and rushed after the departed disciples to pay respect. Knowing that Sariputta and Moggallana were very frugal and would not accept the gifts, Cula Kokalika followed, expecting that the things would be given to him. But the elder disciples just told the people to keep everything, and this angered Cula Kokalika.

A short time later, Sariputta and Moggallana led a thousand disciples on an alms pilgrimage. When they passed through Cula Kokalika's town, the laypeople greeted them enthusiastically and donated many robes and other things. Again, Sariputta and Moggallana gave nothing to Cula Kokalika, and this time he was so furious he began insulting them for being greedy and selfish. So the disciples left the town. People begged them to stay, but could not change their minds. The angry people told Cula Kokalika to fix the problem he had created; and if he could not convince Sariputta and Moggallana to return, he would have to go live elsewhere. Fearful of losing his home, he went to the Buddha's monastery and begged Sariputta and Moggallana to come back with him because the people of his town respected and missed them. But they refused, so Cula Kokalika left the monastery alone.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing how Cula Kokalika both despised Sariputta and Moggallana, and yet desperately wanted them to return to his home, he told them this story so they knew that Cula Kokalika had also been in a can't-live-with-them, can't-live-without-them situation with Sariputta and Moggallana in the past.

Kacchapa Jataka (#273)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived alone in the Himalayas, and while he was sitting in daily meditation in his leaf hut, a mischievous, horrible monkey would come and ejaculate in his ear. But being blissfully calm, the Bodhisatta was not disturbed and did not stop him. One time the monkey saw a turtle sunning itself with its mouth open and he stuck his penis in it. The turtle bit down hard, leaving the monkey in agony. He realized that only the Bodhisatta could end his suffering, so he lifted the turtle with both hands and went to see him.

It looked like the monkey was holding an alms bowl, so the Bodhisatta jokingly asked, “Who are you, a brahmin? Where did you go to collect so much food?” implying the monkey was greedy. The monkey replied, “I’m just a foolish monkey who touched something I shouldn’t have. Set me free and I will go away.” The Bodhisatta said, “The marriage between your clans has been consummated: turtle, you can stop having sex now.” On hearing the Bodhisatta’s words, the turtle and the monkey released their grips. They both showed respect to the Bodhisatta and left, the monkey running far away, never to return.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey and the turtle were earlier births of two high-ranking soldiers who hated each other and spoke rudely every time they met. Neither the king nor their friends and family could set them right. One day the Buddha divined that

these two men were close to having a spiritual breakthrough, so the next morning he went out collecting alms at their houses. While sitting with them, the Buddha preached about loving-kindness and dharma so eloquently that they both became disciples. The two soldiers forgave each other and were harmonious from then on.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how he had humbled the two soldiers, he told them this story so they knew that he had also reconciled the same two men in previous lives.

Lola Jataka (#274)

This story is the same as the Kapota Jataka (#42).

Rucira Jataka (#275)

This story is the same as the Kapota Jataka (#42).

Kurudhamma Jataka (#276)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He ruled the kingdom of Kuru righteously and generously, keeping the ten royal virtues and the five precepts, as did everyone else in the palace. His subjects were happy and prosperous, and he was loved across India.

The kingdom of Kalinga, on the other hand, was suffering drought and famine, and the people lived in fear and poverty. The King of Kalinga tried to make rain by giving alms, observing the holy days, making vows of virtue, and lying on a grass pallet for seven days, but the drought continued uninterrupted. Then his advisors suggested he could bring rain to the kingdom by borrowing the Bodhisatta's auspicious state elephant. The King of Kalinga sent eight brahmins to Kuru to ask, and without hesitation the Bodhisatta gave them not only his elephant but also all its exquisite ornamentation and its mahout. The brahmins rode back to Kalinga, but still no rain fell.

Seeking other solutions, the advisors pointed out that the Bodhisatta faithfully followed the five precepts and this could be the source of the steady rain over his land. So the King of Kalinga sent the brahmins back to Kuru to return the elephant and take notes upon a golden tablet about the Bodhisatta's practice of the five precepts. They were granted an audience and thanked the Bodhisatta for the use of his elephant, but explained that it had not brought them rain. Then they told the Bodhisatta that their king wished to follow the five precepts and asked him to explain them. The

Bodhisatta grew somber and confessed that he had probably once broken the five precepts and so could not help them. During a festival, he shot arrows to the four directions to honor the gods, and one of them may have landed in a lake where it could have struck and killed a fish. The brahmins insisted that without intent there was no sin, so he agreed to tell them the five precepts: don't kill, don't steal, don't lust, don't lie, and don't get intoxicated.

But due to his self-doubt, the Bodhisatta told them to speak with his mother, who he said kept the five precepts without fail. But she had her own uncertainty and also did not feel confident about sharing her knowledge. Throughout the day, the brahmins were passed on to ten people who all agonized over tiny transgressions just like the Bodhisatta did. Their stories demonstrated just how diligently the people of Kuru followed the five precepts.

- The Bodhisatta's mother received two gifts, fine sandalwood perfume and a golden neckband, each worth one hundred thousand coins. She did not use either of these herself, so she passed them on to her daughters-in-law. Later, she worried that she had chosen wrong and should have given each of the women the opposite gifts.
- The queen had once looked at the viceroy with lust during a royal procession around the city, but she quickly regretted it and never acted on the urge.
- The viceroy paid his respects to the king each evening. Sometimes he went home afterward, and sometimes he spent the night in the palace. When it was the latter, his

entourage would go home and come back to get him in the morning. One time he intended to stay at the palace just a short while, but it started raining, so he changed his mind and slept there. He forgot to tell his servants, so they stayed up all night in the rain waiting for him to come out. The next morning when he saw them, he felt terrible that his absentmindedness had caused so many people so much discomfort.

- The royal chaplain had seen a beautiful chariot given as a gift to the king and wished he could have it, though he didn't mention this to anyone. Later, the king offered him the chariot, but he refused because he felt so guilty about having previously desired it.
- The royal driver was once helping a farmer measure his field. He took one end of the rope, tied it to a stick, and walked to the edge of the field, where he found a crab hole. He did not want to place the stick in the hole, possibly hurting the crab; on the near side of the hole, causing the farmer to lose a bit of land; or on the far side of the hole, causing the king to lose a little land. But he had to choose, and he guessed that if the crab were there, it would have already shown itself; so he put his stick in the hole. And when he did, he heard a clicking sound from inside and worried he might have killed the crab.
- One evening while the charioteer was taking the king home from the royal park, storm clouds approached, so he poked the horses to speed them up. The horses interpreted this as a response to some danger, and ever after, when the horses reached that same spot, they

rushed back to the palace at full speed and were very tired.

- A rich man passed by his rice paddy and saw a head of rice bursting open, so he grabbed a handful to take home. Then he realized he had not yet given the king his share of the harvest, which must be done before a farmer can take his own rice home.
- Once while the master of the royal granaries was measuring the portion of a farmer's rice that would be given to the king, it began to rain. He quickly swept up a few loose grains that were being used as markers to keep count, tossed them into one of the heaps, and ran indoors. He became stressed because he couldn't remember whether he had incorrectly put the loose grains on the pile that had already been measured or on the unmeasured pile where they had come from.
- Once when the gatekeeper called out the evening warning that the city gate was about to close, a poor man and a younger woman ran up just in time. The gatekeeper criticized them for cutting it so close when the king was in the city and insulted him by saying they had snuck out for a tryst. When the man explained that he was actually out collecting firewood with his sister, the gatekeeper felt remorse for his words.
- A high-class prostitute had taken one thousand coins from a man who promised to visit her soon. Three years passed and the man never came, but she was an honorable woman and did not take any more customers for that entire time. But she had grown very poor and so went to court. Because such a long time had passed, the judges cleared her obligation to the customer and told

her she could go back to work as normal. Right after she walked out of court, a man propositioned her, and as soon as she held out her hand to take his money, she saw the man from three years ago and was filled with guilt, so she pulled her hand back and turned down her new suitor. The man from the past then revealed himself as Indra, king of the gods. Floating in the air, he explained that he had been testing her virtue, and she had shown herself to be so righteous that people should take their example from her. He filled her home with the seven precious jewels and returned to heaven.

With everybody's story and advice recorded on the golden tablet, the brahmins returned home and gave it to their king. And when he fulfilled the five precepts, rain began to fall. The kingdom again thrived and the people no longer lived in fear.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day after bathing in a river, two disciples saw geese flying overhead, and both claimed they could throw a stone and hit one in the eye. The first disciple missed, but the other hit a goose's near eye and his stone came out through the other. The goose fell dead at their feet. Other disciples who saw this rebuked him for killing a living creature and took him to meet with the Buddha. He asked the disciple why he would do such a terrible thing after embracing the religious life that leads to salvation. Then the Buddha told him this story as an example of people feeling remorse over trivial things and said he should act like these ten people.

The Bodhisatta's mother and queen were earlier births of the Buddha's birth mother and wife. The other pious people were earlier births of some of the Buddha's top disciples: in order of appearance, they were Nanda, Maha Kassapa, Maha Kaccana, Anuruddha, Sariputta, Moggallana, Punna, and Uppalavanna.

Romaka Jataka (#277)

The Bodhisatta was once a pigeon. He and the flock he led fed around an ascetic's forest hut, and visited him from time to time to hear his wise words. After the ascetic had lived there for fifty years, the villagers served him a meal of pigeon, and he thought it tasted so good he decided to kill and eat some pigeons from the Bodhisatta's flock.

The ascetic gathered the ingredients he would need for cooking (rice, ghee, milk, cumin, and pepper) and sat at the entrance to his hut with a staff hidden under his robe, waiting for the pigeons. When the Bodhisatta arrived, he noticed something about the ascetic was not right. Then he smelled the aroma of his recent pigeon meal and knew what the ascetic planned to do. The Bodhisatta told his flock to fly away.

The ascetic tried to sweet-talk the Bodhisatta into returning, asking why after decades of showing respect, he now treated him this way. The Bodhisatta answered that he had only now learned he was a false ascetic. Knowing that his plan had been uncovered, the ascetic threw his staff at the Bodhisatta, but missed. The Bodhisatta told him, "You have missed me with your staff, but you will not miss the torments of hell." The Bodhisatta threatened to expose his true nature to the villagers if he remained, so the ascetic went away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The false ascetic was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Devadatta's evil ways, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried unsuccessfully to kill him in the past.

The good ascetic who lived there before the false ascetic arrived was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mahisa Jataka (#278)

The Bodhisatta was once a buffalo. One day a rude monkey came down from its tree to play on the Bodhisatta—he hung from his horns, swung on his tail, and defecated on his back. Being full of patience and mercy, the Bodhisatta ignored the monkey's misconduct. So the monkey came and did it again and again, day after day.

A tree fairy who lived in the monkey's tree asked the Bodhisatta why he allowed such behavior and didn't trample or gore the monkey. He answered that his destiny required moral behavior, but he was sure that someday the monkey would do it to a different buffalo and get the fate he deserved, leaving the Bodhisatta guiltlessly free of this irritation. And as the Bodhisatta predicted, when a different buffalo stood below the monkey's tree, he climbed down to make mischief just as he always did. But this other buffalo shook the monkey off his back, drove a horn through his heart, and trampled him into mincemeat.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day a family's pet monkey climbed onto an elephant's back and defecated. The elephant was virtuous and patient and did nothing in response. But when the monkey returned to the stable another day, there was a different elephant in it. When it suffered similar mischief, this elephant picked up the monkey in its trunk and smashed it to the ground, then trod all over it.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how the monkey had died, he told them this story so they knew that this very same monkey had behaved and suffered similarly in an earlier birth. The bad buffalo was an earlier birth of the bad elephant.

Satapatta Jataka (#279)

The Bodhisatta was once a thief. A man had died before recovering a loan of one thousand coins. Later, as this man's wife lay on her deathbed, she told her son to go collect the debt. And just after he picked up the money, his mother died. She loved her son so dearly that immediately after her death she was reborn as a jackal in a forest along the road he was heading home on. The Bodhisatta and his crew were lying in wait there to kill travelers and take their money. The mother ran up to her son and tried to tell him to take a different route home, but he could not understand her howls and he threw sticks and clods of dirt to drive her off.

After his mother left, a crane flew over the forest and told the Bodhisatta that the man coming had one thousand coins and should be robbed and killed. The son also could not understand the bird's calls. Thinking that the sound was a good omen, he shouted thanks to the bird. The Bodhisatta had heard both the jackal and the crane, and he did understand their messages, so he knew that the son was a fool, unable to recognize friend and foe. When he caught the son, the Bodhisatta told him the real meanings of the jackal and the crane's cries, and then let him go without robbing him.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Two disobedient disciples of the Buddha openly questioned his doctrine and encouraged their friends to do the same. When the Buddha confronted them, he said the wicked pair

were like the crane who exposed a good man and told this story to explain. Then he advised being careful when choosing who to take advice from.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Puta-Dusaka Jataka (#280)

The Bodhisatta was once a householder. While walking in a park, he saw the gardener up in a tree collecting large leaves to use as bowls. As the gardener dropped the leaves to the ground, a monkey was destroying them. The Bodhisatta assumed the monkey foolishly thought he was being helpful and told him to stop. The monkey replied that he wasn't trying to help anyone; destroying things was simply the nature of monkeys. The Bodhisatta, noting that the monkey was in the odd position of acting both properly and improperly at the same time, told him to go away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey was an earlier birth of a gardener's young son. While they were being served a meal in a park, some of the Buddha's disciples saw the gardener up in a tree collecting large leaves to use as bowls and his son destroying them as they fell to the ground. When they told the Buddha what they had seen, he told them this story so they knew that the boy had also destroyed leaf bowls in the past.

Abbhantara Jataka (#281)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who had many followers studying with him in the Himalayas. One time they all went down from the mountains to get salt and seasoning, and took up residence in a park near the king's palace. The Bodhisatta and his band of ascetics were all so wise and virtuous that when Indra, king of the gods, became aware of them he got jealous and wanted them to feel distressed. Indra set his plan in motion by sneaking into the queen's bedchamber at night and telling her that if she ate a "middle mango" she would conceive a son who would grow up to be a universal monarch. The next morning, the queen pretended to be ill. When the king came to see her, she told him of her craving for a middle mango. She didn't know what it was, but she knew she would die if she did not get one.

The king also had no idea what a middle mango was, so he gathered his advisors and asked them about it. They told him simply to pick a mango growing between two others, and the king sent some men to his park to do it. But Indra had all the mangoes there disappear and made the men report that the Bodhisatta's group had eaten them. The king ordered his men to beat the Bodhisatta and the other ascetics and evict them from the park. Indra's plan had worked, and he felt relaxed again. But the queen still longed for a middle mango.

The king called upon his chaplains and they told him they knew of middle mangoes only from ancient stories, which said they grew on Golden Mountain deep in the Himalayas in the realm of Vessavana, the guardian god of the north, where

humans are forbidden. But parrots could travel there, they said. So the king told his favorite pet parrot, who was fed sweet grains from a golden plate and who loved the king very much, what he needed to do, and the grateful bird promised to do it. When he reached the Himalayas, he asked many other parrots where middle mangoes grew, but nobody knew. Eventually, once he was deep into the seventh range, he met some parrots who knew of Golden Mountain's middle mangoes, but there was no way to reach the tree: it was covered with seven iron nets and guarded by billions of goblins.

But the parrot was determined to go, and he asked for directions. Once he got there, the parrot waited until the dead of night, when the goblins were sleeping, to sneak in and grab a fruit. But as he approached, he rattled a net and the goblins awoke and seized him. As they discussed various ways to kill him, the parrot explained that just as they were loyal to their master, he was loyal to his, and he had no regrets about giving his life in service to his king. Doing so meant he would be reborn in heaven. This display of dedication pleased the goblins, and they spared the parrot's life because he was righteous.

Grateful, but still committed to his mission, the parrot asked the goblins to give him a fruit from their tree. But they couldn't. Every fruit was marked, and if any went missing, they would be killed. But they told the parrot about an ascetic living further up the mountain who got a regular gift of four middle mangoes from Vessavana. So the parrot went and told the ascetic about the queen's desire, and he offered

two mangoes, one for the parrot to eat and one, tied around the parrot's neck, to take back to the palace. The parrot returned, and the queen's craving was, at last, satisfied—though she did not get pregnant, because Indra had lied.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The queen was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife, who had become a disciple. One day she got terrible stomach pains from gas. It was a common affliction for her and was cured by mango juice with sugar, but since she now lived on alms, she did not know how to get this. Her son Rahula, a novice disciple, said he would help her. He told Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples (the ascetic with the middle mangoes was an earlier birth of him), about his mother's illness and what she needed to cure it, and Sariputta said he would get it for her.

The next day, Sariputta went to the palace to explain his need, and the king himself crushed and sweetened some mangoes for her. Once she drank the juice, her pain went away. From then on, the king sent mango juice to her every day.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing his wife's stomach problem, he told them this story so they knew that she'd been in a similar situation in the past, and that Sariputta had resolved it then too.
The parrot was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Seyya Jataka (#282)

The Bodhisatta was once the King of Varanasi, and he ruled righteously, wisely, and generously. He had expelled one of his advisors from the kingdom for making personal use of the royal harem, and this man later became the chief advisor to the King of Kosala. The ex-advisor convinced this king that the Bodhisatta was a weak leader and could easily be conquered. Upon hearing his plan, the King of Kosala suspected that his advisor was a traitor sent to lead him into a trap; but the advisor said he could prove it. He told the king to send some men to massacre a village across the border; then he would see that they would not be punished. The king did so. The murderous attackers were captured and sent to the palace, where the Bodhisatta asked why they had killed the villagers. When they answered that it was because they were poor and could not find work, the Bodhisatta made them promise not to do it again, gave them money, and set them free.

Though things transpired just as his advisor said they would, the King of Kosala was still not convinced. He repeated the test twice more, the last time inside the capital city, and after the same result he realized his new advisor was right about the Bodhisatta being a thoroughly righteous man and no threat at all. The now confident King of Kosala set out on conquest with his army and elephants. Varanasi had the bravest, fiercest warriors in all of India, and when word spread of the coming invasion, they begged the Bodhisatta to set them loose, as did his advisors. But the Bodhisatta was steadfast that he would not allow anyone to suffer, and he prohibited resistance. When the invaders arrived at the city,

the Bodhisatta opened the gate and let them in. The effortlessly victorious King of Kosala ordered the Bodhisatta and his whole court imprisoned.

As he sat in chains, the Bodhisatta felt deep pity for his conqueror, and this created a strong burning pain in that king's body. Asking the cause of his torment, the king was told that it was because he had put a righteous king in prison. Realizing he had made a mistake, he asked the Bodhisatta for forgiveness, which was granted, and promised to help protect his kingdom from any future enemies. After punishing the advisor, the King of Kosala returned to his own kingdom.

The Bodhisatta told those gathered around him that it was only because of his dedication to kindness that he had been able to save his kingdom with no lives lost, and if they followed his example they would end up in heaven. Then he surrendered his throne and lived out his life as an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the king's servants was deeply devoted and very helpful. The king gave him the great honor that he deserved, but this made the others jealous and they concocted a slander against him, which the king believed without investigating. This innocent servant was imprisoned in chains, but he was so virtuous that he maintained his peace of mind and had a spiritual breakthrough in understanding the conditions of existence. Eventually the king learned the truth and set the servant free, and he now got even more honor than before.

Soon after his release, the servant visited the Buddha and told him how he had turned his recent misfortune into something positive. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past he himself had also turned evil into good.

The King of Kosala was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Vaddhaki-Sukara Jataka (#283)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. A carpenter had rescued a young wild boar from a pit in the forest and took it home as a pet. The boar was exceptionally clever and well-mannered and helped the man at his work by fetching tools, holding measuring lines, and turning over logs. The carpenter loved the boar and feared that someone might kill and eat him, so he set him free.

While searching for a new home, the carpenter's boar found a cave with lots of roots and fruits around it and asked if he could join the boars living there. They said he was welcome, but it was not as pleasant and safe a home as it appeared. Every morning, a tiger living on a nearby hill came and carried one of them off to eat. The carpenter's boar said he could kill the tiger if they followed his orders, and they all agreed.

That night the carpenter's boar taught them the art of war and chose the best location for their battle. He dug two pits and stood between them with all the other boars lined up behind him, the biggest and strongest boars standing around the small and young. When the tiger arrived, the boars did not run away as they usually did, instead they copied his actions: when the tiger glared, so did they; when he yawned, so did they; when he relieved himself, so did they. The boars had always run away or cowered in fear upon seeing him, so this morning the tiger retreated, unsure what to do when they stood bravely against him.
The tiger was friends with a false ascetic and always gave him a portion of his morning prey. When the false ascetic heard

why he got no meat that day, he told the tiger there was no reason to fear boars; one roar and a leap would scare them for sure. So the tiger went back and the boars took up their positions again. When the tiger roared and leaped at the carpenter's boar, he dove into one of the pits and the startled tiger stumbled and slid into the other. Then the carpenter's boar jumped into the tiger's pit, gored the tiger to death with his tusks, and tossed his body out. The other boars came and ate all the tiger's flesh; those who did not get to eat any sniffed the others' mouths hoping to get an idea of what tiger flesh tasted like.

The carpenter's boar was full of pride from his victory, but he noticed the other boars remained uneasy. He asked what the problem was now, and the other boars told him about the false ascetic. They worried that he would just recruit more tigers. But the carpenter's boar said killing a human was easier than killing a tiger and he marched everyone off to find the false ascetic. When he saw the boars approaching, the false ascetic ran and climbed up a giant fig tree. The carpenter's boar ordered the women to bring water to the tree's base, the children to dig away the mud, and the males to cut away at the roots. Then he charged at the tree to knock it over, and the false ascetic fell to the ground where other boars devoured him, leaving behind only bones.

Everyone was so grateful to the carpenter's boar that they hoisted him up on the tree trunk and consecrated him king using water poured from the false ascetic's skull. When it was all over, the Bodhisatta, who had watched everything happen,

materialized and praised the boars for working together in unity.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The carpenter's boar was an earlier birth of Dhanuggaha Tissa, one of the Buddha's elder disciples. King Ajatasattu was a devoted supporter of Devadatta (the false ascetic was an earlier birth of him), a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and had taken the throne by following Devadatta's advice to murder his father. The king's mother died of grief after the assassination, and her brother, King Pasenadi, the righteous ruler of an adjacent realm and a devoted supporter of the Buddha, was full of hatred for King Ajatasattu. King Pasenadi wanted to take back a village that had been part of the dowry given with his sister when she married King Ajatasattu's father, so he started a war.

King Pasenadi lost all the battles and was on the verge of being conquered. His advisors suggested getting advice from some of the Buddha's wise disciples, so the king sent men to listen in on conversations at the monastery. Early one morning, some of these men were near Dhanuggaha Tissa's leaf hut and they overheard him and another disciple discussing King Pasenadi's pitiful war-planning skills: "That stupid, pot-bellied Pasenadi, who can't even boil rice without spoiling it, knows nothing about the art of war." He declared that King Ajatasattu could be defeated by posting two garrisons on two hills and acting weak, then attacking from the front and the rear when the king's troops were between the hills. King Pasenadi followed this advice, and won the war.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this matter, he told them this story so they knew that Dhanuggaha Tissa had also planned a successful war in the past.

Siri Jataka (#284)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas. One time he went down to a city to get salt and seasoning. While out on a morning alms round, the Bodhisatta met a mahout who was very impressed by his demeanor and began supporting him with food and lodging.

During this time, a man who made a living gathering firewood lost track of time and, unable to return home before dark, was forced to sleep at a temple outside the city. During the night, a chicken high in a tree defecated on the back of another chicken. The two chickens began to argue and insult each other. The soiled chicken boasted that anyone who killed and ate him would get one thousand coins in the morning. The upper chicken continued to belittle the other, saying anyone who ate his choicest meat would become a king, eating his outer meat would make them the commander-in-chief or chief queen, and eating the meat by his bones would make them the king's treasurer or chaplain, depending on whether they were a layman or a holy man. The wood gatherer heard all this, so he climbed up the tree and killed the magical king-making chicken.

In the morning, when the city gate was opened, the wood gatherer rushed home and told his wife the good news. She promptly cooked the chicken, but because this was such an important event for their lives, they wanted to bathe in the Ganges River before eating. They put the chicken and rice down along the riverbank while they were in the water, and

the wind blew up some waves that washed their chicken away.

The platter with the magical chicken floated downriver where it was grabbed by the mahout, who was in the river bathing his elephants. Just at that time, the Bodhisatta divined what had happened and went to wait at the mahout's house for him to return. When the mahout got home, they sat down to eat and the Bodhisatta requested to be the one to serve the meal. He gave the mahout the best meat, his wife the outer, and himself the inner. After they ate, the Bodhisatta told the astonished couple that in three days they would be king and queen.

Three days later, a neighboring king came with his army and laid siege to the city. The king told the mahout to put on the royal robes to fight while he, in disguise, went with the foot soldiers. Right away, an arrow felled the king, and he died on the spot. The mahout, meanwhile, led the soldiers to battle and killed the invading king. After performing rites for their deceased king, the advisors had to choose a successor. Seeing as the king had given the royal robes to the mahout and the mahout had proven himself brave, skilled, and wise, they made the obvious choice. His wife became his queen and the Bodhisatta his chaplain.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, had given away all his wealth helping the poor, and he fell into poverty. But a fairy who lived above

one of his palace's gateways had been advised by Indra, king of the gods, to take some goblins and scare some of Anathapindika's debtors into repaying him, and to use her own supernatural powers to recover some treasure chests he had lost. Thanks to her assistance, Anathapindika became wealthy again.

A brahmin priest who was skilled at recognizing omens heard about Anathapindika's renewal and wanted to steal his luck. The wicked priest visited him at his home, and while there, he looked around and determined that Anathapindika's luck lay in the comb of a white rooster kept in a golden cage. Anathapindika asked the priest how he could help him, and the priest said his own rooster crowed at the wrong time, disrupting his students, so he wanted to take Anathapindika's rooster. Anathapindika said he could have it, but at that very moment, the luck jumped to a jewel hidden in a pillow. The priest asked for that jewel too, and when Anathapindika agreed, the luck jumped to a club he used for self-defense, so the priest also asked for that. Anathapindika again gave the priest what he wanted, and then the luck jumped to Anathapindika's wife's head. The priest knew he could not ask for a person, so he confessed his actual goal in meeting Anathapindika and left.

Anathapindika went to tell the Buddha about his strange encounter. The Buddha told Anathapindika that while it no longer happens, in the past, luck could be passed from one person to another, and he told him this story about one such incident.

The mahout who became king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Manisukara Jataka (#285)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived deep in the Himalayas. Thirty boars lived in a crystal cave near his hut, and a lion regularly walked by it. The stress from seeing the lion's menacing image in the crystal made them thin and unhealthy. To stop this, they tried to discolor the crystal by rubbing mud on it, but their bristles polished the crystal, making it even clearer. They asked the Bodhisatta how they could dull the crystal, and he told them it was impossible, so they should move to a new home. They followed his advice.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

As the Buddha's fame grew and his disciples multiplied, other religious teachers lost most of their followers. Upset over this, some heretics enlisted a beautiful woman named Sundari to destroy the Buddha's reputation so they would receive more praise and alms. They told her to walk along the road each evening in the direction of the Buddha's monastery and walk toward town each morning, telling anyone she passed that she and the Buddha were lovers. After a few days of letting this rumor spread, the heretics hired some men to kill her.

The heretics informed the king that one of their supporters had gone missing, and they suspected that disciples of the Buddha had killed her to hide their master's sin. The king took them at their word and sent his men through the streets telling people to go see Sundari's body in the cemetery so they knew what the Buddha's disciples had done. After this,

the king had some of his men investigate her murder and they overheard the killers discussing their crime. Brought before the king, they confessed and said who hired them. The king arrested the heretics and had them carry Sundari's body through the streets proclaiming their guilt and the Buddha's innocence.

Following this, the Buddha's reputation grew even greater. When he heard some of his disciples discussing the incident, he told them it is impossible to make a Buddha impure, just as you cannot stain fine jewels. Then he told them this story as an example of the latter.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Saluka Jataka (#286)

This story is the same as the Munika Jataka (#30).

Labha-Garaha Jataka (#287)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famed across the land. One of his students, a virtuous boy, asked him how people get ahead in the world. The Bodhisatta answered that there are four qualities that help people become prosperous: acting arrogant and angry, slandering people, being deceptive, and being unkind. The student did not approve of these wicked behaviors and vowed to live a religious life as an ascetic, which he did until the day he died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The student was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples. One day he asked Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, how someone becomes prosperous. Sariputta answered that there are four qualities that help people become wealthy: acting arrogant and angry, slandering people, being deceptive, and being unkind. The disciple did not approve.

When Sariputta told the Buddha about this conversation, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that it was not the first time this disciple had disapproved of this selfish way of life.

Macch-Uddana Jataka (#288)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy merchant. He and his younger brother went away on business and earned one thousand coins. On their way home, while waiting along the Ganges River for a boat to arrive, they ate a meal. The Bodhisatta threw his leftover food into the river for the fish and gave the merit he earned from this to the river spirit. Because he was the Bodhisatta, it was a lot of merit, and her divine power increased.

His brother was a wicked person and wanted to steal the Bodhisatta's share of the money, so he packed up a parcel of gravel that looked exactly like their money bundle. Later, when they were on the boat at mid-river, the brother pretended to stumble and dropped what he thought was the gravel overboard and said the money was lost. The Bodhisatta had no idea about the scheme and forgave his brother for losing it.

But the brother had unknowingly tossed the money. The river spirit decided to take care of the Bodhisatta and ordered a large fish to swallow the money parcel. She then had the fish caught near the Bodhisatta's home and made the fisherman try to sell it for one thousand rupees and seven annas, a price that people laughed at. But when he went to the Bodhisatta's door, he offered it for just seven annas, which the Bodhisatta paid.

When his wife cut the fish open, she found the coins in its stomach, and they were amazed. Then the river spirit appeared in the air and thanked him for sharing his merit and explained how she had taken care of the Bodhisatta's money. She also revealed how the brother had tried to steal it and suggested that such a terrible person should not get any money. But the Bodhisatta disagreed and gave his brother half.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's brother was an earlier birth of a dishonest merchant, and the Buddha told him this story as a way to get him to start living a virtuous life.

Nana-Cchanda Jataka (#289)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. One night, he walked around the city in disguise, and a band of thieves stole his upper robe. His father's former chaplain, who the Bodhisatta did not know, happened to be outside at the time and he saw in the constellations that the king had fallen into the hands of enemies, but was set free soon after. The king was very near the retired chaplain's home during his brief encounter with the thieves, and he overheard him telling his wife about it as it happened.

The next day, the Bodhisatta called his astrologers to the palace and asked if they had been observing the skies that night. They said they had, and they determined that it was a lucky period; so the Bodhisatta dismissed them all. Then the Bodhisatta sent for the retired chaplain and offered him a reward for his stargazing skill. The chaplain wanted to check with his family before deciding what to request, so he returned home and asked what they wanted. His wife asked for one hundred dairy cows, his son desired a chariot drawn by lily-white thoroughbred horses, his daughter-in-law wanted fancy jewelry, and their maid suggested a mortar and pestle and a winnowing basket. The retired chaplain wanted to control the revenue from a village. Back at the palace, he said his family could not agree on any one thing. The Bodhisatta said it was no problem; they could each have what they wished for. And the Bodhisatta also hired him as an advisor.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The retired chaplain was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. For twenty years, various people served as the Buddha's personal attendant, but one day the Buddha asked his disciples to choose one of them to look after him full-time. Ananda was nominated, and he said he would do it under eight conditions, four negative and four positive. "I will attend to the Buddha if he will not give me any of his robes, not give me any of his food, not allow me to sleep in his private chamber, and not bring me to places he is invited; but will go with me when I am invited somewhere, will let me introduce foreigners who come to visit, will allow me to discuss my doubts when they arise, and will repeat his teachings if I miss them because I am away." The Buddha agreed to them all, and Ananda served him faithfully for the next twenty-five years, until the Buddha entered nirvana.

After Ananda was chosen, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the matter and he told them this story so they knew that he had also granted wishes to Ananda in the past.

Sila-Vimamsa Jataka (#290)

This story is the same as the Silavimamsana Jataka (#86).

Bhadra-Ghata Jataka (#291)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. Before this, he was a wealthy merchant who was righteous and generous. When he died, he left his good-for-nothing son four hundred million coins. The son lived his life for alcohol and debauchery, and before long he had squandered his entire fortune and was homeless. The Bodhisatta loved his son, so when he became aware of his plight, he went to earth and gave him a "wishing cup"—as long as he had it, he would have unlimited money. The son continued to get drunk, and one day, while absentmindedly tossing the cup in the air, he dropped it, and it smashed on the ground. The cup broken, he lived out the rest of his miserable life as a beggar.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The useless son was an earlier birth of a ne'er-do-well nephew of Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity. The nephew had squandered his huge inheritance and came to his uncle for help. Anathapindika gave him one thousand coins, which he spent in no time, and then gave him another five hundred. This too was used up quickly, and then he only got two outfits. When these wore out, he came back for more, but Anathapindika sent him away. Unable to care for himself, the nephew soon lay down next to a wall and died.

When Anathapindika told the Buddha what had happened to his nephew, the Buddha told him this story about how he

himself had tried unsuccessfully to help the nephew in a past life.

Supatta Jataka (#292)

The Bodhisatta was once a crow, the king of a flock of eighty thousand others. One day, while out searching for food, his queen saw all sorts of fish being prepared in the human king's kitchen, and she craved them so much she thought she would die if she didn't get to eat some: if she couldn't eat the king's food, she wouldn't eat anything. The Bodhisatta was worried and explained the problem to his commander-in-chief, who said he would bring her some of the king's fish.

He flew to the palace with a team of crows and waited on the kitchen roof. When people started carrying the food inside, the commander-in-chief flew into one of the men, pecking his nose and causing him to drop all the dishes. Eight other crows swooped in to gather some of the spilled rice and fish in their beaks and flew back to feed the Bodhisatta and his wife. The man who was attacked captured the commander-in-chief crow and took him before the king.

The king was furious and asked the crow why he had done such a thing, knowing full well the punishment would be death. The crow explained the crow queen's craving and said he led the heist because he was completely dedicated to his king. The king was impressed that someone would be so devoted to their ruler; few people would ever do that for him. The king forgave the crow and invited the Bodhisatta to the palace to preach. After this, the king provided food daily for all the crows and protected all animals.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crow queen was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife, who had become a disciple. One day she got terrible stomach pains from gas. It was a common affliction for her and was cured by rice with ghee and red fish; but since she now lived on alms, she did not know how to get this. Her son Rahula, a novice disciple, said he would help her. He told Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples (the commander-in-chief was an earlier birth of him), about his mother's illness and what she needed to cure it, and Sariputta said he would get it for her.

The next day, Sariputta went to the palace to explain his need, and the king provided rice with ghee and red fish. Once she ate it, her pain went away. From then on, the king sent her this food every day.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing his wife's stomach problem, he told them this story so they knew that she'd been in a similar situation in the past, and that Sariputta had resolved it then too.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kaya-Vicchinda Jataka (#293)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He was born into a brahmin family, and as he started to amass some personal wealth, he fell dreadfully sick with jaundice. No doctor could help him. As he and his family worried he might die, the Bodhisatta promised that if he got well he would live a religious life. Eventually he took medicine that worked, and he fully recovered. He kept his promise and went off to the Himalayas to live as an ascetic and was never happier.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man fell sick with jaundice, and doctors thought his case was hopeless. The man vowed that he would live a religious life if he recovered. A few days later, he took medicine that cured him, so he became a disciple of the Buddha, and eventually an arahant.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this man's conversion, he told them this story so they knew that he himself had done the same thing in the past.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Jambu-Khadaka Jataka (#294)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy living in a rose apple tree. One day a jackal looked up and saw a crow eating fruit from this tree and hoped that with a bit of flattery the crow would drop some fruit down for him. “Your voice is as beautiful as a peacock’s,” he said. The crow answered, “You are noble like a young tiger,” and shook a branch to make some fruit drop. The Bodhisatta heard the two carrion-eating creatures lying to each other and, disliking both of them, took a fearful shape and scared them away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal and the crow were earlier births of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and Kokalika, a disciple of the Buddha who became one of Devadatta’s most devoted followers. After Devadatta began to get a bad reputation, he and Kokalika began praising each other’s lineage and religious knowledge as they went out on alms rounds.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that the pair had also lied about each other’s virtue in the past.

Anta Jataka (#295)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy living in a castor-oil tree. One day a crow perched in his tree saw a jackal eating an ox carcass down below and hoped that with a bit of flattery the jackal would share some of the flesh. “You look like a bull and act like a lion, may I share some of the flesh?” he said. The jackal answered, “Your neck is as beautiful as a peacock’s. Come have a bite.” When the Bodhisatta saw this, he commented that the lowest of animals, the lowest of birds, and the lowest of trees were gathered together.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal and the crow were earlier births of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and Kokalika, a disciple of the Buddha who became one of Devadatta’s most devoted followers. After Devadatta began to get a bad reputation, he and Kokalika began praising each other’s lineage and religious knowledge as they went out on alms rounds.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that the pair had also lied about each other’s virtue in the past.

Samudda Jataka (#296)

The Bodhisatta was once a spirit of the sea. One time he heard a “water crow” flying over the ocean, telling schools of fish and flocks of birds not to drink too much water. The Bodhisatta asked the water crow why he was doing this, and he answered that he was worried they would drink it all. Realizing the bird was a greedy fool, the Bodhisatta took a terrifying shape and chased him away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The “water crow” was an earlier birth of Upananda, a hypocritical disciple of the Buddha known for being extremely greedy while simultaneously preaching to others the importance of living a simple, virtuous life. During the rainy season, Upananda would leave something of his, such as an umbrella, waterpot, or walking stick, in a few different monasteries so he could collect robes from each of them.

At the monastery where he actually resided for the rainy season, Upananda encouraged the other disciples to replace their nice robes and alms bowls with rags and clay pots in order to develop their practice. Then he took all the discarded good robes and bowls for himself, and at the end of the rainy season he loaded everything he had gathered into a cart and hauled it to his regular monastery.

Many disciples were displeased with Upananda, and when the Buddha heard them discussing his greed, he said not only

were Upananda's actions wrong, but one should not preach until they have mastered the lesson themselves. Then he told them this story so they knew that Upananda had been similarly greedy in the past.

Kama-Vilapa Jataka (#297)

The Bodhisatta was once a spirit of the air. A poor couple planned to attend their city's large, elaborate night festival, and the wife was upset they had only old, coarse clothes. She wanted to wear safflower-dyed cloth, but there was no way for poor people like them to afford it. The wife didn't care what it took, she demanded safflower, telling her husband to sneak into the royal park to steal some. They knew this was a very foolish, dangerous thing to do, but the man could not convince his wife to be happy with what they had. And since he loved her very much, he agreed to do it.

Under cover of night, the man broke down a fence and got into the park. But the guards heard him and took him away in chains. Brought before the king the next morning, he was sentenced to death and led out of the city to the execution grounds, where he was impaled. As he slowly died in intense agony, with crows pecking out his eyes, he muttered to himself that his greatest pain was not being able to see his wife in beautiful new clothes. He asked a crow to tell his wife that his valuables were hidden in his pillow. Then he died and was reborn in hell. The Bodhisatta saw all this happen.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began longing for his wife from his lay life. The husband and wife seeking the safflower-dyed clothes were earlier births of this disciple and his wife, and the Buddha told the disciple this story from his past so he

knew that his wife was harmful to him and he should not crave her.

Udumbara Jataka (#298)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. During the rainy season, a large monkey, who was wet and miserable, saw a small monkey sitting comfortably at the mouth of its cave home. The large monkey wanted the cave for itself, so it puffed up its belly to look like it had just eaten a lot, walked past the cave, and lied to the small monkey that there were many ripe figs nearby. The small monkey searched for them in vain, then returned home to find the large monkey inside his cave. He knew he couldn't muscle the monkey out, so he tried to outwit him. "Thanks for telling me about the delicious fruit," he said. But the large monkey replied that this was a feeble trick and he wasn't going anywhere. So the small monkey left. The Bodhisatta saw all this happen.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkeys were earlier births of two disciples of the Buddha. The elder of the two disciples lived happily in a small comfortable home outside a friendly and supportive village. One day the other disciple was out collecting alms and came upon this house, and the elder hosted him there for a few days. The newcomer didn't want to leave and schemed to take the house from the elder. He told the elder that if he wanted to visit the Buddha, he would look after his house for him. The elder appreciated the offer and so went away for a few days. While the elder was gone, the newcomer told many lies about him. And upon the elder's return, the newcomer would not let him back into his own house, and the villagers,

who believed what they had heard, would no longer give him any food. So the elder went back to the Buddha's monastery.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about the elder's misfortune, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time the wicked disciple had turned the elder out of his own home.

Komaya-Putta Jataka (#299)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived alone in the Himalayas, though a band of carefree ascetics lived nearby. Rather than work toward religious ecstasy, they mostly sat around laughing and joking together. Their pet monkey was as vulgar as they were.

One time when the carefree ascetics traveled to a town to get salt and seasoning, the Bodhisatta took up residence in their monastery. When the monkey tried to play a prank, the Bodhisatta told him he ought to behave properly from then on, and the monkey did so.

Even after the Bodhisatta left the ascetics' home, the monkey remained virtuous. He told his keepers that he had learned proper behavior from the Bodhisatta and was now interested in meditating. The uncouth ascetics said they no longer liked him because he was boring, and no matter how hard he tried, he would never learn to meditate because he was just a monkey.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The uncouth ascetics were earlier births of some of the Buddha's disciples who one day were being loud and obnoxious in a room below where he was sitting. The Buddha asked Moggallana, one of his top disciples, to quiet them down. Moggallana floated in the air and touched the house's foundation with his big toe, which caused it to shake so violently the disciples ran outside in fear.

Sometime later, the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing how the loud disciples behaved badly and did not grasp core concepts like impermanence. He told this story so people knew they had been the same way in the past.

Vaka Jataka (#300)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. A wolf lived on a rock along the Ganges River, and when a flood arose, his rock became an island. Since he was cut off from the shore without food, the wolf planned to follow the precepts for the holy day. The Bodhisatta knew that the wolf was weak-willed, and he wanted to prove it, so he took the form of a goat and stood on the wolf's rock. As predicted, the wolf decided he would be virtuous another day and chased after the goat. The Bodhisatta escaped all his attacks and the wolf eventually gave up and went to lie down, thinking he hadn't broken any precepts. Then the Bodhisatta revealed himself and rebuked the wolf for breaking his holy-day vow.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's top disciples, Upasena, followed additional austerities (such as wearing robes made from discarded fabric and eating only one meal a day) that were recommended but not required by the Buddha. Disciples who followed them earned the special privilege of being able to visit the Buddha at anytime. Some of the young disciples who studied with Upasena normally wore nice clean robes, but they put on rag robes when they wanted to talk to the Buddha so he would come out of seclusion.

One time the Buddha saw piles of rags in these disciples' quarters and realized what they were doing. He commented that their short-lived practices were like the wolf observing

the holy day and told them this story to explain the comparison.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Cullakalinga Jataka (#301)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. King Kalinga was a fierce ruler with a strong army, and he wanted to fight a war. He sent his four beautiful daughters out in a carriage to travel around India, hoping that a king would want them and be willing to fight for them. But every king they encountered would not even let the women into their cities in order to avoid any risk of conflict. When the daughters came to King Assaka's kingdom, he shut the city gates, just like every other king had done, but his wise advisor Nandisena declared that to maintain the kingdom's pride and reputation as courageous, they should fight. Nandisena convinced King Assaka he would be victorious in any battle, so he took the four women as wives.

King Kalinga was excited by the news and sent his army out immediately. Nandisena sent a message that they would battle at the frontier between their kingdoms in two days. The Bodhisatta lived in this border region, and Nandisena went to ask him who would win the war. The Bodhisatta answered that he could not know, but Indra, king of the gods, was coming to visit soon, and he would know the answer. Indra told him King Kalinga, who had a white bull as his guardian deity, would defeat King Assaka and his black bull guardian. This answer worried King Assaka, but Nandisena was not discouraged in the least and still believed his plan would lead to victory.

On the day of the battle, Nandisena assembled his troops atop a mountain and told them the way to victory was for

them to throw themselves off the cliff, sacrificing their lives for their king. As the men charged forth to do so, Nandisena stopped them and said it was only a test of their bravery and loyalty. Then he led them to the battlefield filled with confidence. The two kings faced off, their respective guardian deities, visible only to themselves, standing in front of them. At this time, Nandisena told King Assaka to jump off his horse and strike the white bull with his spear, and the soldiers ran to join this attack. With his white bull guardian dead, King Kalinga cursed the Bodhisatta, who he assumed had lied about the outcome, and fled in fear.

Nandisena sent a message to King Kalinga telling him that if he did not want another defeat, he should send a bride-price for the four daughters promptly. King Kalinga did so, and from then on the two kings lived together peacefully.

When Indra next came to visit the Bodhisatta, he asked why the prediction about the battle had been wrong. Indra answered that Nandisena's cleverness overcame King Kalinga's strength, and wisdom is more important than power.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A clan arranged a marriage between two expert debaters so they would have clever children who could carry on their skills. Their five children, four girls and a boy, grew up learning one thousand different topics for debate. Their parents told the daughters (who had been King Kalinga's four daughters in earlier births) that when they grew up, if they

ever lost a debate to a layman they should marry him, and if they lost to a holy man they should become his disciple. While the son remained in his hometown, the four daughters wandered town to town debating everybody they could.

When the daughters reached the town near where the Buddha lived, they stuck a rose apple tree branch in a pile of dust by the city gate and told some boys that if anyone wanted to debate, they should crush the branch under their feet. While the daughters were off collecting alms, one of the Buddha's top disciples, Sariputta (who had been Nandisena in an earlier birth), walked by and saw the challenge. He told the boys to crush the branch for him and send the women to find him. Soon a great crowd gathered at the Buddha's monastery. The women presented Sariputta with all one thousand topics, and he solved every one. Then he stumped them with a question of his own. Defeated, they ordained as disciples that same day, and reached arahantship soon after.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Sariputta had converted the women, he told them this story so they knew that in the past Sariputta had also taken in these four women following a victory.

Mahaassaroha Jataka (#302)

The Bodhisatta was once a king, virtuous and generous. He had gone off to fight a battle in a border region, and when he was defeated, he escaped on his horse to safety in a small village. When he arrived there, wearing full battle armor, the villagers fled in fear, except for one man who asked whether he was a royalist or rebel. The Bodhisatta did not reveal himself and answered simply, “I support the king.” The villager, also being for the king, brought the stranger to his home, caring for him and his horse for a few days so he could rest and recuperate. When he was ready to leave, the Bodhisatta told the man that if he ever came to the city, please come see him; ask at the city gate for Maha Assaroha, the “Great Horseman.”

Back home, the Bodhisatta left standing orders with the gatekeepers that any man who asked for Maha Assaroha was to be brought immediately to the palace. But the man, having no reason to visit the city, never came. To entice him, the Bodhisatta raised the village’s taxes, but he still did not come. So the Bodhisatta raised the taxes a second time, and then a third. Finally, the villagers, suffering from the unfair burden, suggested the man go to the city and see if the stranger he met could intervene with the king on their behalf. They gathered gifts of clothes and a fried cake for the Bodhisatta and his family, and the man took them to the city.

Hearing the name “Maha Assaroha,” the guard took the man to the palace, where he learned his former houseguest’s real identity. The Bodhisatta was thrilled to see the villager and

treated him like an equal: he gave the man a silk robe worth one hundred thousand coins to wear, told him to sit on his throne, and ordered his chief queen to wash his feet. Then the Bodhisatta beat the drum to call an assembly and announced that he was giving the villager half his kingdom. The man relocated his family to the city, and he and the Bodhisatta became inseparable friends, ruling in perfect harmony.

The Bodhisatta's son and his advisors were not pleased with this and eventually worked up the courage to ask him what the man had done to deserve such a rich reward. The Bodhisatta explained how the man had helped him after his defeat in battle and that such noble kindness must be rewarded. Hearing this, the men had no more complaints.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The helpful villager was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. When a king received one thousand splendid, expensive robes, he gave one to each of his five hundred wives, and they, in turn, gave them to Ananda, who was their dharma teacher. The next morning when they had breakfast, the king asked his wives why they were not wearing their beautiful new clothes. When they told him, the king figured Ananda was secretly making money by selling them, and he got angry, so he went to confront him.

He asked Ananda why he took five hundred robes when the Buddha's rules forbid his disciples from having more than

three. Ananda explained that though he accepted the gift, he did not keep it; instead he gave robes to other disciples who needed new ones. Then, to explain to the king that no offerings were wasted, he told what happened to old robes when disciples got new ones. First they were turned into cloaks, which were later sewn into shirts, which then became bed sheets, then mats, then towels, then finally the worn fabric was chopped up into bits and mixed into mortar for building houses. The king was pleased with what he learned and gave Ananda the other five hundred robes.

Ananda passed on this new batch to a young disciple as a thank you for all the support he gave him—things like sweeping his room, serving him food and drink, cleaning the bathroom—and let him distribute them to other young disciples. Some disciples asked the Buddha if it had been proper for Ananda to give such a large gift to someone inferior to him. The Buddha explained that Ananda's gift was acceptable because it was given out of gratitude: it was simply a matter of one good deed deserves another. Then the Buddha told them this story so they knew that in the past he himself had once rewarded someone of lower status for being helpful.

Ekaraja Jataka (#303)

This story is the same as the Seyya Jataka (#282).

Daddara Jataka (#304)

The Bodhisatta was once a naga. His father was a wise naga king and his younger brother was cruel and hot-headed, always getting in trouble. One time after the brother struck some female nagas, his father got so angry he ordered him expelled, but the Bodhisatta convinced him to change his mind. The same thing happened a second time, but after the third time, the father was so fed up that he ordered both the brother and the Bodhisatta to go to the human city and live on a dunghill for three years; and this time his mind could not be changed.

When some boys saw the pair scrounging for food, they mocked them and threw sticks and things at them. The younger brother was furious about this disrespect and told the Bodhisatta they should kill the boys with their poisonous breath. The Bodhisatta calmed him down and explained that they were in a foreign land where nobody knew about their rank, so they had no choice but to endure abuse from low-class people. This was an important lesson for the brother, and after the exile was over he returned home with a humbler heart.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The younger naga brother was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had a bad temper. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that he had been the same in the past and had overcome the problem.

Silavimamsana Jataka (#305)

The Bodhisatta was once a student. He had a world-renowned teacher and was at the top of his class. The teacher had a grown-up daughter and wanted to give her away in marriage to one of his students, so he tested their virtue. He told his students that his daughter was getting married (without saying to who) and said he needed proper dresses and ornaments for her, so they should steal some. He would not accept anything the owners saw being taken, only things stolen secretly.

All the students brought him things except the Bodhisatta. The teacher asked why he was not helping, and the Bodhisatta answered there is no secrecy in wrongdoing because gods can see everything everywhere. The teacher was pleased with his words, and then explained to the students that he had more than enough money to prepare a wedding and this was only a test of their virtue. He told the other students to return the stolen goods and told the Bodhisatta he had won his daughter's hand.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred friends had heard the Buddha discuss dharma, and they renounced the world together to become his disciples. One night thoughts of desire filled their heads. The Buddha constantly watched over his disciples—the same as a one-eyed man guards his eye, a father his son, and a yak its tail—so he knew what was happening to them. He called an assembly and lectured them, explaining there is no secrecy in

wrongdoing, and he told them this story as an example. When the Buddha was finished, all five hundred disciples became arahants.

The teacher was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sujata Jataka (#306)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day the king saw a beautiful woman selling jujube fruit outside the palace, and he fell in love at first sight. She was unmarried, so he made her his chief queen. Sometime later, while the king sat eating jujubes from a golden dish, she pretended to have never seen one and asked what fruit he was eating. The king was furious at her haughty display. He told her they were going to divorce, and she would go back to working for her family's fruit business. The Bodhisatta told the king not to be angry because this was normal behavior for women suddenly raised from low rank to high. So the king forgave her, and she never acted like that again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and his jujube-selling queen were earlier births of King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, and Queen Mallika, his exceptionally wise chief queen. One time the king was so angry with Queen Mallika that he completely ignored her. The Buddha resolved to make peace between them, so he went to collect alms at the palace. When the king served rice and cakes, the Buddha covered his bowl. He asked why the queen was absent, and the king explained that she had become intoxicated with pride and he didn't want to be around her. The Buddha said the king, by making her a queen, was the cause of her inflated ego, so it was wrong of him to discard her like this. The king accepted this wisdom, and from then on the couple lived together in happiness.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how he had reconciled the king and queen, he told them this story so they knew that he had also done the same thing to the same people in the past.

Palasa Jataka (#307)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. A poor man began tending the Bodhisatta's Judas tree: sweeping the ground below it; pulling grass around its roots; and offering flowers, perfumes, and incense. Every day he greeted the tree and wished it "Peace be with thee" as he departed. The Bodhisatta appreciated the attention and wanted to know why the man worshipped him.

The next time the man came to sweep, the Bodhisatta took human form and asked why he prayed to this tree. The man answered that he deeply respected tree spirits and assumed they guarded treasures. The Bodhisatta was so pleased with this answer that he identified himself as the spirit of the tree and said he would give the man his buried treasure. And, not wanting to inconvenience the man, he magically transported it to his home. The Bodhisatta bid him farewell with a reminder to live a moral life and be generous giving alms.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The poor man was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. While the Buddha was on his deathbed, Ananda felt that the twenty-five years of service he had given to the Buddha would be fruitless because he had not yet achieved arahantship, and he broke down crying. When the Buddha heard about this, he sent for Ananda and assured him that his support had not been for naught and told him this story of how his own efforts in the past were eventually rewarded.

Javasakuna Jataka (#308)

The Bodhisatta was once a woodpecker. One day he saw a lion suffering and asked what ailed it. The lion answered that a bone was stuck in his throat, causing him pain and preventing him from eating anything. After the lion promised not to eat him, the Bodhisatta agreed to help. But not entirely trusting the lion, he propped his mouth open with a stick for added safety before poking his head in to dislodge the bone. Then he kicked out the stick and flew away into a tree without a word of thanks from the lion.

Sometime later, the Bodhisatta saw the lion eating a wild buffalo. He flew onto a tree branch nearby and asked if he could get something for saving the lion's life. The lion told him that not eating him when he had the chance was sufficient reward.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The lion was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. While discussing Devadatta's ingratitude one time, the Buddha told this story so people knew that Devadatta had also been ungrateful in the past.

Chavaka Jataka (#309)

The Bodhisatta was once an untouchable. His wife was pregnant and got an insatiable craving for a mango, but it wasn't mango season. He offered to get her some other fruit, but she insisted she must have a mango, or else she would die. The Bodhisatta loved his wife and thought hard about where he could find a mango for her. Then he remembered the special mango tree in the royal park that bore fruit year-round. The Bodhisatta snuck into the park late at night and climbed the tree, stepping branch to branch seeking a ripe fruit. Before he found one, twilight broke, and he knew that if he came down, he would be seen and arrested. So he went high up to wait out the day and go home in the dark of the next night.

During the day, the king came to study sacred texts with his chaplain under this mango tree. The king sat in a high seat and the chaplain took the seat below him. The Bodhisatta was aghast at the two wicked men—a holy teacher should always sit above his students—and this made him feel shame over his own sin. So he swung down from the tree and boldly rebuked the pair for their misdeeds. The king was extremely impressed by his knowledge and said he would have given the Bodhisatta his crown if he hadn't been from a low caste. The best he could do was share the kingdom, the king ruling in the daytime and the Bodhisatta ruling at night, and he placed a garland of red flowers around the Bodhisatta's neck. From then on, the king always took the lower seat when studying.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Six disobedient disciples of the Buddha known for flouting the rules were caught teaching from a low seat while their students sat above them. When the Buddha confronted them, he told them this story so they knew that he had dealt with a similar situation in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sayha Jataka (#310)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was the son of the king's chaplain and was raised in the palace with the crown prince. The two men were very close friends, and when the prince became king, the Bodhisatta knew he would be asked to replace his own father and become the royal chaplain. But he did not want this, so he went off to the Himalayas to live as an ascetic. Not long after, the king was ready to appoint the Bodhisatta as chaplain and sent his men to bring him back to the city. When the messenger told the Bodhisatta of the king's wish, he answered that he would not return and give up his simple, holy life even if he were to be made a universal monarch.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, while out on a morning alms round, saw a woman so beautiful he fell in love at first sight. After returning to the monastery, he became depressed and longed for his old life. The Buddha told him a religious life leading to salvation was better than a worldly life and told him this story as an example.

The king and messenger were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Pucimanda Jataka (#311)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy who lived in a neem tree in a cemetery. One day a thief fresh from a job came and rested under the Bodhisatta's tree. In those days, thieves were impaled with stakes made from neem tree branches, and if the thief was caught there, the Bodhisatta's tree would be damaged. So the Bodhisatta told the thief that the king's men were fast on his trail and he should flee immediately. And the thief did.

Another tree fairy who lived in a nearby Bodhi tree asked the Bodhisatta why he helped the thief, and the Bodhisatta said he did not want a branch cut off. The people chasing the thief arrived soon after and saw that he had rested there. Before continuing the chase, one of them said that after catching the thief they would bring him back there to be hung from this neem tree or impaled with a branch from it. The Bodhi tree fairy commented how wise the Bodhisatta was for thinking about the future.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day while Moggallana, one of the Buddha's top disciples, was residing out in a forest, a suspicious-looking man came and lay down in front of his leaf hut. Moggallana, presuming he was a thief, told him to go away. Shortly after the man left, a group of men bearing torches arrived in pursuit of the thief and saw that his track stopped at Moggallana's hut. Since the thief wasn't there, they continued on, though they could not find him.

The next morning, Moggallana told the Buddha what had happened, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past he himself had also shooed a thief away from his home.

The Bodhi-tree fairy was an earlier birth of Sariputta, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kassapamandiya Jataka (#312)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived in the Himalayas with his father and younger brother, and like most ascetics living in remote locations, they spent rainy seasons down in the realm of men because it was difficult to get wild roots and fruits when it rained. After the rains stopped, they left the city and headed back to their leaf huts. On the final day of their journey home, the Bodhisatta walked ahead of the others to get everything in order. The father walked very slowly and his young son tried to speed him up by pushing him in the back. The two quarreled, and the father got so annoyed he turned around and started the walk again from the place where the Bodhisatta had left them.

Because of the father's bad temper, night fell before the two had reached their home. The Bodhisatta took a torch and walked back to find them. They told him what had happened, and when safely back at their huts the Bodhisatta told his father that young boys are like clay pots: they are easily broken and he needed to be patient, even when his son was wrong. The father followed the advice from that point forward.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A young nobleman became a disciple of the Buddha, and not long after, he reached arahantship. When the nobleman's mother died, his elderly father and younger brother joined him as disciples—the Bodhisatta's father and brother were earlier births of these two men. The three went to a village

for the rainy season, and when it was over, they walked back to the Buddha's monastery. When they got nearby, the young nobleman walked quickly ahead of the others to prepare their rooms. The father walked very slowly and his young son tried to speed him up by pushing and pulling him. The two quarreled, and the father got so annoyed he turned around and started the walk again from the beginning.

Because of the father's bad temper, night fell before they reached the monastery. The young nobleman took a torch and walked back to find them, so he had to wait until the next day to pay his respects to the Buddha. When the Buddha asked the young nobleman why he came late, he explained what his father and brother had done. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past his father had annoyed he himself in the same way.

Khantivadi Jataka (#313)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas. One time he went down to a city to get salt and vinegar, and he slept in the royal park. The next morning, while on an alms round, he met the commander-in-chief, who was impressed by the Bodhisatta's demeanor. He invited the Bodhisatta to his home for a meal and promised to support him during his time staying in the park.

One day the king got drunk and came into the park with a company of dancers and musicians from his harem. While watching the entertainment, the king fell asleep, and most of the women went for a walk. When they met the Bodhisatta, they asked him to preach something worthwhile, and he agreed. When the king woke up, he was enraged that the women were gone. Grabbing his sword, he went off to get them and punish the Bodhisatta. When the king found them, he asked the Bodhisatta what the sermon was about. Patience, he answered, adding that one should not get angry even if someone insults or abuses you. "Let's see if you practice what you preach!" the king said, and he summoned the executioner.

The king ordered the executioner to flog the Bodhisatta two thousand times with a whip made of thorns. With the Bodhisatta covered in blood, the king again asked what his lesson was. The Bodhisatta once more answered patience, adding that his own patience was not skin deep, it was in his heart. So the king continued torturing and taunting. He had the executioner cut off the Bodhisatta's hands, then his feet,

nose, and ears. Through it all, the Bodhisatta showed perfect patience and did not get angry. Finally, the king gave him a kick in the chest and took off. And before he was even out of his park, the earth opened up and a ball of flame seized the king, dragging him down to the lowest, most brutal level of hell.

With the king gone, the commander-in-chief stepped in to bandage the Bodhisatta's wounds. He praised the Bodhisatta's patience and asked if he was angry at the king. The Bodhisatta said, no: pure souls like his disregard all evil deeds. He died from his injuries later that day.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples was filled with anger. The Buddha told him this story as an example of how one is supposed to act, and upon hearing it, the disciple's state of mind improved, as did that of many others listening to the story.

The king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and the commander-in-chief was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Lohakumbhi Jataka (#314)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. One night the king heard the cries of four beings who dwelled in hell—the sounds “Du,” “Sa,” “Na,” and “Su;” one from each of the four—and was terrified. His brahmins told him this was an ominous warning of impending danger and said performing the fourfold sacrifice (killing four of each kind of living creature; from humans, bulls, horses, and elephants down to small birds) was the only way to stop it. The king ordered his chaplain to dig a sacrificial pit and gather animals.

The chaplain’s top student reminded his master that the Vedas say there is no happiness for those who kill. He replied that they would be paid very well for arranging this, so the student should keep quiet and bring more animals. But the righteous student refused to take part. The Bodhisatta had divined the tragedy that was about to take place and flew through the air to the royal park to stop it. There he met the student chaplain. The student explained that the king was a righteous ruler, but was being misled by his wicked chaplain into committing a grave sin and asked the Bodhisatta to stop him. The Bodhisatta agreed and the student brought the king to the park to talk.

The king saluted the Bodhisatta and then listened as he explained that the sounds had risen out of hell and foretold nothing bad. Before their deaths, four princes had committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives and were condemned to thirty thousand years of boiling liquid torture in iron

cauldrons. They had risen like foam to the edge of the cauldron and tried to yell out words of warning, but were only able to speak the first syllable before sinking back down. The first, who uttered “Du,” was trying to say, “Due to living an evil life, we are suffering.” The others wanted to say, “Sad fates we are suffering ceaselessly;” “Nay, we are doomed by fate for the bad things we did on earth;” and “Soon we will be reborn and live virtuously.” Upon hearing this, the king felt the joy of relief and set all the sacrificial victims free.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One night King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, heard the cries of four beings who dwelled in hell—the sounds “Du,” “Sa,” “Na,” and “Su;” one from each of the four—and was terrified. His brahmins told him this was an ominous warning of impending danger to either his kingdom, property, or life and said performing the fourfold sacrifice was the only way to stop it. The king told them to arrange it right away. Excited that they would be paid very well for the ceremony, they dug a sacrificial pit and began gathering victims.

King Pasenadi’s exceptionally wise chief queen, Mallika, noticed the brahmins were very happy, and when the king told her what had happened, she suggested he consult the Buddha. So the king went to the monastery and told the Buddha what he had heard and what his brahmins were going to do about it. The Buddha explained the real nature of these cries from hell—princes who had committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives and were now suffering sixty

thousand years of iron cauldron torture because of it wanted to send warnings to people on earth, but they only had time to speak one syllable—and that the sounds did not foretell danger, so the sacrifice was unnecessary. Hearing this, King Pasenadi canceled it. Then the Buddha told this story to explain the meaning of the sounds.

The student chaplain was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mamsa Jataka (#315)

The Bodhisatta was once a son of a wealthy merchant. He and three wealthy friends once saw a hunter hauling a deer to sell in town, and they wanted some of the meat. The first boy went up to the hunter and said, “Hey you, give me a piece of meat.” The hunter, believing that beggars ought to be polite, gave the boy what his words deserved: just skin and bone. Another boy approached the hunter and said, “Oh brother, give me some meat,” and got a cut of venison on the bone, while the third said, “Dear father, give me some meat,” and got the heart. Lastly, the Bodhisatta went to beg and said, “My friend, give me some meat.” The hunter thought about how lonely a world without friends would be, so he gave the Bodhisatta the rest of the deer. The Bodhisatta was so grateful he had the hunter and his family come live on his land, and they became dear friends for the rest of their lives.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The hunter was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha’s top disciples. One of the Buddha’s disciples got sick and ate some oil as a laxative, and the disciples who were caring for him went to town to get some fancy food to help him recover. But they were unsuccessful. When they told Sariputta about it, he took them back to the same street and received plenty of fancy food for the ill disciple.

Later, the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing how Sariputta got the fancy food after the others could not, and he told them this story so they knew that in the past he

himself had also known just what to say to obtain good food when others could not.

Sasa Jataka (#316)

The Bodhisatta was once a hare. He lived in the forest and had three friends, a monkey, a jackal, and an otter, who he advised on moral matters. One evening before a holy day, he reminded them that giving alms brings great rewards, so they should feed any beggars who happen to approach them. Early the next morning, they all went out to get food to bring back to their homes to eat later when breaking their fasts. The otter found a string of seven fish that a fisherman had buried in the sand for safekeeping, the jackal entered the hut of a field watcher who wasn't at home and took a lizard and a jar of curds, and the monkey gathered mangoes in the forest. Because he ate only grass, the Bodhisatta did not gather any food, and he realized he would be unable to offer anything to any beggars who came his way. But he vowed to give his own flesh if needed.

The throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm as the Bodhisatta made his selfless pledge, and when Indra divined the reason, he disguised himself as a brahmin priest and put the Bodhisatta to the test. Indra first visited the otter and said that if he could get some food for breaking his fast, he would be able to do his priestly duties. The otter offered him the seven fish and asked him to stay in the forest for a while. Indra replied that he would come back later for the food. He then made the same request and got the same offers from the jackal and monkey before approaching the Bodhisatta. Upon hearing Indra's request, the Bodhisatta was filled with joy and told him to prepare a fire, which he did. The Bodhisatta shook himself three times to avoid killing any

insects living in his fur and then jumped into the flames, like a swan landing amidst lotuses.

To his surprise, the Bodhisatta felt no heat and wondered what was happening. Indra then revealed himself and explained that he had come to test the Bodhisatta's virtue. He told Indra that he would have done the same for even the lowliest person, and Indra said the Bodhisatta's virtue should be known for a whole eon, so he squeezed a mountain and used its essence to paint a picture of the hare on the moon for all to see.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

For one week, a certain landowner was exceptionally generous in donating fancy food to the Buddha and his disciples, and on the seventh day he gave them robes and other requisites. The Buddha told the man that taking delight in providing charity was a wonderful thing. Then the Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past he himself had done something similar.

The otter, jackal, and monkey were earlier births of Ananda, Moggallana, and Sariputta, three of the Buddha's top disciples.

Matarodana Jataka (#317)

The Bodhisatta was once a son of a wealthy merchant. After his parents died, his elder brother managed the family estate and took care of him. When this brother died, his friends and relatives were distraught and wept loudly, but the Bodhisatta showed no sorrow. People criticized him, assuming he was glad his brother was dead because he would inherit his money. The Bodhisatta replied that his critics were ignorant of the reality of the world. Since everybody has to die, people should weep for the living, who are doomed, rather than the dead, who are already gone. With this lesson about impermanence, everybody realized the Bodhisatta was right and they overcame their sorrow.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One morning, the Buddha divined that a certain landowner, who was so distraught over the death of his brother that he stopped eating and bathing, was ready for a spiritual breakthrough, and only he could end this man's grief. Later that day, the Buddha went to the man's house and taught him that all things are impermanent and people should not worry about what is lost. Then the Buddha told him this story as an example from his own past, and the man did have a breakthrough in understanding.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Kanavera Jataka (#318)

The Bodhisatta was once a thief. He was so bold and strong that he became known across the world. After he broke into a wealthy merchant's house, people pleaded with the king to catch him, so detachments of men were posted around the city, and the Bodhisatta was arrested with stolen treasure on him. The king had him bound and whipped and ordered his head cut off.

While the Bodhisatta was being led to the place of execution, Sama, a high-class prostitute, saw him and fell in love at first sight. She offered a thousand-coin bribe for his release, but the Bodhisatta was too notorious to just be set free. The governor said if she could find a man as a substitute, he would do it. So when one of her daily customers, a wealthy young merchant, arrived at sunset, she lied that the Bodhisatta was her brother and said she wanted to save him. The merchant agreed to deliver a thousand-coin bribe for his release, but when he handed it over, he was seized and hidden away and the Bodhisatta was secretly sent to Sama's home in a covered carriage. The execution was delayed until very late that night so nobody would see it was another man beheaded in place of the Bodhisatta. Then the merchant's headless body was impaled and the matter was over; the Bodhisatta was free.

Sama stopped her liaisons, and she and the Bodhisatta lived together happily. But the Bodhisatta realized if she ever fell in love with someone else, he would be killed. So he decided to escape. He suggested they have a picnic in a garden and she

agreed, putting on her finest jewelry for the occasion. While there, the Bodhisatta took Sama into a thicket and hugged her so tight that she passed out. He grabbed all her jewelry, hopped over the garden wall, and ran off. Not suspecting what the Bodhisatta had really tried to do, Sama mistook his attack for excessive passion and assumed he had fled out of fear that he had accidentally killed her.

Sama returned home deeply depressed and vowed to find her love. She hired a troupe of minstrels to sing a song about her—"'Twas the joyous time of spring; Bright with flowers on each tree; From her swoon awakening; Sama lives, and lives for thee."—and sent them to perform in every town and village in the kingdom until they found her husband. Sama was sure that when he heard the song, he would speak to her minstrels, and they should tell him she loved only him and was waiting for him to come back.

Eventually, out in a remote border village, the Bodhisatta heard the minstrels' song and did approach them. He told them her love was fickle and he feared eventual betrayal, so he would never return. The minstrels returned to the city and gave Sama the Bodhisatta's message. Full of regret, she began plying her trade again, just as before.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The merchant executed in place of the Bodhisatta was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's junior disciples. Because he was new, his food was poor (lumpy gruel with stale or rotting ingredients and dried or burnt sprouts) and he did not

get enough to stay healthy. He started to return each morning to the wife he left behind (she was the prostitute in an earlier birth), and she gave him delicious rice with sauce and curry. This made him miss his former life, and with her encouragement he decided to leave the sangha.

The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past his wife had caused him to be beheaded. After talking to the Buddha, this disciple gained new understanding and chose to stay.

Tittira Jataka (#319)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. One time he went down to a village to get salt and vinegar, and the people there were so impressed they built a leaf hut for him to stay in.

A hunter from the village kept a partridge in a cage and used it to attract other partridges, which he caught and killed. The partridge felt remorse for helping kill other birds and so stopped singing, but when the hunter struck him on the head with a piece of bamboo, he cried out in pain, drawing in birds just as before. While the hunter had evil intent, the partridge did not, and he wondered whether his actions were sinful and if they would negatively affect his karma.

One day after catching a basket full of birds, the hunter stopped at the Bodhisatta's hut to get a drink of water, and there he fell asleep. The partridge finally had an opportunity to ask about his fate. Hearing the partridge's story, the Bodhisatta assured him there is no guilt when there is no ill intent. The partridge was freed of his sorrow.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The decoy partridge was an earlier birth of Rahula, the Buddha's son, who became a novice and never sought special attention because of his lineage. After listening to the Buddha preach, many disciples and novices would just fall asleep on the floor of the sermon hall instead of going off to their

quarters. The Buddha disapproved and made it a formal offense for novices to sleep in the same room as disciples.

The next night the disciples, out of fear of breaking the new rule, would not set up a bed for Rahula as they had always done previously, leaving him to go off and find a place to sleep on his own. Rahula was so diligent in following rules that, rather than risk sleeping somewhere a disciple might come into later in the night, he slept in the Buddha's outhouse. The incident prompted the Buddha to change his mind and allow novices to stay in a disciple's quarters for up to two days when necessary.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing Rahula's excellent behavior, he told them this story so they knew that Rahula had been as virtuous, fond of instruction, and accepting of rebuke in the past as he was now.

Succaja Jataka (#320)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king's son served as viceroy, but as the king grew old, he feared that his son might seize the throne, so he banished him from the city. The son took his main wife to a distant borderland and lived a simple life in a leaf hut eating wild roots and fruit from the forest.

When the son read in the stars that his father had died, he returned to take the throne. While traveling back to the city, they passed a mountain, and his wife asked him, "Suppose that mountain turned into pure gold. Would you give me some of it?" "Not even one iota!" was his reply. This upset his wife, who had loved her husband so much that she did not abandon him when he forced her to live as an ascetic. Back at the palace, he made her his queen consort, but from that point on, the king completely ignored her and took his pleasure with other women.

The Bodhisatta felt that the queen deserved some respect because she was a good woman, and he decided to get it for her. His plan began by asking her why she did not give gifts to the men of the royal court. "What can I give you," she asked, "when my husband gives me nothing? Even when we traveled back here, he said he would not give me anything if he had a mountain made of gold." The Bodhisatta told her that he was going to confront the king about this misconduct, and she needed to give the same direct, honest answer to this question in his presence.

Later that day, the Bodhisatta again asked the queen why she was cruel and did not give anything to the men of the court, and she gave the same answer about not receiving anything from her husband, not even the hypothetical gold. But she also pointed out that the king was otherwise a good man. The Bodhisatta sang the queen's praises and told the king he should honor her. The king agreed, and from then on gave his queen everything she deserved, and he also thanked the Bodhisatta for reminding him of her virtue.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and queen were earlier births of a husband and wife who had traveled from the city to the country to collect a debt. As they returned home, they passed a mountain, and the wife asked him, "Suppose that mountain turned into gold. Would you give me some?" "Not even an iota!" he replied. This upset her a lot.

Later, they stopped at the Buddha's monastery for some water, and the Buddha divined that they were ready for a spiritual breakthrough. He asked the wife if her husband was kind and loving. "I love him," she answered, "but he does not love me. For example, today he said that if a mountain turned to gold he would not give me any." The Buddha told them this story so they knew that in the past she had been equally loving and kind, and he had mistreated her like this. And after hearing the Buddha's words, the husband stopped his selfish behavior.

Kutidusaka Jataka (#321)

The Bodhisatta was once a bird living in the Himalayas. His nest kept him dry, even in the rainy season. One day, when he saw a cold, wet monkey sitting nearby, he asked why, since he had hands like a human, he didn't build a home for himself. The monkey answered that he had body parts like humans, but lacked their wisdom. The Bodhisatta told him he should give it a try, which the envious monkey felt was an insult. So he tried to catch the Bodhisatta and smashed up his nest.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey was an earlier birth of a wicked novice who lived in a forest with the elder Maha Kassapa, one of the Buddha's top disciples. He and another novice were there to care for the elder, but only the other one took his duties seriously. When the responsible novice did something, the bad one took credit for it. Tired of this, the good novice decided to expose the bad one. He heated water for Maha Kassapa's bath and hid it in a back room so that when the bad novice called the elder to come bathe, he found no water. Then the good novice brought the water he had heated into the room. Maha Kassapa now knew what the bad novice had been doing, and after bathing, he scolded him and told him not to lie again.

The boy was furious at his master for calling him out, and the next day he refused to go on the morning alms round. Instead, he visited a family who supported the three of them and said Maha Kassapa was sick, so he would take food back

to him. The next day, the elder visited this family and heard about the bad novice's ruse, so after returning home, Maha Kassapa scolded him again.

After Maha Kassapa went out for alms again the next day, the bad novice smashed all the cooking utensils with a hammer and burned down the elder's leaf hut. Not long after, the bad novice died and was reborn in hell.

When some of the Buddha's disciples living near Maha Kassapa visited the Buddha at his monastery, they told him what this bad novice had done. The Buddha told them this story so they knew that the boy had also once destroyed his home.

Daddabha Jataka (#322)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. One day a hare living in the same forest as the Bodhisatta thought, “If this earth should break up, where will I go?” And at that exact moment, a bael fruit fell out of a tree onto a palm leaf. The sudden loud noise made the hare imagine the earth was collapsing, and he took off running as fast as he could without even looking behind him. Another hare saw him running and joined in, asking what caused his panic. He answered that the earth was breaking up, so the second hare, also not looking back, kept going. Soon a hundred thousand animals also heard the news and united into a massive stampede.

When the Bodhisatta saw the animals fleeing and heard the cause, he knew the earth was not breaking apart and that these animals would surely rush into the ocean and perish if he did not stop them. So he ran in front and halted everyone with his frightening roar. He asked the crowd who had seen the ground collapsing, and was told that the elephants knew about it. But they said they hadn’t seen anything, they’d only heard about it from the lions. The lions also knew nothing, having heard about it from the tigers. The tigers heard from the rhinoceroses, the rhinoceroses heard from the wild ox, the wild ox from the buffaloes, the buffaloes from the elk, the elk from the boars, the boars from the deer, the deer from the hares, and the hares pointed out the first of them to spread the news.

The Bodhisatta approached the first hare and asked what he had seen. He answered that he hadn’t seen anything, but he

had heard it very clearly. The Bodhisatta was now sure he knew what had really happened and told the hare to jump on his back; they were going to investigate whether the earth was actually coming to an end or not. He told the huge herd of animals to stay put and wait for him to return, then he ran to the hare's home. The hare pointed out the exact spot the sound had come from, and they saw that the ground was normal and intact, with a ripe fruit lying there. The Bodhisatta rushed back to the animals and told them the good news.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One morning, some of the Buddha's disciples saw false ascetics lying on beds of thorns and undergoing other similar sufferings. After they returned to the monastery, the disciples asked the Buddha whether any good came from doing these things. The Buddha answered that there was no benefit at all; it was just like the noise that the hare heard. They did not understand the reference, so he told them this story to explain it.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Brahmadatta Jataka (#323)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas. One time he went down to a city to get salt and vinegar, and he slept in the royal park. The next morning, the king saw the Bodhisatta out collecting alms and, impressed by his demeanor, invited him into the palace for a big meal. After they talked, the king told the Bodhisatta he could stay in the park as long as he liked and all his needs would be met.

When the rainy season ended, the Bodhisatta was eager to return to the Himalayas, but he first needed to get a parasol and a pair of shoes. He planned to ask the king to provide them. Because he felt guilty asking, and because he worried that the king would feel bad if he needed to say no, he asked to talk to the king in private. The king sent his servants away, but then the Bodhisatta decided not to ask, because he did not want to risk putting a strain on their friendship. He told the king not to worry, he would take care of the matter on his own. Later, the Bodhisatta changed his mind and again asked to speak with the king; but just as before, he could not bring himself to make the request.

Twelve years later, the king thought back about the Bodhisatta's two aborted conversations and guessed that he had grown weary of the religious life and wanted to rejoin the world of pleasure and be a king. So the king went to see the Bodhisatta and told him he could have anything he wanted, even the entire kingdom. The Bodhisatta told the king all he really wanted was a pair of single-soled shoes and a parasol made of leaves. The king was astonished that the

Bodhisatta was so extremely considerate of other people's feelings. The king begged the Bodhisatta to stay, but with his new parasol and shoes he returned home, living in bliss again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Some of the Buddha's disciples needed new quarters, and they were so demanding and persistent that they greatly annoyed the townspeople. Whenever they saw disciples approaching, people would go away. Because of this, Maha Kassapa, one of the Buddha's top disciples, could not get alms when he visited the town. At mealtime, other disciples explained to him why this had happened, and he went to discuss the matter with the Buddha.

The Buddha called an assembly and criticized these thoughtless disciples. He told them this story as an example of how in the past he had been so considerate of others that he would not even ask for small, simple things in public.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Cammasataka Jataka (#324)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. An ascetic wearing leather clothes out on an alms round passed by a ram fighting area. When a ram saw him approaching, it stepped back, and the ascetic thought it was showing him respect, like a person would. The Bodhisatta saw this happening and tried to warn the ascetic that the ram was about to attack, but before he finished his sentence, the ram charged at full speed and knocked the ascetic over. He lay on the ground groaning in pain and regretting his foolish confidence. He died soon after.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

An ascetic wearing leather clothes out on an alms round passed by a ram fighting area. When a ram saw him approaching, it stepped back, and the ascetic thought it was showing him respect, like a person would. But then it charged at full speed and knocked the ascetic over, killing him.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the ascetic's death, he told them this story so they knew that the exact same thing had happened to the same ascetic in an earlier birth.

Godha Jataka (#325)

The Bodhisatta was once a lizard. One day an ascetic moved into the forest near the Bodhisatta's home. Assuming he was a proper holy man, the Bodhisatta visited the ascetic regularly to pay respect. One time a supporter of the ascetic gave him some lizard meat to eat, and he liked it so much he wanted to eat the Bodhisatta. The ascetic prepared the ingredients he would need for cooking (ghee, curds, condiments, and the like) and sat at the door of his leaf hut with a mallet hidden under his robe, waiting for the Bodhisatta to come.

When the Bodhisatta arrived, he noticed that something about the ascetic was not right and guessed what his plan was. He walked downwind, and the ascetic's scent confirmed his suspicions. So the Bodhisatta went away without stopping, and the ascetic threw his mallet, but it hit just the tip of his tail. The Bodhisatta told him, "You missed me, but you will not miss your punishment in hell," and ran off to hide in an anthill. He popped his head out a hole other than the one he had used to go in and hurled insults at the wicked ascetic, telling him that if he stayed, he would expose him to all the people living there. So the ascetic left.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The false ascetic was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been exposed as a cheater. The Buddha told this story so the other disciples knew that the cheating disciple had also been a rogue in the past.

Kakkaru Jataka (#326)

The Bodhisatta was once a god in heaven. The king hosted a great festival, and many nagas, garudas, and other terrestrial deities came to watch. The Bodhisatta and three divine friends also came to see it, and they wore wreaths made of heavenly kakkaru flowers, which filled the city with their scent. People wondered where the wonderful aroma came from, so the gods exposed themselves for all to see. The king asked them what flowers they wore and if he and others could have some. Kakkaru flowers, the Bodhisatta said, were only for those possessing exceptional virtue, including being honest, humble, persistent, and having a good reputation. Most humans were far too foolish and full of sin to wear them.

The king's chaplain knew he did not possess these virtues, but figured if he lied to get some of the flowers, everybody would believe he did. The Bodhisatta and the other three gods each gave him a wreathe, then they returned to heaven. The moment they left, the chaplain was seized with intense pain in his head. He rolled on the ground screaming in agony and confessed to lying about his virtues. People tried to remove the wreaths from his head, but they would not budge.

His suffering lasted for seven days and it appeared he would die. The king and his advisors discussed how they could save him, and they decided to host another festival hoping the gods would return to the city. The plan worked and the chaplain begged their forgiveness. After rebuking the

chaplain for lying and living a sinful life and warning others not to follow his example, the Bodhisatta removed the wreaths and returned home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The chaplain was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. He left the Buddha's sangha with many disciples to set up his own order and declared that he too was a Buddha, but soon after, most of them returned to the Buddha's fold.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Devadatta had spit up blood and became very ill after losing his followers, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also suffered because of his lies in the past.

The other three gods at the festival were earlier births of Maha Kassapa, Moggallana, and Sariputta, three of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kakati Jataka (#327)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He frequently hosted games of dice, and a garuda king in the form of a handsome young man often came to play. The garuda and the Bodhisatta's gorgeous chief queen fell in love and secretly ran off to live together at the garuda's remote island home. Missing his queen, the Bodhisatta sent one of his minstrels out to find her. Suspecting she was with the garuda, the minstrel found him relaxing on a lakeshore and snuck into his feathers to hitch a ride to his island. There he had sex with the queen and later flew back home undetected in the same way. The next time the garuda played dice at the palace, the minstrel took his lute to the dice chamber and sang of his affair with the queen. The garuda regretted not guarding her better and, now knowing what a wicked woman she was, gave her back to the Bodhisatta and never returned to the palace.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The minstrel was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who considered quitting the sangha after falling for the charms of a woman. The Buddha explained that it's easy to be led astray by women, and then he told this story as an example of how there is no place one can escape temptation.

Ananusociya Jataka (#328)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived with his wife in the Himalayas. He had no interest in marriage, but his parents insisted. So he had a golden statue of a woman made and told them he would only marry someone as beautiful as her. His parents sent the statue out across India in a carriage and told their emissaries that if they found the woman, they were to give her parents the statue in exchange.

Eventually they met a young woman as pure and beautiful as a nymph, who looked exactly like the statue. Like the Bodhisatta, she did not want to be married, but her parents made the trade and sent her away. Though the Bodhisatta and his wife resided together, they lived a virtuous, celibate life as though they were saints. When the Bodhisatta's parents died, he and his wife gave away their vast wealth and renounced the world.

One time while down in the city to get salt and seasoning, they took up residence in the royal park. After eating some low-quality rice, the Bodhisatta's wife grew weak from an attack of dysentery. Before making his morning alms round, the Bodhisatta carried her to the city gate and laid her down on a bench. While he was out gathering food, she died. A crowd of weeping and lamenting people gathered around her, but when the Bodhisatta returned, he sat on her bench and calmly started to eat. The people were shocked that he felt no sorrow over her death, so he gave them a lesson on impermanence, explaining that death is inevitable and

sorrow serves no benefit. Then people gave her funeral rites, and the Bodhisatta returned to the Himalayas alone.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When a landowner's wife died, he was so depressed that he stopped eating, bathing, and caring for his farm fields, and he spent long hours wandering around the cemetery. One morning, the Buddha divined that this man was ready for a spiritual breakthrough, and only he could end his grief. So, after completing his alms round, the Buddha went to the man's house and taught him that all things are impermanent and one should not grieve over what is lost. Then the Buddha told him this story about losing his own wife in the past, and the man did have a breakthrough in understanding.

The Bodhisatta's wife was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Kalabahu Jataka (#329)

The Bodhisatta was once a parrot. He and his younger brother were caught and given to the king, who kept them in a golden cage and fed them honey, parched grain, and sugar water. They got a lot of attention and respect from people in the palace. One day a hunter gave the king a monkey, and it got the best food and most attention. This bothered the brother, and he suggested they return to the forest. But the Bodhisatta said he did not want to leave and assured him the monkey's honor would be short-lived. The monkey's tricks, such as shaking its ears, frightened the king's children, so it was soon sent away, and the Bodhisatta and his brother's popularity was restored.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The monkey was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Devadatta lost his good reputation and popular support, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta also had short-lived success in the past.

The brother was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Silavimamsa Jataka (#330)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. He was thoroughly righteous and received more honor than anyone else in the king's inner circle. The Bodhisatta wanted to know if this was because of his virtue or if it was only due to coming from a respected family. To test this, he stole some coins in full view of the king's treasurer.

The Bodhisatta was arrested and taken before the king. After being sentenced to death, he said he was not a thief and explained why he had pocketed the coins. And being given this punishment showed that the king's honor really was earned from his virtue, not his lineage. Forgiven for his crime, the Bodhisatta left the palace and headed out to live as an ascetic in the Himalayas.

As he left the palace, the Bodhisatta saw a hawk seize a piece of meat from a butcher and fly off. Other birds surrounded him and attacked with their feet and beaks. Because of the pain, the bird dropped his meat. Another bird seized the meat, suffered a similar attack, and also dropped it. This continued, bird after bird, and whichever had the meat was attacked, and whichever dropped it was left in peace. The Bodhisatta realized human desires are like the meat: life is best when we let them go.

The Bodhisatta spent that night at a home in a village. He heard one of the family's slaves tell her lover what time to come meet her. After her master went to bed, she waited through the night at the front door for the man to come, but

he never did. At daybreak, the slave finally gave up and went to sleep. The Bodhisatta saw how hope brought her sorrow, but when she was resigned to despair, she felt peace.

The next day, the Bodhisatta entered the forest and saw an ascetic sitting on the ground in meditation. He thought there was no greater happiness on earth or in heaven than the bliss of meditation. He kept these three lessons in mind as he began his new life as an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples had been a king's chaplain before joining the sangha. He received more honor than anyone else in the king's inner circle and wondered if it was because of his virtue or his lineage, so he did the exact same test of his privilege. After being forgiven by the king, the man joined the sangha and eventually reached arahantship. When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing this, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that he himself had once done the same test in the past.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Kokalika Jataka (#331)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king was very talkative and the Bodhisatta wanted to change this, but was waiting for the right time to discuss it. One day the king was relaxing in his park below a mango tree. In it was a crow's nest where a cuckoo had laid an egg. The mother crow raised the cuckoo hatchling as one of her own until it prematurely uttered its first cry. Hearing the strange sound, the crow pecked the baby cuckoo to death and threw it out of the nest. It fell at the king's feet, and he asked the Bodhisatta why this had happened. Finally finding his opportunity to teach the king a lesson, the Bodhisatta explained how the cuckoo speaking at the wrong time let the crow know it was not her offspring. Anyone, person or animal, who speaks out of turn is eventually bound to suffer misery because of it. Upon hearing this advice, the king became more thoughtful before speaking.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The young cuckoo was an earlier birth of Cula Kokalika, a greedy disciple of the Buddha. Two of the Buddha's top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, spent one rainy season at Cula Kokalika's home, with the instruction not to tell the locals they were there. After the three months had passed, they set off back to the Buddha's monastery. Right after they departed, Cula Kokalika boasted to people about who had been staying with him. They quickly gathered food and robes to donate and rushed after the departed disciples to pay respect. Knowing that Sariputta and Moggallana were very

frugal and would not accept the gifts, Cula Kokalika followed, expecting that the things would be given to him. But the elder disciples just told the people to keep everything, and this angered Cula Kokalika.

A short time later, Sariputta and Moggallana led a thousand disciples on an alms pilgrimage. When they passed through Cula Kokalika's town, the laypeople greeted them enthusiastically and donated many robes and other things. Again, Sariputta and Moggallana gave nothing to Cula Kokalika, and this time he was so furious he began insulting them for being greedy and selfish. So the disciples left the town. People begged them to stay, but could not change their minds. The angry people told Cula Kokalika to fix the problem he had created; and if he could not convince Sariputta and Moggallana to return, he would have to go live elsewhere. Fearful of losing his home, he tried to persuade them. But he failed.

Forced to leave, Cula Kokalika went to the Buddha's monastery. When he got there, he immediately began to tell the Buddha how wicked Sariputta and Moggallana were, not stopping even after being rebuked by the Buddha for his inappropriate words. Moments later, bloody boils erupted on his body and he fell over in pain. One of his former teachers heard his cries and came down from heaven, encouraging him to make peace with the elders. But Cula Kokalika would not let go of his anger, and he died and went to hell.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing Cula Kokalika's downfall, he told them this story so they knew

that this was not the first time Cula Kokalika's own words had caused his destruction.

Rathalatthi Jataka (#332)

The Bodhisatta was once a judge. One day, while driving his chariot to his estate, the king's chaplain came upon an oxcart caravan blocking the road. Enraged because the men would not move out of his way, he threw his goad stick at the first driver. It hit the chariot and bounced back, striking the chaplain in his forehead and leaving a large bump.

The chaplain returned to the palace and told the king that the caravan workers had attacked him. The king summoned them and immediately ordered all their property seized. The Bodhisatta reminded the king that sometimes people lie, and he should listen to both sides before declaring guilt. The king took the Bodhisatta's advice, and when all the information was presented it was clear the caravan workers had done nothing wrong.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day, while driving his chariot to his estate, the king's chaplain came upon an oxcart caravan blocking the road. Enraged because the men would not move out of his way, he threw his goad stick at the first driver. It hit the chariot and bounced back, striking the chaplain on his forehead and leaving a large bump.

The chaplain returned to the palace and told the king that the caravan workers had attacked him. These men were summoned to the palace, and the judges hearing the case

listened to both sides and ruled they had done nothing wrong.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the matter, he told them this story so they knew that the wicked chaplain had done the exact same thing in an earlier birth.

Godha Jataka (#333)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king's son served as viceroy, but as the king grew old, he feared that his son might seize the throne, so he banished him from the city. The son took his main wife to a distant borderland and lived a simple life in a leaf hut eating wild roots and fruit from the forest.

When the son read in the stars that his father had died, he returned to take the throne. While traveling back to the city, some hunters gave him and his wife a roasted lizard to eat. They sat down next to a lake, and while his wife was getting water, he ate the lizard all by himself. When she returned, he showed her the tip of the tail and said the lizard ran away. He tried to catch it, he told her, but the tail broke off and the lizard escaped into a hole. Not showing her anger, she simply said, "There's nothing you can do when a roasted lizard runs away," and they continued their journey. Back at the palace, he made her his queen consort, but from that point on, the king completely ignored her and took his pleasure with other women.

The Bodhisatta felt that the queen deserved some respect because she was a good woman, and he decided to get it for her. In the presence of the king, he asked her why she did not give gifts to the men of the royal court. "What can I give you," she asked, "when my husband gives me nothing? Even when we traveled back here, he would not share his roasted lizard," and she told him the whole story. "Then why do you stay with a man who disrespects you and makes you feel bad?" the

Bodhisatta asked, adding, “When a tree goes barren, birds fly to a new grove.” While the Bodhisatta and his wife spoke, the king remembered all the good things about his wife. He apologized, and from then on gave his queen everything she deserved, and he also thanked the Bodhisatta for reminding him of her virtue.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and queen were earlier births of a husband and wife who had traveled from the city to the country to collect a debt. As they returned home, some hunters gave them a roasted lizard to eat. The man ate the whole lizard while his wife was getting water, and he lied that it had run away. Not showing her anger, she simply said, “There’s nothing you can do when a roasted lizard runs away,” and they continued their journey.

Later, they stopped at the Buddha’s monastery, and he asked the wife if her husband was kind and loving. “I love him,” she answered, “but he does not love me.” The Buddha told them this story so they knew that in the past she had been equally loving and kind, and he had mistreated her like this. And after hearing the Buddha’s words, the husband stopped his selfish behavior.

Rajovada Jataka (#334)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. The king was seeking self-improvement and he asked people to tell him his faults so he could correct them, but nobody in the city would say anything negative. So the king wandered the countryside in disguise, yet still found nobody with anything bad to say. Finally, he went into the Himalayas and wandered the forest, and there he came upon the Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta welcomed the stranger and offered him some figs. They were delicious and the king asked why they were so sweet. The Bodhisatta explained that when a king rules with justice, fruits, honey, molasses, and the like are wonderfully sweet. When a king is wicked, they lose their good flavor until righteousness returns.

The king, without having identified himself, returned to the palace and stopped being fair because he wanted to put the Bodhisatta's words to the test. A short time later, he went back to see the Bodhisatta and tried another fig, which was so bitter he spat it out. This time the king revealed who he was and explained what he had done, promising to set everything right again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time a king came to hear the Buddha preach. He told the king to rule righteously, and that sensual pleasures lead to misery: when people die, their virtuous actions are their only refuge. Then the Buddha told this story as an example of a

king in the past earning rebirth in heaven by following this advice.

The king from the past was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Jambuka Jataka (#335)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. One day he met a jackal in the forest, and being unable to escape, the jackal threw himself at the Bodhisatta's feet and said he would be his servant if he spared his life. The Bodhisatta accepted the offer. He brought meat back to his home every day, and the jackal ate the leftovers.

The jackal grew large with this arrangement and got arrogant, wanting to kill an elephant by himself. The Bodhisatta replied that no jackal could kill an elephant because they were too small, but the jackal ignored his advice and went out to hunt. When he saw an elephant walking below him, the jackal dove toward it and landed at its feet. The elephant stomped his head, smashing his skull to pieces. The Bodhisatta commented that the jackal died due to pride, and that everyone should stick to their proper duties.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. He left the Buddha's sangha with many disciples to set up his own order and declared that he too was a Buddha. The real Buddha sent two of his top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, to preach to those wayward disciples; and while Devadatta was asleep, most of them returned to the Buddha's fold. This so angered Kokalika, a disciple of the Buddha who became one of Devadatta's most devoted followers, that he kicked Devadatta in the chest and caused him to spit up blood.

The Buddha told this story to let his disciples know this was not the first time Devadatta had imitated him and suffered for it.

Brahachatta Jataka (#336)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king conquered a neighboring kingdom and hauled off its vast riches, burying everything in iron pots in his royal park. The defeated king's son had escaped the attack and became an ascetic, leading a band of five hundred others. Eventually he led them on an alms pilgrimage to the Bodhisatta's city. The king was unaware of the prince's identity and, respecting their knowledge and behavior, gave the ascetics gifts and invited them to stay in his park for as long as they wanted.
The prince knew a spell for locating buried treasure, and he used it to find his father's stolen riches. He thought he could use the treasure to recover his father's kingdom, so he revealed his true identity to the other ascetics and asked if they wanted to join him in his new quest. They all agreed. That night they dug up the pots, inserted grass in place of the treasure, reburied them, and fled.

Soon after he stole the treasure, the prince seized his father's former kingdom and used the money to boost the city's fortifications, making it impregnable. When the Bodhisatta's king learned about the prince stealing the treasure and taking the throne, he grew depressed and wandered about murmuring, "Grass, grass, grass." The Bodhisatta knew he was the only one who could free the king's troubled mind, so he asked the king the significance of the word grass. When he heard the whole story, the Bodhisatta told him that what he'd lost was not really his to begin with, so he should let his sorrow go. The king took his advice and ruled righteously from then on.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The prince was an earlier birth of an obstinate disciple of the Buddha. The Buddha told him this story of his past life to help him improve his attitude.

Pitha Jataka (#337)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived in the Himalayas and one time went down to a city to get salt and vinegar. The next day, on his morning alms round, people suggested he visit a merchant who was exceptionally devout. The merchant was out visiting the king when the Bodhisatta arrived at his house, and none of the servants saw him waiting there, so he left. But as the Bodhisatta walked away, he met the merchant on his way back home, and he invited the Bodhisatta to come with him. He gave the Bodhisatta a variety of food and a foot rub, and when finished with these he begged forgiveness for not being there first thing in the morning, insisting this was the first time ever that a stranger coming to his home had gone away empty-handed. The Bodhisatta said that while it was a bit strange to not be at home to welcome people in the morning, he felt no anger toward the merchant.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A disciple of the Buddha came to his monastery from the countryside and asked other disciples who were the best people to get alms from. They told him Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, and Visakha, the Buddha's top female lay supporter. Promptly the next morning, the disciple set out for both of their houses and arrived so early that nobody was there to attend to him. He wandered around the city a while before returning a second time, but by then it was too late and all their rice was gone.

When he returned to the monastery, the disciple openly insulted both of them. When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing this, he called the disappointed disciple to a meeting and said this was nothing to be upset about. Then he told him this story to explain that in the past when he himself got no alms at a supporter's house he did not get angry.

The merchant was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Thusa Jataka (#338)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famed across the land. When one of his students, a crown prince, mastered his studies and was about to return home, the Bodhisatta divined that some future day when he was king, his son would do him harm. To protect his student, the Bodhisatta wrote four verses and told him to recite them when his son turned sixteen years old: the first verse while eating dinner, the second during a great reception, the third verse standing at the head of the stairs when ascending to the palace roof, and the fourth at the threshold of the royal bedchamber. The prince thanked him and left.

Eventually the former student became king, and the prophecy came true. When the son turned sixteen, he was filled with the desire to seize the kingdom for himself, and his servants encouraged him, saying that having power when one is young is better than waiting until old age. So they planned to kill the king by poisoning his rice. The prince went to eat dinner with his father, who remembered the advice from the Bodhisatta, and when the food was served, the king said, “Rats are choosy, and while they don’t like the husks they do eat the grains.” Hearing this, the prince thought he had been discovered and did not pour the poison into his father’s bowl.

The prince and his servants came up with a new plan: during the next great reception, the prince would stab his father with his sword. While waiting for the right moment, he heard his father say, “I heard the plot devised during the secret

meeting in the forest." Again, thinking his father was on to him, the prince ran away. His servants said he was imagining things and should get on with the assassination.

A week later, the prince hid away with his sword in a closet at the top of a staircase, but when the king climbed the stairs he said, "A monkey made evil plans but could not perform them." The prince thought he was going to be seized and again ran away.

Two weeks later, realizing that if his father had really known his plans he would have been imprisoned by now, the prince lay with his sword under a couch in the royal bedchamber. When the king entered his room, he stood on the threshold and said, "I know someone is here creeping like a one-eyed goat in a mustard field!" Fearing his father was about to execute him, the prince showed himself and begged forgiveness. The king had his son thrown in prison, not to be released until he died; only then was his son given the throne.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When a certain prince was conceived, his mother was overcome with the urge to drink blood from her husband's right knee. When the king heard of this, he consulted his astrologers who told him it was an omen that his queen was pregnant and his future son would kill him to seize the throne. The king wasn't worried about this prophecy, so he cut open his right knee with a sword and gave his wife the blood she desired in a golden bowl. When the queen learned

of the prediction about her son, she twice tried to abort him, but the king put a stop to it both times.

After the queen gave birth, the Buddha came to preach to the king. At this time, someone brought the young prince to the king, and he played with him on his lap so affectionately that he did not pay attention to the sermon. The Buddha commented that most kings who had reason to suspect and fear their sons kept them locked away during their lifetime and told him this story as an example. The Buddha added that kings' fears of their sons are often justified, but the king still wasn't worried about it.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Baveru Jataka (#339)

The Bodhisatta was once a peacock. Some merchants sailed to a kingdom that had no birds. The people there saw a crow perched on the ship's mast and were enchanted by its beauty, so they bought it for one hundred coins and kept it in a golden cage. The crow attained great gain and glory. The next time the merchants sailed to this land they brought the Bodhisatta, who had been trained to sing at the snapping of fingers and to dance at the clapping of hands. The people bought him for one thousand coins and put him in a cage decorated with the seven precious jewels. The Bodhisatta earned even greater gain and glory and people lost all interest in the crow, so it flew away and lived on a dunghill.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crow was an earlier birth of the Jain leader Nigantha Nathaputta. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how religious leaders like him lost gain and glory after the Buddha began teaching the truth, he told them this story so they knew that in the past those with little virtue but abundant honor also came to their right result after someone arrived who was endowed with genuine virtue.

Visayha Jataka (#340)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy merchant. He was so righteous and generous that he gave alms to six hundred thousand people every day, and the food he donated was the same quality that he himself ate. His generosity became legendary across India, and eventually it warmed the throne of Indra, king of the gods. Indra worried that when the Bodhisatta died he would dethrone him and take over his job. So he decided to end the Bodhisatta's generosity by making everything he owned—from food to money to slaves—disappear. The house now empty, the Bodhisatta and his wife no longer had anything other than the clothes they were wearing.

Desperate to give something to the poor, they saw a grass cutter throw down his equipment and run away, so the Bodhisatta picked it up and went to work in a field. He cut two bundles of grass and sold them at the city gate for two small coins, keeping one to buy food and giving the other away to some beggars. But upon seeing more beggars, he gave away the second coin, and he and his wife didn't eat that day. He did the same thing again for the next five days, and on the seventh day the Bodhisatta was so weak from not eating that he passed out.

When Indra saw the Bodhisatta fall down, he came to talk. Standing in the air, he told the Bodhisatta he was the one who took away his possessions, and he wanted him to stop giving alms. The Bodhisatta answered that Indra was guilty of a great offense and vowed to never stop giving for as long as

he lived. Indra asked the Bodhisatta to explain his desire to be generous, and the Bodhisatta said he was not seeking any earthly or celestial reward, only insight and happiness. Indra was pleased by this answer and restored the Bodhisatta's former prosperity and then some, telling him and his wife to henceforth double their daily charity.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, had a fairy living over the fourth gateway of his massive palace. The fairy was not a follower of the Buddha and was greatly annoyed that she and her children had to come down to the ground floor to pay respect every time he and his elder disciples visited Anathapindika. She tried unsuccessfully to get Anathapindika's business manager and his eldest son to stop him hosting these people because of all the money he wasted.

Even after Anathapindika fell into poverty from neglecting his business in order to focus fully on helping people, he continued to give what he could to the Buddha's sangha. The fairy now saw a chance to change his mind, and she appeared before him in visible form, imploring him to stop donating to the Buddha and instead think of his future and his family. Anathapindika, whose faith in the Buddha never wavered, was so incensed by her words that he kicked her and her children out of the palace.

Now homeless, the fairy asked several gods to convince Anathapindika to let her return. But when they heard the

wicked words she had spoken, all refused. Indra, however, did propose a way she could earn his forgiveness. Anathapindika had not sought recovery of many of the loans he had made and had also lost some buried treasure chests. Indra suggested the fairy tell Anathapindika's delinquent borrowers that while he had not sought payment of debts when he was wealthy, now that he was poor it was time to pay up. And she should take some young goblins with her to scare these people into action. She should also use her supernatural powers to find the missing money.

The fairy did as Indra advised and placed a fortune in his treasury; then she went to seek forgiveness. She explained that she had been stained by passion and blinded by ignorance, but she now recognized the Buddha's infinite virtue and had sought atonement by recovering his money. Anathapindika welcomed her conversion, but he wanted her to request his pardon in the presence of the Buddha. So the next day they went to his monastery and she confessed what she had done. The Buddha preached that to bad people sin looks good before it ripens, and to virtuous people goodness feels like sin before it ripens. The fairy then fell to the Buddha's feet in tears to apologize and ask forgiveness, which both the Buddha and Anathapindika granted.

Anathapindika then began to speak highly of himself since the fairy had not swayed him to stop supporting the Buddha. But the Buddha corrected him, explaining that his dedication was no great accomplishment because he was living in the lifetime of a perfect Buddha. Then the Buddha told this story

as an example of how he himself had once been so dedicated to giving alms that he ignored Indra's advice to stop doing it.

The Bodhisatta's wife was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Kandari Jataka (#341)

This past-life story is one of eight told by the Bodhisatta in the Kunala Jataka (#536) as examples of why men should never trust women.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's wise chaplain. A loathsome, misshapen man lived alongside the palace wall in the shade of a rose apple tree. One day the beautiful queen consort saw the loathsome man from her window and fell madly in love with him. Soon after, she instigated an affair. Each night, after the king fell asleep, she climbed out her window on a cloth rope and crossed over the palace wall via the rose apple tree. After taking her pleasure, she returned to her room, covered herself with perfume, and lay down by the king's side.

One day, after he made a solemn procession around the city and was returning home, the king saw the pitiful man and asked the Bodhisatta if any woman would ever be with him. This man heard the king and, full of pride, told the tree it was the only one who knew his secret. The Bodhisatta noticed the man's reaction and deduced what the queen was doing. He told the king his suspicion. Though he was doubtful, that night the king only pretended to fall asleep and he followed the queen out the window. Her lover slapped the queen for coming late, and one of her special lion-head earrings fell out and landed at the king's feet. He picked it up and returned to bed.

The next morning, the king summoned the queen to come before him wearing all the jewelry he had ever given her. She

came with only one earring, saying the other was with the goldsmith. To humiliate her further, the king summoned the goldsmith to expose her lie. Then he threw the missing earring at her feet and ordered the Bodhisatta to chop off her head. The Bodhisatta asked the king to spare her life because she was only acting the way all women do, and he offered to prove it.

The king left the kingdom in the care of his mother, and the two men set out into the countryside in disguise. Not far outside the city they encountered a wedding celebration, and the Bodhisatta told the disbelieving king he could have sex with the bride right then. To make it happen, the Bodhisatta rushed in front of the procession and set up a screen around the king. When the bride's carriage passed them, the Bodhisatta began to cry and said his pregnant wife was inside the screen and there was no woman to help with the delivery. The father-in-law, thinking that helping a woman give birth would be auspicious and help the newlyweds have a large family in the future, sent the bride in. When she stepped inside the screen, she fell in love at first sight with the king and gave herself to him. Back outside, she announced that it was a beautiful baby boy.

The men continued their journey around India, and the Bodhisatta convinced the king that all women were the same. When they returned home, the king spared the queen's life, but evicted her from the palace and chose a new chief queen. He sent the loathsome man away too, and cut off the rose apple branch that reached over the wall.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred new disciples of the Buddha felt dissatisfied. They had ordained following a quarrel between the Buddha's Sakya clan and a neighboring clan over who should get water for their crops after their shared dam ran low at the end of the dry season. The Buddha convinced everyone to settle their dispute peacefully. Then, as an act of atonement for planning to go to war, both clans sent two hundred fifty princes to become disciples. But these men had ordained out of respect for the Buddha, not a desire for spiritual growth, and feelings for their former wives led to discontent. To help them overcome their dissatisfaction, the Buddha told them about a momentous sermon on the inherent wickedness of women he had given when he was a cuckoo in an earlier birth, and the sermon included this particular story.

Vanara Jataka (#342)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. A pair of crocodiles lived near him. The female crocodile got an intense urge to eat the Bodhisatta's heart and told her mate to get it for her. He promised he would, and went to talk to him. The crocodile offered to carry the Bodhisatta over the Ganges River on his back so he could eat fruit on an island, and the Bodhisatta accepted the ride.

As he swam, the crocodile sank down, plunging the Bodhisatta into the water. "What are you doing?" he asked, and the crocodile explained his wife's request and the real reason for carrying him. The Bodhisatta told the crocodile his plan was flawed because monkeys remove their hearts when they jump through treetops, and he pointed to a fig tree with red, ripe fruit. The Bodhisatta promised to climb up and get his heart for the crocodile, who took him back to the shore. He climbed up the tree to safety and mocked the crocodile for being stupid.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The male crocodile was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he was advised that Devadatta had made plans to kill him, the Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past but couldn't even make him afraid.

Kuntani Jataka (#343)

The Bodhisatta was once a king who ruled righteously. He had a heron who carried messages for him. Once when she was away, two boys who lived in the palace squeezed the heron's two children to death. A tiger was kept chained up in the palace, and later when the two boys went to see it, the heron got revenge by grabbing them and throwing them to the tiger, who ate them both. The heron told the king what she had done and said she could no longer live there. The king said he understood she had good reason to kill the boys and asked her to stay. But she said she could not and flew off to the Himalayas.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The heron of the past was an earlier birth of a king's messenger heron in the Buddha's time. Once when she was away, two boys who lived in the palace squeezed the heron's two children to death. A tiger was kept chained up in the palace, and later when the two boys went to see it, the heron got revenge by grabbing them and throwing them to the tiger, who ate them both. Feeling satisfied, the heron flew straight off to the Himalayas.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the heron's vengeance, he told them this story so they knew that she had also killed the killers of her young ones in the past.

Ambacora Jataka (#344)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. A wicked ascetic who engaged in many false practices lived in a mango orchard. He collected the ripe fruit to eat and to share with his relatives. One day the Bodhisatta divined this ascetic's bad behavior and wanted to scare him. When the ascetic was away collecting alms, the Bodhisatta used his magic powers to make all the mangoes disappear, as if thieves had stolen them. Four daughters of a merchant entered the orchard just before the ascetic returned home, and when he saw them, he accused the women of eating all his mangoes. When they denied it, the ascetic told them to take an oath that they were innocent, and each did, so he let them go. Then the Bodhisatta took a terrible form and showed himself to the ascetic, who fled in fear.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked ascetic of the past was an earlier birth of a man who became an ascetic in his old age and built himself a leaf hut in a mango orchard. He also collected the ripe fruit to eat and to share with his relatives. One time while he was out on an alms round, some thieves came and stole all his mangoes. After this, four daughters of a wealthy merchant (the four women of the past were earlier births of these four) who had been bathing in the nearby river came into the orchard. When the ascetic returned home, he saw the women and accused them of eating all his mangoes. When they denied it, the ascetic told them to take an oath that they were innocent, and each did, so he let them go.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how the old ascetic had shamed the women by falsely accusing them of theft and making them take an oath, he told them this story so they knew that the ascetic had done the same thing in the past.

Gajakumbha Jataka (#345)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king was quite lazy, and the Bodhisatta wanted to find a way to motivate him. One day, while they were in the king's park, the king saw a turtle for the first time. He asked the Bodhisatta about it, and he explained that even though they walk all day long, turtles are so lazy they only move a couple of inches. The king asked the turtle what he would do if a forest fire broke out, and he answered that he would try to get to a hole in the ground or in a tree. Then the Bodhisatta explained that those who rush when they should rest and tarry when they should hurry are harming their well-being. After the king heard these words, he stopped being lazy.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The turtle was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who became quite lazy after taking his vows. He no longer studied or preached and spent most of his days just lounging around. When the Buddha heard some of his other disciples discussing this disciple's laziness, he told them this story so they knew that the disciple was also lazy in the past.

Kesava Jataka (#346)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in a band of five hundred others in the Himalayas. Their master was an elder named Kesava, and the Bodhisatta was both his top student and a close friend. One rainy season they all went to the city to get salt and vinegar, and they stayed in the royal park being cared for by the king. When it was time to return, the king suggested that Kesava remain behind because he was very old. He agreed. All the others returned to the mountains, and the Bodhisatta became their leader.

Kesava missed the Bodhisatta and was not happy living alone in the city. Because of this, he slept poorly, which made him unable to digest his food properly, and he fell ill with dysentery. The king's doctors looked after him with leeches, but his condition did not improve. So Kesava asked to return to the Himalayas, and the king sent one of his advisors and some foresters to accompany him. Kesava's depression broke the moment he saw the Bodhisatta.

The Bodhisatta made him an unseasoned broth of millet, wild rice, and leaves, which immediately cleared up the dysentery. The advisor asked why he preferred such a humble food compared to the royal rice and meat he ate courtesy of the king. Kesava explained that it doesn't matter whether food is fancy or plain, a meal served with love is always the best.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, prepared morning meals for five hundred disciples every day. This impressed the king, and he started doing the same at the palace. The king's food was the absolute best available, but it was served by the king's advisors, not the king himself, so the disciples came and took some, but went elsewhere to eat. They gave the families that had long supported them the king's food in exchange for whatever the families were serving that day.

One morning, the king received an abundance of wild fruit, and he ordered it taken to the disciples eating at the palace, and this was when he was told that there were no disciples there and why. So the king went to discuss the matter with the Buddha, who explained that the best food is that which is served with love, no matter whether it is fancy or plain. Then the Buddha told the king this story as an example.

The master ascetic was an earlier birth of Baka Brahma, a god who was converted from false beliefs by the Buddha in the Baka-Brahma Jataka (#405). The king who supported the Bodhisatta and his advisor were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Ayakuta Jataka (#347)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He was very righteous, and soon after he was crowned he banned animal sacrifice. Some goblins were angry about this and they sent one particularly savage goblin to kill the Bodhisatta with a blazing mass of iron, as big as the roof of a house. As the goblin appeared at the head of the Bodhisatta's bed, ready to strike, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm. When Indra divined the reason, he grabbed his thunderbolt and stood over the goblin. The Bodhisatta woke up and saw the goblin hovering over him, though Indra was invisible. The Bodhisatta asked if he was there to protect him or kill him. The goblin answered honestly, but said he had changed his mind because he feared Indra. From then on, all goblins would protect him.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples sat around discussing how great the Buddha was: how he kept a simple life, was kind to all (even nagas and garudas), converted many people, and always lived for the benefit of the world. When the Buddha heard their discussion, he told them this story so they knew that he had also acted in the interest of others in the past.

Indra was an earlier birth of Anuruddha, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Aranna Jataka (#348)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a wealthy brahmin, but after his wife died, he took his young son to live an austere religious life deep in the Himalayas. Many years later, some bandits from the border region raided a town to take plunder and slaves. One beautiful but wicked woman fled their attack, and during her journey she came upon the Bodhisatta's hut. He was away gathering fruit, but his son was at home and the woman quickly charmed him into sleeping with her. Then she told him they should leave and live in civilization. He agreed to go with her, but needed to say goodbye to his father first. The woman knew that if she was still there when the Bodhisatta returned, he would do something bad to her, so she left right away and waited for him at the road.

When the Bodhisatta returned, he immediately realized his son had fallen under the power of a woman because he had not done his duties. He told his father he was going to go live in the world of men. But having come to the Himalayas as a child, he did not know what life was like there, and he asked his father which group of people he should befriend. As a way of warning his son what life was like outside the forest, the Bodhisatta answered that he should find people who are trustworthy, patient, and polite and avoid anyone who is impulsive. The son knew it would be very difficult to find people like this, so he decided not to leave. The Bodhisatta then taught his son mystic meditation, and they both stayed in the wilderness for the rest of their lives.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked woman who tempted the Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of a plump, lascivious young woman who had no suitors for marriage. Her mother decided to entice one of the Buddha's disciples into falling for her. That morning, as she offered alms to the disciples walking past her house, the mother looked for one who could be tempted by a craving for good food. Eventually she saw a disciple who had not given up concern with his appearance: the corners of his eyes were anointed with oil, some hair hung down, his robes were of fine fabric and immaculately clean, and his bowl was colored like a precious gem. The mother knew she could corrupt him, so when he came to the door she took his bowl and invited him into the house to eat the best food she could provide. When he finished eating, she told him to come by again anytime. He took up her offer and they got to know each other well.

When she thought it was the right time, the mother took the next step in her plan by telling the disciple that theirs was a happy household, but she had no son or son-in-law to maintain it. The next time the disciple came, she had her daughter adorn herself and begin seducing him with womanly tricks and wiles—and it worked. He fell under her power and wanted to leave the sangha. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that this same woman had harmed him and tried to lure him away from a spiritual life in an earlier birth, when he was the young ascetic living in the Himalayas.

Sandhibheda Jataka (#349)

The Bodhisatta was once a king, and he ruled righteously. One time a cowherd mistakenly left a pregnant cow behind in the forest, and it became good friends with a lion. Later, both animals gave birth at the same time, and their children also became friends and roamed around together.

When a forester delivered some things he had gathered in the forest to the palace, the Bodhisatta asked him if he had ever seen any unusual marvels in the forest. He told the Bodhisatta about the cow and lion's friendship, and the Bodhisatta told the forester that if he ever saw a third animal join them, he should immediately come to the palace and inform him. The next time the forester returned to that place, he saw a jackal hanging out with the pair, so he rushed back to the city to tell the king about it.

The jackal had eaten every kind of meat except beef and lion, and he knew that if he got the two friends arguing they would kill each other, and he would get his special meals. So he lied and told the lion and cow they each spoke poorly of the other. His scheme worked, and the two animals fought to their deaths. When the Bodhisatta got the news from the forester, he hitched up his chariot and the forester led him to the spot. There they saw the delighted jackal eating the flesh of the two friends. The Bodhisatta spoke on the dangers of slander; gathered the lion's mane, skin, claws, and teeth; and returned home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A group of six of the Buddha's disciples slandered other disciples in order to create arguments. When the Buddha heard about it, he rebuked them and told this story as an example of how slander can end friendships.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Devatapanha Jataka (#350)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Devatapanha Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. King Vedeha had the Bodhisatta sit on his throne and listen to the goddess living in the royal parasol recite four riddles. And he easily answered them all.

- "He strikes with hands and feet, beats the face; and he is dearer than a husband." – A happy child sitting on its mother's lap playfully beats his mother with hands and feet, pulls her hair, and hits her face with his fists. And the loving mother, unable to restrain her affection, hugs and kisses him.

- "She abuses him roundly, yet she wishes him to be near; and he is dearer than a husband." – A young child of seven years, old enough to help with household chores, will ask for a tasty treat when told to go to the field or market, but after getting it refuses to go. The mother yells and threatens to hit him with a stick, so he runs off to play at some relative's home. Her heart pained and her eyes red from tears, she searches around for her son and squeezes him tight when she finds him.

- "She reviles him without cause and criticizes without reason; yet he is dearer than a husband." – Without reason, a woman will accuse her secret lover of not

really caring for her and criticize him over nothing, yet their love grows ever stronger.

- “People provide food, drink, clothes, and lodging, and good men take them away; yet they are dearer than a husband.” – Devout people delight in giving alms to religious brahmins who give nothing in return.

Both the goddess and the king rewarded the Bodhisatta with perfumes, flowers, gold, jewels, and more for answering the riddles, and the king elevated him to commander-in-chief.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha’s disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he’d also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another.

Manikundala Jataka (#351)

This story is the same as the Seyya Jataka (#282).

Sujata Jataka (#352)

The Bodhisatta was once a landowner. When the Bodhisatta's grandfather died, his father was overwhelmed with grief and stopped eating, bathing, and attending to his business. The Bodhisatta knew he was the only one who could get his father over his sorrow, so he went out of the city and found a dead ox. He placed grass and water in front of it and loudly encouraged it to eat and drink, making sure many people saw him doing this.

As the Bodhisatta had hoped, word got back to his father that his son had lost his mind, and the father's worry now turned to his ailing son. He rushed out to see the Bodhisatta and asked what was wrong with him. The Bodhisatta answered that this ox still had its body, unlike his grandfather who had been cremated, so it was more likely the ox would come back to life. The father understood the message and praised his son for helping him remember the truth of impermanence. His happiness was restored.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day, the Buddha divined that a certain landowner, depressed over his father's death, was ready for a spiritual breakthrough. The Buddha went to the man's house and told him that people who understand that all things are impermanent do not grieve. Then the Buddha told him this story as an example, and the man did reach a breakthrough.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Dhonasakha Jataka (#353)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famed across the land. A cruel and violent prince was sent to Taxila to study with him. The Bodhisatta warned the prince to change his ways because power attained by violence is short-lived, and in the end, one reaps what one sows. The prince thought little of this advice, but he did finish his studies and impressed his father.

When his father died, the cruel prince ascended the throne. His royal chaplain was a similarly cruel and greedy man, and he convinced the new king to go on the attack and try to become the ruler of the whole of India. The king marched his army from kingdom to kingdom, defeating and capturing each king except for the King of Taxila because the Bodhisatta had fortified the city walls so strongly they could not be breached. The chaplain suggested they could have victory if they sacrificed all one thousand of their captive kings to the guardian deity of the banyan tree they were camped under. The marauding king agreed to the plan. The prisoners were brought one by one to the king's tent, where a wrestler squeezed them unconscious. Then their eyes were poked out and their flesh ripped off, and the carcasses were thrown into the Ganges River.

After performing this bloody sacrificial ceremony, the king marched his army forward into battle. But as he did, a goblin came and tore out one of the king's eyes, so he returned to his tree and lay down on his couch. There, a vulture perched in the tree dropped a sharp-tipped bone onto the king's other

eye. Blind and in agony, he remembered the Bodhisatta's words of advice. The king died murmuring that he would never have the pleasure of seeing his beautiful queen again, and he went straight to hell. Moments later, so did the chaplain.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The cruel king was an earlier birth of a cruel prince who commissioned a palace like none other in the world. After construction was done, the prince had the architect's eyes poked out to prevent another one like it from ever being built. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how the prince had blinded the architect, he told them this story so they knew that the prince had also been evil in the past.

The chaplain was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis.

Uraga Jataka (#354)

The Bodhisatta was once a farmer. His whole household (the Bodhisatta and his wife, their son and daughter, a daughter-in-law, and a female slave) lived happily together, and they all respected his lessons on giving alms, observing the holy days, following moral law, and remembering that all things are impermanent.

One day, while out plowing a field, the son gathered some rubbish and set it on fire. The smoke irritated the eyes of a snake living nearby, so it raged out of its hole and bit him. A moment later, the son was dead. The Bodhisatta placed his body under a tree, covered it with a cloak, and without shedding a tear, went back to plowing. When a neighbor passed by, the Bodhisatta asked him to send a message to his house that his slave only needed to bring one lunch to the field instead of two and that all four of the women should dress nicely and come with perfumes and flowers. Upon getting the message, his wife understood that her son was dead. With perfect self-control, the women did as they had been told.

After the Bodhisatta finished eating his lunch, they stacked a funeral pyre, offered the perfumes and flowers to the gods, and burned the body without any sorrow. Their virtue was so pure that the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm. And when he looked down and saw the reason, he was delighted and wanted to praise these virtuous people. Taking human form next to the funeral pyre, he asked the Bodhisatta what he was doing. When he answered that they were

burning a man, Indra feigned doubt, saying that by the looks on their faces, it appeared to be just some animal in the fire. Then he must be an enemy, Indra said. When the Bodhisatta replied that it was his son and he loved him very much, Indra asked why he didn't cry. The Bodhisatta explained that not only is death inevitable, but the dead cannot perceive any mourning. Indra then asked the others about their lack of emotion, and they all gave similar answers.

Delighted by their righteousness and understanding of the true nature of the world, Indra revealed himself and said they should never need to do physical labor again. He filled their home with the seven precious jewels and cautioned them not to stray from their virtuous path.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day the Buddha divined that a certain landowner, who was depressed over the death of his son, was ready for a spiritual breakthrough. The Buddha went to the man's house and taught him that all things are impermanent, so there was no point in grieving. Then the Buddha said that he himself had once lost a son but did not grieve, and he told this story. The man did have a breakthrough.

The Bodhisatta's wife, daughter, and slave were earlier births of Khema and Uppalavanna, two of the Buddha's top female disciples, and Khujjuttara, a top female lay supporter, and his son was an earlier birth of the Buddha's son.

Ghata Jataka (#355)

This story is the same as the Seyya Jataka (#282).

Karandiya Jataka (#356)

The Bodhisatta was once a student of religion. His teacher preached moral law to people he met, whether they were interested or not, though the latter never accepted it. His disciples encouraged him to preach only to those who wanted to hear his lessons, but he wouldn't follow their advice.

The Bodhisatta wanted to convince his teacher to change his ways, so he started throwing rocks into a cave. Other disciples asked him what he was doing, but he didn't answer; he just kept throwing rocks. They told their master and he came to ask the Bodhisatta why he was doing this. He answered that he wanted to make the world completely smooth by filling in every cavity and leveling every hill. His teacher responded that no mortal could do such a thing, and this made him realize that also nobody could make all people agree. The teacher praised the Bodhisatta and promised to stop trying to convert everyone.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The teacher was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples. Sariputta tried to teach dharma to many wicked people, like hunters and fishers, hoping to convert them. Though they listened out of respect, none ever accepted his teachings. His fellow disciples advised Sariputta to stop preaching to those who did not want to hear it, and this offended him.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Sariputta's method of proselytizing, he told them this story so they knew that Sariputta had done the same in the past.

Latukika Jataka (#357)

The Bodhisatta was once an elephant. He lived in the Himalayas, and a herd of eighty thousand followed him as their leader. A quail laid her eggs in their feeding ground and the hatchlings had just broken out of their shells when the herd arrived. Worried that an elephant would step on her young, the quail stood before the Bodhisatta and begged him to protect them; and he did, standing over the nest until the entire herd had passed by. Before he left, he warned the quail that a rogue elephant was walking behind them, so she would need to talk to him too.

When the rogue elephant arrived, the quail made the same plea. But this elephant was evil, and he intentionally trampled the chicks and urinated on their mangled corpses. The quail cursed the elephant and vowed revenge, stating that a strong mind was more powerful than a strong body.

Soon after her chicks died, the quail did favors for a crow, a fly, and a frog, and then she enlisted them to return the favors by helping her murder the rogue elephant. When the time came, the crow pecked out the elephant's eyes, blinding him. Then the fly laid eggs in his eye sockets, and when they hatched into maggots the elephant was maddened by the pain. Then the frog went up a mountain and croaked. The elephant followed the sound, assuming the frog was near water. And as the elephant climbed, the frog hopped down a cliff and croaked again, leading the elephant to step off and fall to his death. The delighted quail did a victory dance on the elephant's body before flying away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The rogue elephant was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about how Devadatta was harsh, cruel, and violent, without even an iota of empathy for others. He told them this story so they knew that Devadatta was also this way in the past. The story was also used as a lesson to the disciples to not instigate quarrels because even someone much weaker than you can bring you down.

Culladhammapala Jataka (#358)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. One day, when he was seven months old, his mother sat playing with him, and she was so joyful from motherly love that when the king entered her room, she forgot to rise in respect. His queen's affection for their child enraged the jealous king. He returned to his throne and summoned the executioner, ordering him to seize the Bodhisatta.

The executioner ripped the Bodhisatta out of his mother's arms and laid him on a board in front of the king, who ordered the boy's hands chopped off. The weeping queen said she was the one who did wrong and begged the king to cut off her hands instead. But the king ignored her, and the executioner swung his axe. The Bodhisatta did not cry or react; full of perfect patience, he bore his pain with resignation. Ignoring desperate pleas from his horrified queen, the king then ordered the executioner to cut off the Bodhisatta's feet and head, and chop his corpse into bits.

When it was over, the queen sat with the Bodhisatta's flesh on her bloody lap. Overwhelmed by sorrow, her heart snapped like bamboo in a fire, and she died immediately. Then the ground under the king broke open and the flames of hell reached up and dragged him in.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried unsuccessfully to

kill him. But in earlier births, there were times when Devadatta did kill the Bodhisatta, including this story and the Khantivadi Jataka (#313).

One day the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Devadatta's three assassination attempts: hiring archers, pushing a boulder into his path, and setting a fierce elephant loose. He told them this story so they knew that even though Devadatta had been successful in the past, he did not fear him now.

The queen was an earlier birth of the Buddha's foster mother.

Suvannamiga Jataka (#359)

The Bodhisatta was once a deer. He was exceptionally beautiful and graceful, as was his mate, and he led a herd of eighty thousand. One day he stepped into a hunter's snare, and despite his great strength, he could not break free. Fearing death, the Bodhisatta cried out, and the other deer fled in panic. But his devoted doe stayed behind, and when the hunter arrived, she told him how virtuous the Bodhisatta was and begged him to kill her instead. The hunter was amazed: both by the doe's ability to speak and her devotion. Even humans would not give up their lives for their king, he thought, and he spared both of them. To thank the hunter, the Bodhisatta gave him a magic jewel that he had once found, and told him he could use it to set up a comfortable household for his family and be generous giving alms and doing good deeds; and he never needed to kill another creature again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The doe was an earlier birth of a woman whose parents were devoted supporters of Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples. Her parents married her into a non-Buddhist family with the promise that she could keep her religion with no restrictions. She was a devoted wife and a faithful caretaker to her parents-in-law, and she continued to give alms to the Buddha's disciples. Sariputta and Moggallana became regular visitors to her house, and one time she asked her husband to meet them. He agreed and was so impressed by their explanation of dharma that he joined them several

more times and eventually converted. Soon after, the rest of the family, from his parents to his servants, accepted the Buddha's teachings. Later, husband and wife both ordained as disciples and reached arahantship.

When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing the pair, he told them this story so they knew that in this life the woman had freed her husband from the suffering caused by the bonds of cravings, and in the past she had freed him from certain death.

The hunter was an earlier birth of Channa, Prince Siddhartha's charioteer, who later became a disciple.

Sussondi Jataka (#360)

This past-life story is one of eight told by the Bodhisatta in the Kunala Jataka (#536) as examples of why men should never trust women.1

The Bodhisatta was once a garuda king. He would often take the form of an extremely handsome young man and join games of dice with a human king. Word of his beauty spread around the palace, and one day the gorgeous queen consort came to see him. They caught each other's gaze and fell in love. By his supernatural powers, the garuda stirred up a raging storm over the city and fled with the queen in the darkness to his remote island home, where they lived happily together. Nobody knew what had happened to the queen, so the Bodhisatta continued to play dice with the unsuspecting king.

The king sent one of his minstrels out in search of his missing queen, ordering him to explore every land and sea until he found her. Eventually he took passage on a merchant ship, and while out on the ocean the men asked him to play his lute for them. He warned them that his songs were so good they would excite the fish and the ship would be wrecked, but they did not believe him and they insisted. As he sang and played, fish splashed about and a giant sea creature leaped out of the water, falling on the ship and splitting it in two.

Blown by the wind, the minstrel floated on a plank and came to the Bodhisatta's island home, where the runaway queen

recognized and welcomed him. He told her his story of how he got to the island, and she brought him back to her home to take care of him. They became lovers, he hiding away whenever the Bodhisatta was at home.

After a month and a half, some merchants landed on the island to gather water and firewood, and the minstrel sailed back home with them. The king and the garuda were playing dice when he arrived back at the palace, and he told them of his adventure and confessed his love for the queen by playing a song. The Bodhisatta was full of regret for not guarding his love from other men sufficiently and, now knowing what a wicked woman the queen was, gave her back to the king. He never returned to the palace.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples considered quitting the sangha after falling for the charms of a woman. The Buddha explained that it's easy to be led astray by women, and then he told this story as an example of how there is no place one can escape temptation.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Vannaroha Jataka (#361)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. A lion and a tiger lived together in a cave, and they let a jackal eat their leftover meat. The jackal had never eaten lion or tiger meat and wanted very much to do so. He knew that if he got the two friends arguing they would kill each other, and he would get his special meals.

The jackal told the lion that the tiger spoke poorly of him, saying the lion was not even one-sixteenth as beautiful or strong as he was. The lion sent the jackal away, saying the tiger would never say such things. Then the jackal told the tiger the same lie about the lion. The tiger asked his friend if it was true, and the lion denied it. The tiger apologized for doubting him, and the lion forgave him. The two remained close friends, and the jackal fled. The Bodhisatta saw all this happen.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The lion and tiger were earlier births of Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples. They spent a rainy season living in the wilderness, and a beggar (the jackal was an earlier birth of him) who lived nearby assisted them in exchange for leftover food. The two elders were close friends, and when the beggar saw how harmoniously they lived, he wanted to make them quarrel. He told Sariputta that Moggallana spoke poorly of him, claiming he was lower in both lineage and spiritual attainments. Sariputta knew the beggar was lying and thought nothing of it. Then the beggar

told Moggallana the same story, and he also rejected it. The elders sent the beggar away.

When they returned to the Buddha's monastery, Sariputta and Moggallana told him about their experience with the beggar, and the Buddha told them this story so they knew that he had done the same thing to them in the past.

Silavimamsa Jataka (#362)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. Before being hired, the Bodhisatta had been educated by the best teachers in Taxila, and he wondered if the king respected him more for his virtue or for his devotion to learning. To test this, he stole some coins in full view of the king's treasurer.

The Bodhisatta was arrested and taken before the king. After being sentenced to death, he said he was not a thief and explained why he had pocketed the coins. And being given this punishment showed that the king's honor really was earned from his virtue, not his education. Forgiven for his crime, the Bodhisatta left the palace and lived out the rest of his life as an ascetic in the Himalayas.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples had been a king's chaplain before joining the sangha. He received more honor than anyone else in the king's inner circle and wondered if it was because of his virtue or his devotion to learning, so he did the exact same test of his privilege. After being forgiven by the king, the man joined the sangha and eventually reached arahantship.

When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing this, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that he himself had once done the same test in the past.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Hiri Jataka (#363)

This story is the same as the Akatannu Jataka (#90).

Khajjopanaka Jataka (#364)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Khajjopanaka Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. After four of King Vedeha's other advisors framed the Bodhisatta for stealing from the king, he fled to save his life. The goddess who lived in the royal parasol missed hearing the Bodhisatta preach and wanted him back. So one night she asked King Vedeha four riddles about who is dearer than a husband, and he took them to his four wicked advisors. They had no idea.

The next night the goddess returned and the king said he couldn't solve the riddles. She rebuked the king's foolishness for relying on Senaka, his chief advisor, and the others and said only the Bodhisatta was smart enough to figure them out. "When you want fire, you don't blow on a firefly. Putting fireflies under grass and cow dung will not make them burn," she said. "And when you want milk, squeeze a cow's udder, not its horn. To know something's weight, use a balance, not your hand. Senaka is a firefly; the Bodhisatta is a bonfire blazing with wisdom. If you do not bring him back to the palace to answer these questions, you are a dead man."

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves,

goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another. Senaka was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha, and the other three advisors were earlier births of Potthapada, Ambattha, and Pilotika, three ascetics who respected the Buddha.

Ahigundika Jataka (#365)

This story is the same as the Salaka Jataka (#249).

Gumbiya Jataka (#366)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant who led many oxcarts to trade with distant lands. During one trip through a vast forest, the Bodhisatta warned his men that demons often put food laced with poison along the road, so they should not eat anything they found without consulting him first. People who ate the poison would die, and then the demons would eat their corpses. Some of his men came upon honeycombs placed on top of leaves, and the demon who put them there walked along the road pretending to look for honey in the trees. The men assumed the honey was an offering to the spirits from this honey hunter, so some ignored the Bodhisatta's warning and ate it right away. Most of them died, though those who had only eaten a little bit took medicine from the Bodhisatta to induce vomiting and survived. The Bodhisatta used this as a lesson that avoiding desires protects people from suffering.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples considered quitting the sangha after falling for the charms of a woman. The Buddha told him this story as an example of how following desires can lead to ruin.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Saliya Jataka (#367)

The Bodhisatta was once a son of a village householder. A poor, elderly doctor saw a snake coiled up asleep in the fork of a banyan tree under which the Bodhisatta and his friends were playing. Wanting the boys to get bitten by the snake so he could make money curing them, he told the Bodhisatta there was a hedgehog in the tree, and he should catch it. Not taking even a moment to look, the Bodhisatta climbed up the tree and grabbed it by the neck. Once he realized it was a snake, he immediately flung it away. It fell on the doctor's neck and bit him; and he dropped dead instantly.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The doctor was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. While talking with some of his disciples, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that none of Devadatta's attacks, present or past, had ever caused him fear.

Tacasara Jataka (#368)

The Bodhisatta was once a son of a village householder. A poor, elderly doctor saw a snake coiled up asleep in the fork of a banyan tree under which the Bodhisatta and his friends were playing. Wanting the boys to get bitten by the snake so he could make money curing them, he told the Bodhisatta there was a hedgehog in the tree, and he should catch it. Not taking even a moment to look, the Bodhisatta climbed up the tree and grabbed it by the neck. Once he realized it was a snake, he immediately flung it away. It fell on the doctor's neck and bit him; and he dropped dead instantly.

When the doctor's friends learned his fate, they blamed the boys for causing the man's death. They were arrested and led in chains to be judged by the king. The Bodhisatta told the other boys to act happy and not show any fear; he would save them. The boys did as they were told, and when the king saw them calm and content, he wanted to know the reason for their carefree attitude. The Bodhisatta told the king that resisting fate is pointless and that the only people who benefit from grieving are a person's adversaries, since they delight in others' pain. After the king heard their story, he not only judged them innocent but also made the Bodhisatta one of his advisors and gave the other boys jobs in the palace.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while talking with some of his disciples about perfecting wisdom, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that he had also been wise in the past. The king was an

earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the other boys were earlier births of some of the Buddha's other disciples.

Mittavinda Jataka (#369)

The incidents of this story will be found in the Catu-Dvara Jataka (#439).

Palasa Jataka (#370)

The Bodhisatta was once a goose living in the Himalayas. Every day, while flying to and from the lake where he fed, he stopped to rest on a large Judas tree and became good friends with the tree fairy who dwelled in it. One day a bird defecated a banyan tree seed into one of the Judas tree's crooks. When it had grown into a sprout, the Bodhisatta noticed it and told the tree fairy that banyans kill every tree they grow on, so he should pick it off. But the tree fairy wanted to let it grow and care for it like a child. The Bodhisatta said he was a fool and stopped visiting the Judas tree. Eventually the banyan engulfed the Judas tree just as the Bodhisatta had said it would, and the tree fairy lost his home. He regretted not following the Bodhisatta's advice.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred friends had heard the Buddha discuss dharma, and they renounced the world together to become his disciples. One night thoughts of desire filled their heads, and the Buddha knew about it, so he called an assembly and told them this story to illustrate how a sin as small as a banyan seedling can become disastrous. When the Buddha was finished, all five hundred disciples became arahants.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Dighitikosala Jataka (#371)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. After a king had seized his home and murdered his parents, the Bodhisatta got himself hired as the conquering king's assistant in order to seek revenge. One time the Bodhisatta was alone with the king in a forest and he grabbed the king's hair, drew his sword, and yelled, "Now I will cut the killer of my parents into fourteen pieces!" But at that very moment, he remembered that his father had advised against killing. He kept the king in fear for a while, and told him that virtue, not wealth, made life good. He then set the king free and handed him his sword, saying he was ready to die. But the king took the Bodhisatta's words to heart and did not slay him. Instead, the king swore an oath of friendship and promised to never harm him. He gave the Bodhisatta his daughter as a wife and returned his father's kingdom to him.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, an expert in scripture, left a vessel he used for rinsing his mouth in the lavatory. When his roommate, an expert in the monastic rules, saw that it held excess water, he told the first disciple he had done wrong. The errant disciple said he was not aware this was an offense, and he promised to atone for it, but the other disciple explained that if something is done inadvertently there is no infraction. But later, this rule expert criticized the offender to some students and said he had indeed sinned. When the offender heard about being called a sinner, he was angry and called his accuser a liar. Word of this spread and a quarrel

broke out, dividing not only the disciples into two sides, but also forming splits among the laypeople on earth and between the gods of heaven. The rules-expert disciple had the other excommunicated, but supporters of the offending disciple rejected this.

Eventually the Buddha heard about this schism and went to solve it. He asked the two sides to sit together, alternating one by one from each side of the debate, and told them the quarreling had to stop. Then he told them this story as an example of how following his parent's advice in the past led to a harmonious result.

But the disciples did not end their feud, and the frustrated Buddha rose into the air to lecture that wise people do not quarrel, and when fools surround you, you should get away from them. So the Buddha spent three months alone in a forest before returning home. While he was away, the lay followers grew so frustrated at the disciples' behavior they stopped supporting them, and the disciples had to go to ask the Buddha for forgiveness, which they received.

The prince's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother.

Migapotaka Jataka (#372)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. An ascetic who lived in the Himalayas adopted an orphaned fawn and treated it as a child. One day the deer ate too much grass and died of indigestion. This depressed the ascetic, and when the Bodhisatta noticed it, he came down to earth and floated in the air, telling him that his sorrow was improper. This reminded the ascetic that all things are impermanent, which restored his happiness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The ascetic and the deer were earlier births of one of the Buddha's elder disciples and a novice under his guidance. The elder was overcome with grief after the novice got sick and died. When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing the elder's sorrow, he told them this story so they knew that the elder had also lost control of his emotions and lamented the death of a youngster in his care in the past.

Musika Jataka (#373)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famed across the world. When one of his students, a crown prince, mastered his studies and was about to return home, the Bodhisatta divined that some future day when he was king, his son would do him harm. To protect his student, the Bodhisatta wrote three verses and told him precisely when to recite them. The prince thanked him and left.

Eventually the former student became king, and when his son turned sixteen years old, he was filled with the desire to seize the kingdom for himself so he could rule as a young man rather than waiting until he was old. Encouraged by his servants, that evening the prince took his sword and stood near the king's bathing tank, ready to kill his father. While preparing the bath, the king's slave saw the prince, so he chopped her in two and threw her body in the water. When the king arrived and did not see his slave, he remembered the Bodhisatta's warning and said out loud, "People ask where has she gone? Only I know she is lying dead in the tank." Hearing this, the prince thought he had been discovered and fled.

After a week, it appeared that the king had only guessed about his slave's fate, and the prince thought his plans were still unknown. So the prince stood sword in hand at the bottom of some stairs waiting for his chance to strike. But when the king arrived he said, "Like a beast of burden, you who killed my slave keep turning." Again the prince took off.

But after two weeks passed with no arrest, the prince once again went to kill his father at the staircase, this time by hitting him with a shovel. And when he approached, the king said, “You are but a weak fool, like a baby holding a toy. I will slay you.” Unable to run away this time, the prince threw himself at his father’s feet and begged that his life be spared. The king had his son thrown in prison, not to be released until he died; only then was his son given the throne.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When a certain prince was conceived, his mother was overcome with the urge to drink blood from her husband’s right knee. When the king heard of this, he consulted his astrologers who told him it was an omen that his queen was pregnant and his future son would kill him to seize the throne. The king wasn’t worried about this prophecy, so he cut open his right knee with a sword and gave his wife the blood she desired in a golden bowl. When the queen learned of the prediction about her son, she twice tried to abort him, but the king put a stop to it both times.

After the queen gave birth, the Buddha came to preach to the king. At this time, someone brought the young prince to the king, and he played with him on his lap so affectionately that he did not pay attention to the sermon. The Buddha commented that most kings who had reason to suspect and fear their sons kept them locked away during their lifetime and told him this story as an example. The Buddha added that kings’ fears of their sons are often justified, but the king still wasn’t worried about it.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Culladhanuggaha Jataka (#374)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. A young brahmin had been sent to Taxila to study archery, and he became a master, equaling the skill of his teacher. The teacher was so impressed, he gave the young archer his daughter to marry. As the archer traveled back home with his new wife, they came to a forest where a wild elephant was rampaging, and local people told him the forest was too dangerous to pass through. But the archer knew his skill would protect him and ignored them. And when the elephant charged, he shot an arrow straight through its head, killing it.

The archer continued on and came to a spot where fifty thieves were working the road, and local people warned him not to go there. Again the archer ignored the advice, and he encountered the thieves. Their leader was a good judge of character and could tell that the archer was noble and heroic, so he told his men not to risk an attack. Feeling safe, the archer sent his wife to ask the thieves for some of the venison they were eating, but they ignored their leader's demand to treat them well and gave her raw meat instead of roasted. The archer responded to the insult by shooting forty-nine of the thieves, but he ran out of arrows before he could shoot their leader because he had used one arrow on the elephant. Instead, he knocked the leader down and sat on his chest. He asked his wife to get his sword, but she had fallen in love at first sight with the chief thief and gave it to him instead. He cut off the archer's head, then he and the woman took off together.

As they traveled, the thief realized that someone of her ilk would do the same thing to him someday, so he decided to get rid of her. When they came upon a flooded stream where a crocodile lived, the thief needed to help the woman across. She told him to put all her jewelry in a bag and take it across first, then come back for her. But after he got to the other side, he ran away and she slumped down on the ground screaming in anguish.

The Bodhisatta looked down on the world and saw the woman weeping. Thinking she deserved to be mocked and rebuked, he took the form of a jackal and had Matali, his charioteer, and Pancasikha, one of heaven's top musicians, change into a fish and a bird respectively. The Bodhisatta stood with a piece of meat in his mouth where the woman could see him. Then to illustrate the woman's stupidity, the fish jumped out of the stream, the Bodhisatta dropped his meat to pick up the fish, but the fish jumped back into the stream, and the bird flew off with the meat. The woman laughed at what she had just seen and called the Bodhisatta a fool. He answered that it's easy to see another person's faults, but hard to see one's own: "What is the cost of losing both a husband and a lover?" Understanding his point, the woman vowed to find another husband and remain faithful to him. The Bodhisatta was doubtful, saying if she betrayed a husband once, she would do it again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The archer and his wife were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and the disciple's former wife. This disciple

began to miss his former life, and with his wife's encouragement was considering leaving the sangha. The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past his wife had caused him to be beheaded. After talking to the Buddha, this disciple gained new understanding and chose to stay.

Kapota Jataka (#375)

This story is the same as the Kapota Jataka (#42).

Avariya Jataka (#376)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas. One time he went down to a city to get salt and vinegar, and he slept in the royal park. The next morning, the king saw the Bodhisatta out collecting alms and, impressed by his demeanor, invited him into the palace for a big meal. After they talked, the king told the Bodhisatta he could stay in the park as long as he liked and all his needs would be met.

The king came daily to pay respect to the Bodhisatta, who preached to him about ruling righteously with patience, kindness, and compassion, and avoiding anger. To show his appreciation, the king tried to give him a village that had revenue of one hundred thousand coins, but the Bodhisatta was not interested in worldly things and refused.

After living for twelve years in the park, the Bodhisatta felt he should take a journey. At the Ganges River he boarded a ferry whose foolish owner collected fares after his passengers reached the other side. Often they gave him nothing, and fights broke out. The ferryman asked the Bodhisatta what he would pay, and he answered, “I will tell you how to increase your wealth, welfare, and virtue.” Once on the other side, the Bodhisatta advised him to increase his wealth by collecting his fare before taking the passengers across and increase his welfare and virtue by not getting angry. The ferryman had assumed he would also get some money in addition to the advice; when he didn’t, he threw the Bodhisatta down on the ground, sat on his chest, and punched him in the mouth. It

was an example of how some people are just too stupid to receive good advice; it's like giving gold to animals.

The ferryman's wife saw him attacking the Bodhisatta and told him to stop. Now angry at her too, he jumped up and knocked her down, causing her to miscarry. He was arrested and taken to the king, who punished him.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The ferryman of the past was an earlier birth of a ferryman in the Buddha's time. A disciple of the Buddha who lived in the countryside traveled to visit the Buddha and arrived late. The ferryman told him to wait until morning to cross the river, but the disciple insisted on going right away. The ferryman took him, but traveled slowly and steered poorly, causing the boat to take on water, making the disciple's robe wet. Because of this, he was unable to see the Buddha that day.

The next day, the Buddha asked the disciple why he didn't come see him the day before. When the disciple explained what had happened, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that the ferryman was also an ignorant and crude man in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Setaketu Jataka (#377)

The Bodhisatta was once a teacher, famed across the land. His top student, Setaketu, was from a brahmin family, and he was full of pride on account of his caste. One day he walked near an untouchable and did not want any wind that had passed over the untouchable's body to touch his own. Setaketu ordered the untouchable to pass him on the downwind side, but he refused. Setaketu shouted insults, but the untouchable would not give in. Instead, he challenged Setaketu to answer one question—if answered correctly, the untouchable would step aside; if answered incorrectly, Setaketu had to crawl between his legs. The question was, "What are the quarters?" and Setaketu answered confidently, "North, south, east, and west." As these were not the quarters the untouchable was thinking of, he grabbed Setaketu by his shoulders and pushed him down through his legs.

Later, the Bodhisatta talked to Setaketu about what had happened, telling him to get over his anger and explaining that the four quarters were parents; teachers; heads of households who provide food, drink, and clothing; and a place where misery becomes bliss. (It was a clever pun on these four words.) But his shame over the encounter would not go away and Setaketu left the Bodhisatta to go study elsewhere. Eventually he joined a group of ascetics and traveled with them.

While the ascetics were temporarily residing in the royal park, the king announced that he would come to pay respect.

Setaketu told the other ascetics that, to impress the king, they should perform austerities such as lying on a bed of spikes and worshipping fire. The king arrived, accompanied by his chaplain. Seeing the ascetics' rigorous activities and the fancy seat used by Setaketu, the king said these must be supremely learned and advanced men. But the chaplain told the king he was being deceived by sham tricks and a facade of grandeur. After listening to the chaplain discuss the true religion, the ascetics renounced their ways and worked as servants for the king.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Setaketu was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who claimed to dedicate himself to seeking salvation, but was known by other disciples to be dishonest. When the Buddha heard some of them discussing the dishonest disciple, he told them this story so they knew that this disciple had also been a rascal in the past.

The untouchable was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Darimukha Jataka (#378)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He, a prince born to the chief queen, and the son of the royal chaplain were born on the same day. The two boys grew up in the palace together as very close friends and were sent to Taxila for their education. When they finished their studies, the pair wandered through the land to get new experiences and arrived in a city a week after its king had died without an heir. They took up residence in a temple, and the next morning walked the streets seeking alms. At one house, the Bodhisatta was given a seat covered with a white cloth, while a red rug was spread over his friend's seat. The friend recognized this as an omen that the Bodhisatta would soon be made king of this city and he himself would be chosen as the commander-in-chief.

Later, while the two men relaxed in the royal park, the Bodhisatta taking a nap, the royal chariot was sent out of the palace without a driver—a foolproof method to find someone with sufficient merit to be a great king. As the chariot and the throng of people walking behind it approached the park, the Bodhisatta's friend thought about his future and decided he would rather be an ascetic than a layman, so he hid out of sight. The royal chaplain saw auspicious marks on the Bodhisatta's feet and had the musicians play loudly to wake him. The chaplain lowered himself in front of the Bodhisatta and told him, "Lord, the kingdom falls to you." The Bodhisatta accepted the crown, and after the coronation, done right there in the park, he completely forgot about his friend.

After the Bodhisatta left, his friend sat down and watched a leaf fall from a tree. He realized that his body would someday decay just like the leaf; this opened his insight into the impermanence of all things, and he became a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others). After a robe and a bowl fell from the sky onto his body, he flew to the Himalayas.

Forty years later, the Bodhisatta remembered his friend and wondered what had happened to him. He let it be known there would be great honor to anyone who could find him, though the Bodhisatta did not make any effort to seek him out.

After another decade, the friend divined that the Bodhisatta had thought of him, so he flew to the city to preach. The king gave his old friend a kind greeting and listened to him explain the realities of attachments and suffering. His friend then suggested that in his old age it was time for the Bodhisatta to renounce the world. The Bodhisatta replied that while he ruled righteously and gave charity, he was too attached to pleasures to give them up. His friend spoke some more about the misery of desires and the blessings of a holy life and urged the Bodhisatta to reconsider. Then he flew back to his mountain home.

The Bodhisatta pondered his friend's advice and soon changed his mind. He gave the throne to his son and set off for the Himalayas where he lived out his days as an ascetic in a leaf hut.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while talking to his disciples about the Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment, the Buddha told them this story as an example of a similar renunciation in his past.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Neru Jataka (#379)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden goose living with his younger brother in the Himalayas. One day, while flying home, they saw the magical Mount Neru, where the animals that live there turn a golden hue, and they landed on the summit. The brother commented how all animals—the dim and clever, the cowardly and brave—were honored equally. Jackals rivaled tigers, and crows rivaled golden geese. Saying good creatures would never stay in such a terrible place, they quickly left.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha gave one of his disciples some topics for meditation and sent him away to spend the rainy season in a frontier village. At first, the people there welcomed him, building him a hut and bringing him food, and he was happy there. But not long after, people switched their support to some teachers proposing that things are permanent, and then to men from a sect that denied immortality, and later to some naked ascetics.

When the rainy season ended, the disciple went back to the Buddha's monastery and told him about being unsatisfied in a place where people did not know right from wrong. The Buddha said he should have moved to another place, and he told this story as an example of how he himself had done so in the past.

The younger goose was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Asanka Jataka (#380)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas. A god of perfect merit fell from heaven and was born inside a lotus near his home. While the other lotuses withered, hers remained flawless. When the Bodhisatta noticed this flower, he walked out to inspect it and found the baby girl. He named her Asanka, meaning “Doubt,” and raised her as his daughter. She grew into one of the most beautiful women in the world.

When Asanka was sixteen years old, Indra, king of the gods, visited the Bodhisatta’s camp and gave her luxurious clothes and jewelry and a crystal palace that floated in the air. Soon after, a forester saw her and told the king about her divine beauty. The king immediately went to the forest with his advisors and a large army and asked the Bodhisatta to let him take her as a wife. The Bodhisatta agreed, but the king could not have her until he knew her name. He discussed it with his advisors and guessed many names, but they were all wrong.

A year passed as they gathered more guesses, and the king and his men suffered great hardship living in the forest; some died from snakes, flies, and cold; others were attacked by lions and such beasts. The king decided to give up and go home. As he left, Asanka stood at a window of her palace and called out to the king, telling him he would never find a wife as good as her and he should be more patient. In heaven, she said, the gods wait one thousand years to drink the juice from a special vine that makes them intoxicated for four months.

Swayed by both her words and her beauty, the king guessed names for another year.

Once again failing to find Asanka's name, the king was ready to leave. And again Asanka appeared at her window. She told him that one time a crane flew to the top of a hill and wanted to stay there for a full day. Indra divined the bird's wish and diverted a stream up to the hilltop so the crane could feed. "The crane's hope was fulfilled," she told the king, "and yours can be too." So the king remained for a third year and presented the Bodhisatta with more names, all wrong.

Thoroughly frustrated, the king again set off for home. When he saw Asanka at her window, he told her it had all been too much. Though her words were sweet, she had not helped him. "You promised I would succeed, but it was all talk with no performance. My men and I have suffered greatly, and I doubt my life will be terrible without you as my wife." Hearing his words, Asanka told the king he had just said her name in his farewell; surely he could figure it out now. And he did. The king took his new bride, and they lived happily ever after.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and Asanka were earlier births of one of the Buddha's junior disciples and the disciple's former wife. Because he was new, his food was poor (lumpy gruel with stale or rotting ingredients and dried or burnt sprouts) and he did not get enough to stay healthy. He started to return each morning to the wife he left behind, and she gave him

delicious rice with sauce and curry. This made him miss his former life, and with her encouragement he decided to leave the sangha.

The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past his wife's behavior had caused him three years of misery and made many men suffer and die. After talking to the Buddha, this disciple gained new understanding and chose to stay.

Migalopa Jataka (#381)

The Bodhisatta was once a vulture. His strong and stubborn son flew higher than any other vulture, and the Bodhisatta warned him that flying so high was dangerous. But he ignored this advice and one time flew into winds so fierce that they smashed him to death. Because he ignored the wise advice of elders, the foolish young vulture brought suffering on the family he left behind.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The young vulture was an earlier birth of an unruly disciple of the Buddha, who told him this story of his past so he knew that his disobedience had once led to his death.

Sirikalakanni Jataka (#382)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. He lived a thoroughly righteous life, giving charity and observing the holy days, and so did his family and all his workers. He kept a special couch and bed in his home specifically for use if anyone with purer morals than his own ever visited.

One time, daughters of the gods of the East and West went to bathe in the sacred Lake Anotatta at the same time. They quarreled over who should get to bathe first, each believing she was more worthy than the other. Unable to agree, they asked their fathers to choose. But they couldn't decide either, so they asked the gods of the North and South, and they passed the matter to Indra, king of the gods, who also refused to settle the dispute. Indra told the two daughters to visit the Bodhisatta at his home, and whichever of them was offered his couch and bed would be the one worthy of bathing first.

The first goddess wore a blue (an unlucky color) dress and jewelry and dove down from heaven as if shot from a catapult. She stood in the air above the Bodhisatta, who asked who she was and what she wanted from him. He then asked her about the type of people she associated with, and she answered honestly that her friends were unruly, miserable, greedy, dishonest, cruel, and arrogant. Thinking she was both wicked and ugly, the Bodhisatta sent her away.

Then the second goddess came bathed in a golden hue and stood respectfully by the Bodhisatta. He asked her the same

questions, and she told him she loved people who were mild-mannered, responsible, friendly, honest, and kind. Pleased by her words and demeanor, the Bodhisatta invited her to stay the night using his special couch and bed. In the morning, she returned to heaven and bathed in the lake.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing whether Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, and his family were truly virtuous. The Buddha told them that Anathapindika and his entire household did live righteously. Then he shared this story of his own past life when he also kept a pure home.

The superior goddess was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples.

Kukkuta Jataka (#383)

The Bodhisatta was once a wild chicken. A female cat frequently deceived members of his flock and ate them. The cat knew that the Bodhisatta was very wise, but she was determined to eat him too; so she flattered him about his beauty and asked him to marry her. The Bodhisatta knew she had eaten many of his relatives, and to get rid of her said that beasts and birds should never marry. But she didn't give up and promised him youth and beauty if he married her, or even just took her as a slave. The Bodhisatta got more direct and said he knew that she was wicked and had killed his family, so the cat went away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples considered quitting the sangha after he saw a beautifully dressed woman. The Buddha told him that women are like cats: they deceive and lure men into ruin. He then told him this story as an example, and the disciple decided to stay.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Dhammaddhaja Jataka (#384)

The Bodhisatta was once a bird. He lived on an isolated island and was the leader of a large flock. One time a ship sank near the island, and a crow from the ship flew there to safety. The crow wanted to eat eggs and chicks, so he flew to the other birds and stood amidst them on just one foot with his mouth open. They asked the crow what he was doing, and he told them he was a holy being who ate nothing but the wind; and if he put his other foot down, the earth could not bear his weight. He then gave them a short sermon about the importance of practicing virtue and greatly impressed the birds.

As the crow had predicted, the birds asked him to watch over their nests when they went out to feed. While they were away, the crow ate his fill, and then went back to his perch. When the birds returned, they were distraught and wondered who the killer was, but did not suspect the crow. After a few more days of this same thing happening, the Bodhisatta realized the problem only began after the crow had arrived on the island. The next day, he went off to a hiding place instead of going to their feeding grounds, and he saw the crow eating their young. When his flock returned, the Bodhisatta told them the truth about the crow and ordered him killed, striking the first blow himself.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crow was an earlier birth of a deceitful disciple of the Buddha. He told this story so others knew that this disciple had also been deceitful in the past.

Nandiyamiga Jataka (#385)

The Bodhisatta was once a deer who was deeply devoted to caring for his parents. The king enjoyed hunting, and every day he took his subjects to the forest to assist him. They hated this disruption to their lives, so they decided to drive deer into the royal park to let the king hunt with ease. They encircled a vast stretch of forest and walked through it, beating trees with sticks and clubs to scare the deer into fleeing toward the park. When people surrounded a thicket where the Bodhisatta rested with his parents, he saved their lives by running out alone while his parents remained. As he'd predicted, the people saw a deer flee and did not enter the thicket looking for others. Surrounded by the mass of armed people, the Bodhisatta followed the other terrified deer into the enclosure. The people closed the gate and told the king what they had done, and he agreed to start hunting there.

The Bodhisatta's parents had assumed that, because he was exceptionally strong, he would have leaped over the fence to freedom. When he did not return after several days, they stopped a brahmin walking down the road toward the park and asked him to send their son a message that they missed him and wanted him to come back. But the Bodhisatta had been eating the king's food and drinking his water and felt obligated to do something good for the king in return before leaving; and he also wanted to help the other captured deer.

To avoid the suffering of being shot by multiple arrows before dying, the deer all agreed to choose one of themselves at

random each day to go stand and be shot. When his turn to die came, the Bodhisatta stood strong without a hint of fear as the king drew his bow. But sensing such great virtue, the king spared his life. And when the Bodhisatta asked why only him, the king gave immunity to all living creatures. The Bodhisatta preached for a few days to the king about ruling with righteousness, then returned to his parents.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day the Buddha was told that one of his disciples continued to support his parents. He praised the disciple's good behavior and told him this story of a time in the past when he himself supported his own parents.

The king and brahmin were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples, and the Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother.

Kharaputta Jataka (#386)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. When a naga king had left his realm and went to earth looking for food, some boys thought he was a snake and started throwing things at him. The human king saw the children and ordered them to stop, saving the naga king's life. The naga king thanked him with a reward of jewels and a naga maiden who would always stay by his side for pleasure and protection. If the king ever lost sight of her, he could recite a spell to find her instantly.

One day, while the king was relaxing in the royal park, the naga maiden saw a water snake, and she shed her human form and had sex with it. The king, noticing she was gone, spoke the spell, and when he saw what she was doing, he beat her with a bamboo pole. She returned to the naga world in anger and showed the mark on her back from the beating, but lied about the reason, claiming it was because she did not do the king's bidding. Furious, the naga king sent four nagas to kill the human king. They entered the king's bedchamber right at his bedtime and heard him tell his queen about the incident with the naga maiden and the water snake and ask if she had seen her. "I fear that she has gone and lied to the naga king," he said. The assassins returned home and told the naga king about it.

With regret, the naga king went to the king's bedchamber and apologized by giving the king a spell that allowed him to understand animal conversation—but if he taught it to anyone else, he would die a fiery death. Soon after, while

eating with his queen, drops of honey and molasses and a bit of cake fell on the ground. An ant found them and called out to the others to come eat, which caused the king to laugh out loud. Then a fly asked his wife to have sex, but she said to wait until the king was anointed with perfumes; then they could do it on his back while smelling very fragrant. Again the king laughed. And at dinner, a lump of rice fell on the ground, and the excited ants yelled out with joy. Once again, the king laughed.

The queen worried that the king was laughing because he found fault with her, and that night she asked him about it. While at first he refused to answer, she nagged him until he told her about the animal spell. She wanted to learn it and told the king point blank that she didn't care if he died; she must know it. Swayed by her womanly charm, the king agreed to teach her the spell and die by fire.

As the king and queen went to the park, the Bodhisatta saw what the foolish king was doing and went to earth with another god to save him. They took the form of goats and started to have sex in the road in front of the king's chariot, but they only let the king and the donkeys pulling the chariot see them. One donkey told the goats that this sort of shameless act, which should only be done in private, was one of the reasons everyone knew goats were stupid. The Bodhisatta replied that he wasn't the one tied up with ropes and who chose not to flee to freedom when he had the chance. And the king was even stupider than the donkey, the Bodhisatta added, because he was throwing away his life for his wife.

Hearing everything spoken by these animals, the king sent his chariot away and asked the Bodhisatta what he should do. Revealing himself as Indra, the Bodhisatta told the king he was there to rescue him. He told the king to lie to his wife, telling her that to learn the spell she needed to take a beating. He predicted that when she heard this, she would change her mind, and he would be able to keep both his promise and his life.

The Bodhisatta returned to heaven, and the king continued on to his park. Once there, he told the queen the first step in learning the spell was to receive one hundred lashes to the back, during which she could not make a single sound. So greedy was the queen that she agreed to do it. The king's slaves began whipping her, and after just three hits she cried out for them to stop. But the king, angry that she was willing to kill him to get the spell, ordered his slaves to continue until the skin fell off her back.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and queen were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and the disciple's former wife. When the disciple began to long for her, the Buddha told him this story so he knew that in the past his wife had once been so selfish that she had tried to lead him to death.

The donkey who spoke to the Bodhisatta was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Suci Jataka (#387)

The Bodhisatta was once a blacksmith. He was poor but highly skilled. The king's favorite blacksmith, a wealthy, accomplished man, lived in a nearby village, and his daughter's beauty was talked about far and wide. Though he'd never seen her, the Bodhisatta resolved to win this daughter's hand by making the greatest needle ever; a feat he was able to accomplish through the magical abilities possessed by all Bodhisattas. Using the best iron, he crafted a tough but delicate needle that could pierce dice and float on water. Then he made seven tiny nested sheaths for it that were as strong as the needle itself.

His masterpiece complete, the Bodhisatta went to the head blacksmith's village and walked down his street hawking his incomparable creation. The daughter was outside, fanning her father with a palm leaf, and was overcome by bliss at the sound of the Bodhisatta's voice. She went to meet him and explained how foolish it was to sell needles in a blacksmith village. He replied that his needles were so good her father would be amazed.

The head blacksmith agreed to have a look at the Bodhisatta's needle, and he called all the other blacksmiths in the village to come see it too. The head blacksmith thought the tube was the needle, but the Bodhisatta opened it with his fingernail to show that it was really a sheath. Six more times he opened a sheath, and when the men saw the actual needle, they waved cloth in the air and snapped their fingers in delight. To demonstrate the needle's strength, the

Bodhisatta had two strong men hold an anvil over a bowl of water. He struck the needle hard, pounding it right through and into the water.

None of the other blacksmiths had ever even imagined something this incredible, and the head blacksmith was so impressed that he married his daughter to the Bodhisatta right then and there. Later, when the head blacksmith died, the Bodhisatta took his place.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing his supreme wisdom, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also been very clever in the past.

The head blacksmith's daughter was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Tundila Jataka (#388)

The Bodhisatta was once a wild boar. One day he, his mother, and his younger brother were lying in a pit when an old woman using a walking stick approached. The mother was frightened to death by the sound of the stick tapping the ground, and she ran off, leaving her two young sons behind. The old woman felt compassion for the piglets and took them home in her basket, rearing them like children.

When the pair grew up big and fat, the woman refused all offers to buy them until one day during a festival when some men ran out of meat and wanted more right away. After being rejected repeatedly, these men got the woman drunk, and then she agreed to sell the Bodhisatta's brother. She filled his trough with rice and called him to come eat. When he saw strange men holding nooses standing next to his food, he knew he was about to die, so he ran to the Bodhisatta and stood shaking in fear.

The Bodhisatta told his brother that this is the fate of all pigs reared by humans, so he should not grieve but rather accept his destiny gracefully. The Bodhisatta then preached the perfection of love to his brother, and his voice spread over the whole kingdom so everybody heard him. His lesson was so pure and flawless that people snapped their fingers and waved cloth, and the king brought both pigs to live as his sons in the palace, dressed in robes and jewels. The Bodhisatta became both a judge and a spiritual advisor. After the king died, the Bodhisatta wrote a book about justice (which was

used by people for sixty thousand years) and then retired to the forest with his brother to live out his final days.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's brother was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had an intense fear of death. He ran away shaking when he heard even small sounds like a stick falling or a bird singing. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing this, he told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time this disciple had feared death.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the people who heard the Bodhisatta preach about love were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Suvannakakkata Jataka (#389)

The Bodhisatta was once a farmer. A beautiful, charming golden crab lived in a pond next to his field. The Bodhisatta used to carry the crab in his outer garment while he worked and took him back to the pond before heading home each night, so they became friends.

A she-crow who nested in a tree near the pond saw the Bodhisatta's beautiful eyes and wanted to eat them. She told her husband of her longing and schemed that their snake neighbor would kill the Bodhisatta, after which her husband would bring his eyes to her.

Agreeing to her plan, the crow started to help the snake with various things, and eventually the snake asked how he could repay him. The crow told of his wife's desire, and the snake agreed to kill the Bodhisatta. The next day, the snake lay in wait for the farmer and bit his leg when he walked by. After the Bodhisatta fell to the ground, the crow perched on his chest and pecked at his eyes. The crab climbed out of the Bodhisatta's pocket and grabbed the crow by the neck with his claw, and then did the same with the snake when he came to help the shrieking crow.

Knowing that crabs don't eat snakes or crows, the snake asked why he seized them. He answered that the farmer was his friend, so the snake promised to suck the venom out of his leg and heal him. The crab let the snake go, and the farmer was revived. But the crab knew the scheming pair would try to kill him again later, so he crushed both of their

heads. Seeing this from afar, the she-crow flew away. The farmer and the crab went on as before, their friendship now even stronger.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crab and the crow were earlier births of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When Devadatta planned his third attempt to kill the Buddha, by releasing a drunk, fierce elephant into the street while the Buddha walked his morning alms round, people told the Buddha not to go to the city. But he still went as usual.

When they saw the elephant demolishing houses and crushing wagons, all eighty of the chief elders wanted to face the elephant themselves to protect the Buddha; but he ordered them not to. Ananda, however, had such strong affection for the Buddha that he didn't listen and stood in front of the Buddha ready to sacrifice his life. After Ananda ignored two orders from the Buddha to leave, the Buddha used his supernatural powers to send Ananda behind him. As the elephant charged, he saw the Buddha's glorious form and fell down in worship at his feet, never again harming a person.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Ananda's willingness to sacrifice his life for him, he told them this story so they knew that Ananda also had risked his life for him in the past.

The snake and she-crow were earlier births of the demon Mara, enemy of all that is good, and Cinca-Manavika, a woman who had falsely claimed the Buddha impregnated her.

Mayhaka Jataka (#390)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before renouncing the world, he was a wealthy merchant who gave alms generously. Eventually he understood the misery of desire and gave everything he owned, including his wife and young son, to his brother and headed off to live a simple religious life in the Himalayas. Before departing, he urged his brother to continue giving charity; but instead, the brother tore down the alms hall at the front of the house. So great was the brother's greed that one day he drowned the Bodhisatta's son in a river so that he wouldn't need to give him half of the Bodhisatta's estate.

Back in town, the brother told people the boy had gone missing while playing in the river, and he did not see what had happened. Everyone believed him. But the Bodhisatta divined the truth and wanted to expose his brother's wickedness. He flew back to the town and sat down to visit with his brother. After hearing his brother lie to his face about his son's death, the Bodhisatta rebuked him and compared him to a mayhaka bird, which sits in fig trees crying "Mine, mine!" when other birds eat the fruit. The Bodhisatta then taught a lesson on the sorrow that comes from greed and how generosity generates rewards both on earth and later in heaven. Hearing these words, the brother felt shame and began to give alms again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's brother was an earlier birth of a wealthy, miserly merchant who ate only rice-dust broth and sour gruel, wore coarse clothes, rode in a broken-down chariot, and was so stingy he went to hell after he died. He had no heirs, so all his wealth went to the king, whose men took seven days to bring it all to the palace.

After everything was moved, the king went to see the Buddha, who asked why he had not visited for so long. The king explained what had kept him occupied during the last week and asked the Buddha why such a selfish, undeserving man had gained such great wealth and why he couldn't enjoy it. The Buddha told him it was karma from one of the merchant's past lives in which he was also extremely greedy. He had never given anything to anyone, but one day he told his wife to fill the alms bowl of a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) with the best food possible. Thanks to this gift, he gained vast riches in his next earthly life. But the man immediately regretted his act of generosity since he got nothing in return for it in the short term, and this regret is why he couldn't enjoy his wealth. Then the king asked the Buddha why the merchant had no children, and the Buddha told him this story to explain that it was because in a past life he had drowned his brother's son.

Dhajavihetha Jataka (#391)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. At midnight, a wizard used his magic powers to sneak into a king's palace and rape the chief queen. To catch him if he returned, the king gave the queen a bowl of vermillion to put a mark on him; and the next night, after he had his way with her again, she made a handprint on his back. The king sent his men around the city looking for the rapist, and found out that by day he was a sun-worshipping ascetic living in the cemetery. They surrounded him, but he flew away.

Following this, the king banished all holy men from the kingdom. With no religious teachers around, people became savage, no longer giving alms or following the precepts, and they went to hell after they died.

The Bodhisatta noticed fewer people were being born in his heaven, and when he looked down on earth and saw the reason, he knew that only he could destroy the king's heresy and reverse the religious decay. He summoned the eldest private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) living in Nandamula Cave deep in the Himalayas, and together they went and stood in the air outside the palace, the Bodhisatta taking the form of a handsome disciple.

The king went to meet the pair, and asked why the handsome young man venerated the ugly old man. The Bodhisatta revealed himself as Indra and said respecting religious teachers brings great merit and puts people on the path to

heaven. The Bodhisatta and the private Buddha preached to the king about respecting the wise and told him that the wizard who raped his wife was a false ascetic, so he should invite real religious men back to the kingdom. Realizing the error of his ways, the king did so, announcing it by drum around the city. And from then on, the king did many virtuous deeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing how great the Buddha was because he always acted for the benefit of the world. When the Buddha heard their discussion, he told this story so they knew that he had also acted in the interest of others in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Bhisapuppha Jataka (#392)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. One day he went down to a lotus pond and sniffed one of the flowers. A tree fairy who lived there called the Bodhisatta out for stealing the flower's scent since the flower had not been given to him. The Bodhisatta was taken aback by her accusation and asked why she did not confront the other man at the pond who was digging up lotus stalks to make fiber. A goddess like her, the tree fairy answered, would never stoop so low as to speak to an ordinary man like him. But the hair-tip-sized sin of a person seeking truth and purity appears like a black cloud in the sky. The Bodhisatta appreciated the tree fairy's explanation and asked her to inform him if she ever saw him committing any other offenses. The tree fairy told him she was not there to serve him and went back into her home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples was living in the forest. One day he went down to a lotus pond and leaned in to sniff a flower. A tree fairy living there called him an odor thief, and this frightened the disciple so much that he went back to the Buddha's monastery to speak with the Buddha about it. The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past a goddess had once done the same thing to him.

The tree fairy from the Bodhisatta's time was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples.

Vighasa Jataka (#393)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. Seven brothers had gone to the wilderness to live as ascetics, but they enjoyed various amusements and were not diligent in their practice. The Bodhisatta wanted to shame them, so he went to earth in the form of a parrot. He perched on a tree near their home and said out loud, “Praise to those who live on the remnants of charity. They will have happiness in this world and the next.” One of the brothers proudly told the others the tribute was about them, but the Bodhisatta corrected him, saying he was speaking about true ascetics, not carrion-eaters like them. To be proper ascetics, they should rely on people who want to give alms, not the refuse left behind by lions, tigers, and other wild beasts.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The flawed ascetics were earlier births of some of the Buddha’s disciples who engaged in various amusements. One day Moggallana, one of the Buddha’s top disciples, frightened these unserious disciples by shaking their quarters. When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing this, he told them this story so they knew that these disciples had a similar demeanor in the past.

Vattaka Jataka (#394)

The Bodhisatta was once a quail. A greedy crow who was not content eating animal carcasses went to the forest to find better food. The crow noticed that, even though the Bodhisatta ate only raw grass and seeds, he was quite fat and beautiful, while the Bodhisatta saw that the crow, who ate fatty foods, was very lean. The Bodhisatta asked the crow why he was so thin despite his rich diet, and he answered that he lived in constant fear of his enemies and was always watching out for mischief. Then the crow asked the Bodhisatta how he was so healthy from such a meager diet. The Bodhisatta told him he was plump because he was happy without worry.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crow was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who was greedy. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that it was not the first time he had been greedy.

Kaka Jataka (#395)

This story is the same as the Kapota Jataka (#42).

Kukku Jataka (#396)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king was wicked and got rich by oppressing his people. The Bodhisatta wanted to teach him the right way to rule and was waiting until he could give the king a lesson by way of a parable.

A new bedchamber was being built for the king, and one day he saw the roof under construction, with small rafters supporting a large ridge. Fearing the roof would collapse and fall on him, the king would not go into the room. The Bodhisatta finally had his opportunity for a lesson and explained that the rafters working together were strong and held up the ridge, just as a wise man supported by faithful friends never falls from grace. At that moment, someone brought the king a citron, and he gave it to the Bodhisatta to eat. He explained to the king that someone who didn't know the proper way to eat this fruit would think it tasted terrible, but if you remove the bitter-tasting peel, it is sweet and delicious. Similarly, a wise man who collects taxes without violence earns more money and doesn't make people hate him. Then the pair walked to a lotus pond and the king pointed out a beautiful flower rising above the water level, not soiled by mud. The Bodhisatta explained that a king should remain pure like that tall lotus, so he cannot be stained by sin.

The king understood these lessons and changed his ways, ruling righteously and generously for the rest of his reign.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time a king came to hear the Buddha preach. He told the king to rule righteously, and that sensual pleasures lead to misery: when people die, their virtuous actions are their only refuge. Then the Buddha told this story as an example of a king in the past being saved by following this advice.

The king from the past was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Manoja Jataka (#397)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. His son, who did all the hunting for the family (his father, mother, sister, and wife), once met a jackal who asked to be his servant, and the son agreed. So the jackal moved into the son's den. The Bodhisatta told his son that jackals were wicked beasts and they gave bad advice, so he should not befriend them; but the son did not listen.

One day the jackal had a desire for horse flesh, the only meat he had never eaten, and convinced the son to go catch a horse in the city. He went down to the river where the horses bathed and grabbed one, throwing it on his back to carry it home. While the Bodhisatta ate the horse meat, he told his son that all horses are royal property and lions who attack horses don't live long. But the son again ignored his father's warning and continued to steal horses, even after the king tried to protect them by building a stable inside the town.

Eventually the king sent an archer to kill the lion. As the archer waited in a tower, the Bodhisatta's son jumped over the wall and rushed in to kill a horse so quickly that the archer could not shoot in time. But carrying the dead horse on his back slowed the Bodhisatta's son down, and the archer shot an arrow straight through his body. The son reached the mouth of his den and there fell dead. Seeing the bloody corpse, his family mourned that a terrible fate such as this was sure to come from following the advice of outcasts rather than true friends. The jackal returned to live in the forest.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who had been persuaded by a friend to skip his morning alms rounds and eat fancy meals at the monastery of Devadatta (the jackal was an earlier birth of him), a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. The Buddha told this story to the traitorous disciple and those who had reported his misbehavior so they knew that this disciple also kept bad company in the past.

The Bodhisatta's wife was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife, and his daughter and daughter-in-law were earlier births of Uppalavanna and Khema, two of the Buddha's top female disciples.

Sutano Jataka (#398)

The Bodhisatta was once a poor householder who took care of his widowed mother. The king was an avid hunter, and one time he shot at a clever deer who, upon seeing the arrow coming, fell down and feigned being wounded. When the king approached, the deer jumped up and ran away. After being mocked by his advisors, the king chased after the deer. Eventually the deer tired enough that the king caught it; then he cut it in half with his sword. Exhausted, the king took a rest under a banyan tree that was home to a goblin who had permission from the goblin king to eat any living thing that came to his tree. When the king awoke, the goblin grabbed him and said he was about to be eaten. The desperate king said that if he could go free, he would give the goblin his deer meat now and send a new person to the tree every day. The goblin agreed to the offer, but said if any day a person did not come, he would find and eat the king.

Back at the palace, one of the king's advisors came up with a plan to send prisoners with meals to the tree, and not tell the victims what was going to happen there. The goblin got to eat both the person and the rice and was happy with the arrangement, but when the jails had been emptied, the king had to devise a new plan. By now, everybody knew what the king was doing, so to find a volunteer, he offered one thousand coins to anybody who would deliver rice to the goblin. The Bodhisatta, who barely made enough money to survive, accepted the task so he could give the money to his mother and let her live comfortably whether he outwitted the goblin or died trying.

The Bodhisatta told the king he needed to take the king's golden slippers (so as to not stand on the goblin's ground), umbrella (so he did not need to step into the tree's shadow), sword (to make the goblin fearful), and golden bowl (to show the goblin respect rather than putting the rice in his own earthen bowl). The king gave them to him. Once he arrived, the Bodhisatta used the sword to push the bowl of rice into the tree's shadow without stepping into it himself. The goblin urged the Bodhisatta to come under the tree, but he told the goblin he would be a fool to eat him because if he didn't return home alive, nobody would ever come again and he would stop getting a delicious daily meal. The goblin realized the Bodhisatta was right and told him he could go back home.

Then the Bodhisatta, having saved the king's life by ending the agreement, rebuked the goblin's evil behavior and convinced him to give up murder and live a righteous life. At the Bodhisatta's invitation, and with the king's support, the goblin came to live in a home by the city gate where he would get the best food possible. The king sang the Bodhisatta's praises and appointed him commander-in-chief. He also followed the Bodhisatta's teachings and became a virtuous and generous leader.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The parents of one of the Buddha's disciples had been reluctant to let their son adopt a religious life, but he begged them and they agreed. After five years, he fully mastered dharma, so he went out to live alone and meditate in the

forest to reach spiritual insight. But after twelve years of striving, he still had not achieved it. One day another disciple visited him at his hut and told him that his parents had fallen into ruin. With no children around to protect them, their servants and workers had stolen everything, and they were now homeless beggars, clothed in rags. The son began to cry, and realizing he had labored in vain for the past twelve years, he decided to leave the sangha and return home to care for his parents.

The depressed disciple went to listen to the Buddha preach one last time before returning home. The Buddha divined this disciple's situation and made his morning talk about the virtues of parents. Listening to the sermon, the son realized that, though it would be difficult, he could remain a disciple and still support his parents, and he resolved to do so. He took up abode near their hut, and from then on he made two daily alms rounds: one for them and a second for himself. He usually got little food for himself, and some days he got none, so he grew pale and thin.

When some other disciples learned what he was doing, they told him that sharing alms with people who are not disciples was an offense, and they reported him to the Buddha. The accused disciple was summoned back to the monastery, where he admitted sharing the alms he collected with his parents. But, to the surprise of the other disciples, the Buddha praised the caring son instead of rebuking him. He then told this story to explain that caring for others was always a good thing, and that in the past he himself had once gone to great lengths to support his mother.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the goblin was an earlier birth of Angulimala, a dreaded bandit who cut off a finger of each person he murdered and wore them around his neck, and who later became an enlightened disciple of the Buddha.

Gijjha Jataka (#399)

The Bodhisatta was once a vulture who cared for his elderly, infirm parents. One day, while seeking flesh in a cemetery for them to eat, the Bodhisatta got his foot caught in a hunter's snare. His first thought was not of himself, but that his parents would die because they had nobody else to care for them, and he lamented their fate. The hunter was shocked that a vulture could speak and impressed by the Bodhisatta's dedication to his parents, so he set him free.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while discussing one of his disciples who supported his mother, the Buddha told this story as an example of how supporting parents is a good thing.

The hunter was an earlier birth of Channa, Prince Siddhartha's charioteer, who later became a disciple, and the Bodhisatta's parents were earlier births of the king's parents.

Dabbhapuppha Jataka (#400)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. One day a jackal's mate had the urge to eat a carp, so he set off to find one. He saw two otters catch a huge carp and work together to bring it to the shore and kill it. Then they quarreled about who should divide the fish, each wanting the other to do it. When the otters saw the jackal, they asked him to divide it equally for them. The jackal assured them he was a fair and experienced arbiter and agreed to help. He gave the tail to one, the head to the other, and ran off with the middle for himself and his grateful wife. The Bodhisatta saw all this happen and commented that when there is strife between people they suffer and someone else benefits.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The jackal was an earlier birth of Upananda, a hypocritical disciple of the Buddha known for being extremely greedy while simultaneously preaching to others the importance of living a simple, virtuous life. During the rainy season, Upananda would leave something of his, such as an umbrella, waterpot, or walking stick, in a few different monasteries so he could collect robes from each of them.

At the monastery where he actually resided for the rainy season, Upananda encouraged the other disciples to replace their nice robes and alms bowls with rags and clay pots in order to develop their practice. Then he took all the discarded good robes and bowls for himself, and at the end of the rainy season he loaded everything he had gathered into a

cart and hauled it to his regular monastery. On the way, he stopped at another monastery and met two old disciples (the otters were earlier births of them) with two course cloaks and one fine blanket. They didn't know how to divide these between them and asked Upananda to decide. He gave each disciple one cloak and kept the fine blanket for himself.

Many disciples were displeased with Upananda, and when the Buddha heard them discussing his greed, he said not only were Upananda's actions wrong, but one should not preach until they have mastered the lesson themselves. Then he told them this story so they knew that Upananda had been similarly greedy in the past.

Dasannaka Jataka (#401)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day the son of the king's chaplain came to assist the king and fell in love at first sight with the gorgeous queen. He returned home lovesick and lay in bed without eating. After many days had passed, the king asked why the chaplain's son had not returned for such a long time. When told of the son's infatuation, the king gave him his queen for seven days. Back at his house, the chaplain's son took delight with her, and she fell in love with him too. Before the week was up, the pair fled far away to a neighboring kingdom. The king ordered them brought back, but their path was like that of a ship, and nobody could find where they had gone.

The heartbroken king became very ill, and his doctors could not heal him. The Bodhisatta assumed the king's ailment was mental, not physical, so he schemed to cure him by arranging a small gathering of performers in the palace yard. It included a sword-swallower because he knew that when the king saw this performance he would ask if there was anything more difficult than it. The Bodhisatta instructed two of his colleagues how to answer the question, and then he told the king to look at the festivities outside his window, promising they would turn his sorrow into joy.

When the king saw the sword-swallower down a sharp, meter-long sword he, as predicted, was so impressed that he asked one of the advisors, "Is there anything more difficult than that?" The advisor, as directed by the Bodhisatta, replied that it is much harder for a man to say he will give something

away. Knowing that he had offered something to the chaplain's son, the king's sorrow became a little lighter. Then he asked his other advisor if there was anything harder than this, and he replied that saying you will give something away and then actually doing it is even harder. Again the king took pride in having done this with his queen, and his sorrow became lighter. Then he asked the Bodhisatta, his wisest advisor, if there was anything more difficult than giving something up completely, and he answered that not regretting giving the gift was harder still. Hearing this, the king realized his lack of self-control was undignified—if she really loved him, his queen would not have run away. His remaining sorrow rolled away like a drop of water falling off a lotus leaf. Fully recovered, the king gave the Bodhisatta great praise and much wealth in thanks.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and queen were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and this disciple's former wife. This disciple began to miss his former life and was considering leaving the sangha. The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that his wife had caused him misery in the past. After talking to the Buddha, this disciple gained new understanding and chose to stay.

The other two advisors were earlier births of Sariputta and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sattubhasta Jataka (#402)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day an old brahmin collecting alms got one thousand coins, and he stored them at a friend's house. When he came back to get his money, his friend had already spent it, so instead, he gave the old brahmin his daughter as a wife. Being elderly, the old brahmin could not satisfy her sexually, so she started an affair with a young brahmin in town.

Disappointed with her life, the wife told her husband to hire a maid. He didn't have the money for one, so she told him to go out begging. She packed him a meal and he went off for the day. He walked through various villages and towns and earned seven hundred coins, enough to buy two slaves. As the old brahmin set off for home, he stopped to eat, and while he went down to get a drink of water, a snake crawled into his bag. When he left, the brahmin threw his bag over his shoulder and continued down the road, not knowing the snake was there.

As the brahmin walked, he met a tree fairy who told him that if he went home that day his wife would die, and if he stayed out another night he would die: but the fairy did not explain how or why. He entered the city in tears over his fear of death.

It was a holy day and the Bodhisatta was giving a sermon. The old brahmin thought that going to listen to him might take away his troubles. As the Bodhisatta preached, he saw the disturbed old brahmin standing in the back and asked him

what was wrong. He told the Bodhisatta of the prophecy, and by thinking logically, the Bodhisatta deciphered it. He first pondered the many causes of death in the world—such as falling out of a tree, being struck by a weapon, ingesting poison, drowning, freezing, disease, being eaten by fish—and then he noticed the old brahmin's sack and realized a snake must have crawled in unnoticed. If he stayed on the road this night, the old brahmin would open his bag to eat dinner and be bitten by the snake and die. If he returned home, his wife would get bitten when she put away his things. He announced his theory, and the old brahmin laid his bag on the ground and beat it with a stick. Just as predicted, a snake crawled out.

Waving cloth and snapping fingers, the crowd cheered wildly and threw jewels at the Bodhisatta, who told them that wisdom is the most important thing to have if you want to aim for nirvana. A snake charmer caught the snake and let it loose in the forest.

The old brahmin offered the Bodhisatta his seven hundred coins in gratitude, but he not only refused them, the Bodhisatta gave the old brahmin three hundred more. The Bodhisatta also asked the old brahmin about his wife, and when he answered that she was very young, the Bodhisatta said she was surely sinning with another man: if he took the money home, she would give it to her lover. Following the advice of the Bodhisatta, he hid his bag of coins at the root of a tree outside the village before going home.

When the brahmin returned home, the wife snuck her lover out of the house and asked her husband how much money he got that day and where it was. Foolishly, the old brahmin told her, and she told her lover, who went and took it.

The next day, finding his money missing, the old brahmin returned to the Bodhisatta and asked how he could get it back. Knowing the thief must be the wife's lover, the Bodhisatta gave him money to host a special seven-day celebration. Both he and his wife were to each invite seven brahmins to their house for dinner, then each day invite one fewer from the same group until the last day when they each had just one guest. Whichever of the wife's guests was there on the last day was her lover.

The old brahmin did as told and identified the lover-thief. He informed the Bodhisatta, who sent some of his men to bring the lover to meet him. In the presence of a royal advisor, the thief had no choice but to admit his guilt and return the money. The Bodhisatta banished the wicked brahmin from the city, punished the wife (she wasn't banished because the old brahmin wanted to keep her), and gave the old brahmin a home in the city near him.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

The old brahmin and tree fairy were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples. The people who gathered to listen to the Bodhisatta preach were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Atthisena Jataka (#403)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas. One time he went down to a city to get salt and vinegar, and he slept in the royal park. The next morning, the king saw the Bodhisatta out collecting alms and, impressed by his demeanor, invited him into the palace for a big meal. After they talked, the king told the Bodhisatta he could stay in the park as long as he liked and all his needs would be met.

Later, in appreciation of the Bodhisatta's excellent teachings, the king told him he could have anything he wanted, but the Bodhisatta asked for nothing. Because so many other people asked the king for things, he was perplexed by the Bodhisatta's refusal and asked him to explain it. When he said begging in this manner could create problems between people, the king replied that it would not be a problem if done in the right way and at the right time, and he repeated his offer. The Bodhisatta agreed this was correct for regular people, but religious men should live pure, simple lives without worldly desires. The king, insisting the Bodhisatta should take some gift, offered him a thousand of his best cows, and again the Bodhisatta explained that he preferred to live a simple life without possessions. The Bodhisatta's message inspired the king, and for the rest of his life he was thoroughly righteous and generous.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Some of the Buddha's disciples needed new quarters, and they were so demanding and persistent that they greatly

annoyed the townspeople. Whenever they saw disciples approaching, people would go away. Because of this, Maha Kassapa, one of the Buddha's top disciples, could not get alms when he visited the town. At mealtime, other disciples explained to him why this had happened, and he went to discuss the matter with the Buddha.

The Buddha called an assembly and criticized these thoughtless disciples. He told them this story as an example of how in the past he had not asked for anything from a generous and willing king, even though many others did.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kapi Jataka (#404)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey, one of a thousand who lived in the royal park. One day, after the king's chaplain had gone there to bathe, a mischievous monkey sitting on the gateway arch defecated on the chaplain's head as he passed below. And when the chaplain looked up, the monkey dropped more into his mouth. The chaplain was furious and vowed revenge on the park's monkeys. When the Bodhisatta heard about this, he told the monkeys that it's dangerous to live near an enemy and said they should all leave. Half the monkeys went with the Bodhisatta, but the other half listened to a rebellious monkey who chose to stay.

Later, a slave smacked a goat that had eaten some of her rice with a burning torch. He ran away with his hair on fire and rubbed himself on a grass hut to put out the flames, setting the building ablaze. The flames spread, and the nearby elephant stable caught fire, burning the backs of many elephants. Their injuries were so bad that the king's veterinarians did not know what to do, so the king sought the chaplain's advice. Seeing an opportunity for vengeance, his recommended cure was monkey fat. So the king ordered his archers to kill and collect all the park's monkeys. After getting shot, one of them managed to escape and reached the Bodhisatta's new home moments before dying, and he told him what had happened. The Bodhisatta used the opportunity to give a sermon about the risk of living near one's enemies. It so impressed the others that they made him their king.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The rebellious monkey was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and the monkeys who remained in the park with him were earlier births of Devadatta's disciples. When the Buddha heard some of his own disciples discussing how Devadatta had been swallowed by the earth into the flames of hell, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also been destroyed after being rebellious in the past.

Baka-Brahma Jataka (#405)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in a band of five hundred others in the Himalayas. Their master was an elder named Kesava, and the Bodhisatta was both his top student and a close friend. One rainy season they all went to the city to get salt and vinegar, and they stayed in the royal park being cared for by the king. When it was time to return, the king suggested that Kesava remain behind because he was very old. He agreed. All the others returned to the mountains, and the Bodhisatta became their leader.

Kesava missed the Bodhisatta and was not happy living alone in the city. Because of this, he slept poorly, which made him unable to digest his food properly, and he fell ill with dysentery. The king's doctors looked after him with leeches, but his condition did not improve. So Kesava asked to return to the Himalayas, and the king sent one of his advisors and some foresters to accompany him. Kesava's depression broke the moment he saw the Bodhisatta.

The Bodhisatta made him an unseasoned broth of millet, wild rice, and leaves, which immediately cleared up the dysentery. The advisor asked why he preferred such a humble food compared to the royal rice and meat he ate courtesy of the king. Kesava explained that it doesn't matter whether food is fancy or plain, a meal served with love is always the best.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Kesava was an earlier birth of the god Baka Brahma, who had spent billions of years living in bliss in heaven. And during this time, he completely forgot that he'd had other lives in other realms. This caused him to forget that all things are impermanent and to believe that his celestial existence was eternal and unchanging, with no other salvation beyond it. When the Buddha divined Baka's thoughts, he went to heaven to explain the truth.

At first, Baka rejected the Buddha's message, saying heaven is the home of the wise. But the Buddha said that unlike Baka, he could remember all of his and everyone else's past lives, and he and Baka had once lived during the same time. The Buddha told him this story about their time together as ascetics in a past life. The Buddha also said Baka had once given water to people suffering from drought, freed people who had been taken prisoner, and saved people on a boat that was being attacked by a naga. After hearing this, Baka, along with ten thousand others living in heaven with him, were freed from their attachment to the false dogma and again accepted the truth of impermanence.

Gandhara Jataka (#406)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a king, and during the evening of a full-moon holy day he saw an eclipse. It made him realize that one day he would face a decline due to trouble beyond his control, just as the moon loses its light when Rahu seizes it. So he turned over his kingdom to his advisors and began a simple life of meditation in the Himalayas, where he would never need to control or criticize anyone ever again.

Another king had a close working relationship with the Bodhisatta, though they had never met. When some traveling merchants told him the Bodhisatta had renounced the world to live as an ascetic, he was inspired to do the same and also took off for the Himalayas, leaving behind his family and his great wealth.

Eventually the two former kings met and became acquaintances, and the second king served the Bodhisatta as his junior. They never discussed their past lives until much later when there was another lunar eclipse and the Bodhisatta recalled the day he had decided to become an ascetic. The junior ascetic then realized who the Bodhisatta was and shared his own story, and the pair's friendship grew even closer.

One time the two former kings went down to a village to get salt and vinegar, and the people there were so impressed by the pair they built huts for them to stay in and each morning brought them food and a packet of salt. One day the people

gave them food without salt, but the junior ascetic had saved some from an earlier day and offered some to the Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta rebuked him for his attachment to the salt, saying that though he had given up a vast kingdom, hoarding salt showed he had not yet fully shed his desires.

Upset at being scolded, the junior ascetic insisted the Bodhisatta was also at fault because wise men should leave harsh words unspoken, and he had specifically given up his throne so he wouldn't need to give orders anymore. But the Bodhisatta answered that he was speaking out of a love of righteousness and in the hope of helping his friend follow the proper path, much like a potter putting the finishing touches on a vessel after the raw clay has already been fired. Hearing the Bodhisatta's wisdom, the junior ascetic apologized, and the two remained close friends, living peaceful lives in the Himalayas for the rest of their days.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's top disciples, Pilinda Vaccha, had great magical powers. Once during an alms round, he met a girl from a very poor family who was crying because she had no ornaments to wear during a feast day. Pilinda gave her a roll of grass to put on her head, and it turned into solid gold. When the king's advisors heard that this peasant girl had a solid gold wreath, they informed the king and he threw the family in prison on suspicion of theft. When Pilinda heard about this, he visited the king and turned the palace into gold to prove the family's innocence. They were released.

Because Pilinda was known to suffer frequent illnesses, the king and others gave him a load of various medicines as an offering. Pilinda distributed them to any disciples who wanted some. When the Buddha heard people criticizing his disciples for hoarding things in their quarters, he created a new rule that allowed disciples to keep medicine for up to seven days. Then the Buddha told this story to show that he had also criticized someone for hoarding in the past.

The junior ascetic was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mahakapi Jataka (#407)

The Bodhisatta was once a king of monkeys. He led a troop of eighty thousand that fed regularly in a giant mango tree on the bank of the Ganges River that bore the sweetest, most delicious fruit. Not wanting anyone to ever discover this divine tree, the monkeys picked all the flowers that grew in branches over the water so that no fruit could fall in and float away. Despite this caution, one fruit, hidden by an ant's nest, grew ripe and dropped into the river. It floated far downstream and got caught in a fisherman's net. He showed the massive fruit to the king, who showed it to his foresters, who assured him it really was a mango. He tasted it, and the flavor stirred his entire body. Wanting more, he had the foresters lead him upstream into the Himalayas to find the tree. When they reached it, the king and his entourage filled themselves with the fruit and set up camp underneath its branches.

At midnight the Bodhisatta and his troop arrived and started to feed. When the king woke and saw the monkeys eating the fruit, he ordered his archers to surround the tree and prepare to kill all of them in the morning. With his outstanding strength, the Bodhisatta jumped over the river and joined two vines together that would reach the mango tree. He tied one end to a tree and the other to himself and jumped back. But he forgot to account for the part of the rope around his waist and came up just a bit short. He grabbed a branch firmly with both hands and told the monkeys to walk over his back to escape. The last monkey to cross despised the

Bodhisatta and climbed up high before jumping hard on the Bodhisatta's back, breaking it.

The king watched all this happen and was moved by the Bodhisatta's selfless rescue, so he brought him down and tried to save him. The king asked the Bodhisatta why he did it, and with his dying breaths he answered that a truly good leader must care for his subjects to no end; their happiness and safety is his only goal.

The king ordered that the Bodhisatta receive a funeral fit for a king with a pyre made from one hundred wagonloads of timber, and then had his skull decorated with gold and placed in a relic shrine. Following the Bodhisatta's lesson, the king lived out his days in righteousness, giving alms and doing other good deeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, always provided food for the Buddha's disciples, but they did not stay and eat at the palace because the people there were not friendly. When the king found out that they went to eat at their friends' homes, he decided to marry a woman from the Buddha's Sakya clan in order to build closer relations with the Buddha and his disciples. However, the Sakya clan was arrogant and insular and did not want to marry into a relationship with the king; but because he was their leader, a request like this could not be refused without consequences. So they sent a daughter of a nobleman born to a slave woman and told King Pasenadi she was noble.

Knowing the Sakya clan's reputation, the king's assistants wanted to be sure the woman they were taking back was truly noble-born. So the family faked eating a meal together as proof. This was done by having what was claimed to be a very important letter delivered to the father at the start of the meal, so after taking just one bite he sat at the table reading rather than eating. This made it appear that he had dined with his daughter, but since he didn't actually eat, he didn't degrade himself with a slave.

King Pasenadi truly loved his new consort and made her his chief queen. Soon a son was born and he grew up receiving all the advantages a prince deserved, except he did not get gifts from his maternal grandfather's family. Not wanting her son to know about her life, his mother lied and told him they sent nothing because they lived very far away. Once he grew up, he decided to visit his other family; and though she tried, his mother could not stop him.

Upon learning the prince was coming, the Sakya clan sent all their noble children younger than him away to the countryside so nobody would need to bow down in respect to someone born from a slave. A few days later, when the prince was leaving, one of his soldiers overheard a Sakya slave saying the prince's mother had been a slave. Now knowing how the Sakyas had disrespected both his mother and him, the prince vowed to destroy them when he became king.

When King Pasenadi heard the news about his wife, he was furious and gave her and his son nothing more than he gave to his other slaves. But a few days later, the Buddha, while admitting that his clan did wrong, explained to the king that his queen and son were children of royal men and the mother's birth was irrelevant. The king changed his mind and restored their honor.

The wife of King Pasenadi's commander-in-chief had never borne him a son, so he sent her back to her family. Accepting her fate, she went to pay respect to the Buddha before departing, and he told her not to go. Elated by his counsel, she went home and told her husband. The commander-in-chief figured the Buddha must have a good reason for it and let her stay. Soon after, she got pregnant. She told her husband she wanted to bathe in and drink the holy water used for ceremonial sprinkling by the families of kings from another clan, so he took her to the well in his chariot.

Once there, the commander-in-chief fought off the guards and broke through the iron net, and they both bathed in the holy water before fleeing the city. Furious about this egregious violation, five hundred kings ignored the warning from their spiritual advisor that the commander-in-chief would slay them all and chased after him in their chariots. The commander-in-chief waited for all five hundred chariots to line up just right; then he shot an arrow with his special bow, one thousand times stronger than a regular bow, and it passed through all five hundred kings right at the point where they fastened their belts. The kings did not notice their injuries and continued pursuit until the commander-in-chief

stopped his chariot and shouted at them that they were already dead. Still standing and feeling fine, the kings thought he was crazy. But he told them to loosen one man's belt, and upon doing so the man fell over dead. The commander-in-chief told the other men to go home and set their affairs in order before taking off their armor, and they all did, dying when they were ready.

Over time, the commander-in-chief's wife gave birth to twin boys sixteen times. All thirty-two of their sons grew up to be heroic and perfect in every way.

One day some men who lost a court case pleaded with the commander-in-chief to help them because they felt that the judges were corrupt. He looked into the matter and found that the judges really were corrupt, so he judged the men's case himself and sided with them. The city's citizens applauded his intervention, and when King Pasenadi learned about it, he put the commander-in-chief in charge of the court system. But the judges lost so much money by not being able to take bribes that they told the king his commander-in-chief was planning to overthrow him. Believing this lie, the king decided he must kill him. He hired some men to pillage towns in a border region and sent his commander-in-chief and all thirty-two of his sons to capture these bandits. King Pasenadi also ordered some of his soldiers to behead the commander-in-chief and his sons while they were away; and they did.

When she learned of her husband and sons' executions, the commander-in-chief's wise wife summoned all thirty-two

daughters-in-law and told them not to be angry or upset. Though their husbands were pure and innocent now, this must have resulted from misdeeds in their former lives. Seeking revenge would be a sin even worse than the king's. King Pasenadi's spies reported this meeting to him, and after hearing about their reaction he was overcome with remorse. The king went to see the Buddha, and while he was away from the palace, his new commander-in-chief, angry about the assassination, pulled a coup and put the half-slave prince on the throne. King Pasenadi vowed to reclaim his kingship and set out for his city, hoping to muster some troops. He arrived after the gates had been closed for the evening and had to spend the night in a shed. Weak from traveling far and fast in the sun and wind, he died of exposure that night.

The new king had never forgotten his grudge against the Sakya clan for their disrespect, and now he could finally get revenge. He set out with a large army to their territory. The Buddha divined what was happening and wanted to save his clan. He went to the border and sat under a small tree that provided little shade. When the king came to this area, he stopped to greet the Buddha and asked why he didn't sit under the large, shady banyan tree nearby. The Buddha answered that the shade of his family kept him cool. The king understood this meant the Buddha was there to protect his clan, so he turned around. The king later set out on the warpath twice more, and both times the Buddha sat under the same tree, causing the king to back down.

After stopping the king's rampage for the third time, the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about how great

he was for protecting his clan. He told them this story so they knew that he had also done good things for his family in the past.

Later, the king set out a fourth time hoping to destroy the Sakya clan. This time the Buddha decided that because of his clan's sins, he would not protect them anymore. The king's army slayed everyone they met, starting with babies, then returned to the palace.

The evil monkey was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the Bodhisatta's troop of monkeys were earlier births of the Buddha's loyal followers.

Kumbhakara Jataka (#408)

The Bodhisatta was once a potter. Four private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) had flown down from their Himalayan home to collect alms in his village, and when they came by his house, the Bodhisatta invited them in for a meal of fine food. Impressed by their character, the Bodhisatta asked them about their path to enlightenment, and each told their story of having once been a king who renounced his throne to follow a religious life.

The first king ate some delicious mangoes from his garden. Seeing the king pick some, other men did so too, and they climbed the tree and beat the branches with clubs to get every last fruit. On his way home, the king stopped to get some more mangoes and was dismayed to see the tree's broken branches. Nearby was a barren mango tree still standing beautiful and undamaged. Understanding this as a metaphor for life—having possessions leads to misery, so the wealthy live in fear while the poor do not—he resolved to be like the barren tree. He stood below it and quickly reached spiritual insight; then he touched his head and was magically wearing the clothes of a private Buddha. He stood in the air and preached a sermon to those around him before flying off to the Himalayas to begin his new life.

The second king saw a woman grinding perfume. She wore a jeweled bracelet on each arm and they made no sound as she worked. Then she put the bracelet from her right arm onto her left, and the two bracelets jangled. This made the king

realize that by living alone one has no conflict with others. Pondering this, he reached insight and flew off to the Himalayas just like the first.

The third king saw a hawk flying with a piece of meat in its mouth. Other birds surrounded it and attacked with their feet and beaks, so the hawk dropped the meat and was left in peace. Another bird seized the meat, suffered a similar attack, and also dropped it. And so did a third. The king realized human desires are like the meat; whoever relinquishes them will find happiness. So he gave up his palace with sixteen thousand women, attained insight, and flew off like the others.

The fourth king saw several bulls just released from their pen set upon a single cow in lust. Wanting the cow for itself, one of the bulls gored another to death. Understanding that the power of desire brings sorrow, the king abandoned everything. He found insight and flew off like the others.

Impressed by their guests, the Bodhisatta and his wife both wanted to renounce the world and live the simple life of ascetics. He told his wife to care for their children so he could go. Not wanting to delay, she took a pot and said she was going to the water tank—but she really ran out of town and joined a band of ascetics, never returning home. His wife gone, the Bodhisatta had no choice but to continue working and caring for his two young children. When they were a bit older, he started to cook rice in a different way each day: sometimes underdone, sometimes overcooked, sometimes without enough salt, sometimes with too much salt, and so

on. Once the children understood the differences, the Bodhisatta gave them to some relatives and began his new life as an ascetic.

Sometime later, the Bodhisatta met his wife again. She asked if he had killed the children, and he assured her that he had waited until they could understand things before giving them away. Then they each went their own ways and never met again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred friends had heard the Buddha discuss dharma, and they renounced the world together to become his disciples. One night thoughts of desire filled their heads. The Buddha constantly watched over his disciples—the same as a one-eyed man guards his eye, a mother her son, a yak its tail, and a jay its egg—so he knew what was happening to them. He called an assembly and lectured them, explaining that there is no such thing as a petty sin. Every wrong thought, he said, no matter how small, must be considered because these thoughts can grow and bring great ruin. Then he told them this story as an example of how in the past, having proper thoughts resulted in private Buddhahood. When the Buddha was finished, all five hundred disciples became arahants.

The Bodhisatta's wife and son were earlier births of the Buddha's wife and son, and his daughter was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples.

Dalhadhamma Jataka (#409)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's top advisor. The king had a mighty elephant who served as a messenger, traveling up to one hundred leagues in a day, and always crushed the enemy in battle. The king honored and adorned her, but when she grew old and weak he took everything away, sending her off to fend for herself in the forest.

Later, when there was a shortage of pottery in the palace, the potter explained that he could not increase production because he did not have any oxen to haul in the additional cartloads of cow dung he'd need for making more fires. So the king gave his retired elephant to the potter to do the job.

One day the elephant saw the Bodhisatta and fell down at his feet, lamenting the misery of her present fate and begging him to convince the king to restore her former honor. He promised to try, and went to the king that morning. The Bodhisatta reminded the king of the great things the elephant had done and rebuked him for being selfish and insufficiently grateful. Hearing this lecture, the king not only brought the elephant back to the palace, but also dedicated himself to giving alms and doing good deeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The elephant forced to haul dung was an earlier birth of a king's elephant who was similarly respected and honored. Her stall was decorated with colored hangings and scented with perfumed oils and incense, she was fed the choicest

foods, she was vividly adorned when going out, and she had a golden pot set on her dunghill. But when she grew old and could no longer work, she was released to the forest.

One morning, the elephant saw the Buddha going to the city for alms and fell at his feet, begging him to get her honor restored by the king. The Buddha went straight to the palace and told the king it was wrong to revoke a servant's honor. He reminded the king of the elephant's merits and said he should show gratitude. Accepting the Buddha's wisdom, the king brought her back to a comfortable life in the palace.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing what he'd done, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had this elephant's honor restored in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Somadatta Jataka (#410)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. An ascetic who lived in the Himalayas adopted an elephant calf and treated it as a son. One day it got sick from eating too much grass, and while the ascetic went to the forest to get some fruit as a cure, the elephant died. The ascetic became depressed, and when the Bodhisatta noticed it, he came down to earth and floated in the air, telling him that his sorrow was improper. This reminded the ascetic that all things are impermanent, which restored his happiness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The ascetic and the elephant were earlier births of one of the Buddha's elder disciples and a novice under his guidance. The elder was overcome with grief after the novice got sick and died. When the Buddha heard some other disciples discussing the elder's sorrow, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time the elder had lost control of his emotions and lamented the death of someone in his care.

Susima Jataka (#411)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. His father was a royal chaplain, and the Bodhisatta was born on the same day as the king's son, so the two boys were raised and educated together. When the king died and the prince took the throne, he made the Bodhisatta his chaplain. One day the king made a procession around the city on his elephant. The queen mother saw the Bodhisatta riding behind the king and fell in love at first sight. Thinking he was unattainable, she grew depressed and stopped eating, feeling she might die from sorrow. She was too ashamed to tell the king her problem, but because women do not hide secrets from other women, she eventually confided in the queen, who then told her husband. Wanting to save his mother's life, the king decided that if the Bodhisatta married her, he would give him the throne and he himself would serve as viceroy. Reluctantly, the Bodhisatta agreed, but he soon veered back toward a religious life and started to avoid all pleasures.

The queen assumed the young Bodhisatta was turned off by her old age and believed he would start to seek her company if he thought he had a grey hair. So one day while she was cleaning his head, the queen told the Bodhisatta she saw a grey hair. When he asked to see it, she pulled one of his hairs out, but tossed it aside and put one of hers in his hand. Seeing it filled him with fear of death, and he began to sweat. Believing he had aged prematurely due to pursuing desires, like a pig wallowing in filth, the Bodhisatta decided to give the throne back to his friend and go off to the Himalayas to live as an ascetic. Hearing that her scheme had backfired, the

queen admitted her lie and begged him to stay. But the Bodhisatta preached that decay is inevitable for all living beings and did not change his mind.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the magnificence of his Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment. He told them this story as an example of a similar renunciation in his past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the queen mother was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Kotisimbali Jataka (#412)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy living in a cotton tree. A giant garuda grabbed a giant naga out of the ocean by its tail and flew away. The naga tried to free itself by grabbing a banyan tree, but the two creatures were so strong the tree just came out of the ground. The garuda laid the naga, and the banyan tree it was grasping, on the trunk of the Bodhisatta's cotton tree, ripped it open, and ate its fat. Then the garuda threw the carcass into the sea. The Bodhisatta thought nothing of this.

Later, a bird that had been in the banyan tree flew out and took a perch high up in the cotton tree, and the Bodhisatta shook with fear. The garuda noticed the tree trembling and asked the Bodhisatta why he was afraid of a tiny bird but not a giant, fierce garuda. The Bodhisatta explained that banyan trees are parasitic, and if the bird defecated a banyan seed onto the cotton tree it would eventually overgrow and kill it, leaving the Bodhisatta homeless. The garuda replied that fear is justified when danger is real, and he shooed the bird away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred friends had heard the Buddha discuss dharma, and they renounced the world together to become his disciples. One night thoughts of desire filled their heads, and the Buddha knew about it, so he called an assembly and explained that distrust is proper when you fear something bad can happen. Then he told them this story as an example of how sin can entangle a man the way a banyan entangles its

host tree. When the Buddha was finished, all five hundred disciples became arahants.

The garuda was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Dhumakari Jataka (#413)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. The king showed favor to new soldiers and slighted the older ones. One time he went to put down a rebellion in a frontier province, but neither the new nor the old soldiers would fight because each group thought the other would do it. The king was defeated, and he realized it was because he favored the new soldiers. The king asked the Bodhisatta if any other kings had ever been defeated after making the same mistake. He said a goatherder had once suffered much greater misery from similar behavior.

During the rainy season, some golden-hued deer began to dwell in the forest around the goatherder's home, and he gave them all his attention. But when the rains ended and the deer moved back to the mountain heights, the goats were all dead from neglect. Feeling sorrow for his mistake, the goatherder suffered jaundice and died.

Hearing this story made the king feel much better. He thanked the Bodhisatta with a donation of great wealth, and from then on he showed favor to his own people.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The goatherder was an earlier birth of King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha. He had once shown great hospitality to some strangers who recently arrived in the kingdom and became soldiers, and in doing so, he neglected his older soldiers. When King Pasenadi needed

to put down a disturbance out in a frontier province, neither the new soldiers nor the old would fight because each thought the other would. The king knew that mistakenly favoring the newcomers had caused his defeat, and when he asked the Buddha if any other king had ever been defeated for a similar reason, the Buddha told him this story.

The king of the past was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Jagara Jataka (#414)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas and did walking meditation all night long. A tree fairy who lived at the end of his walking path respected him, and one day asked him two questions. “Who wakes when others sleep and sleeps when others wake?” she riddled. The Bodhisatta answered correctly that it was he. Then the tree fairy asked him, “How do you do it?” and the Bodhisatta said it was because he was dedicated to living with virtue. Pleased with the Bodhisatta’s answers, the tree fairy returned to her tree.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A layman who was deeply devoted to the Buddha was traveling with a trade caravan. One night as he did walking meditation, a band of thieves surrounded their camp and waited for him to go to sleep, but he didn’t. At dawn, the thieves threw down their weapons and left empty-handed, telling the caravan leader he owed his life and property to the man who didn’t sleep. All the caravan workers thanked him for saving their lives.

When he next saw the Buddha, the layman recounted what had happened, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that he himself had also once gained great merit by doing walking meditation all night.

The tree fairy was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha’s top female disciples.

Kummasapinda Jataka (#415)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. In his life before this, he was a poor laborer. One day he took four portions of sour gruel without salt or oil to eat before going to work. But when he saw four private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) out collecting alms, he gave the gruel to them, hoping he would gain much merit and not be born into a poor family in his next earthly life. And his wish came true.

During the Bodhisatta's grand coronation ceremony, in which the city was made as resplendent as a city in heaven, he remembered his past life and knew that having all the gold, jewels, elephants, and dancing girls that were now his was due to the simple alms gift he had given the four private Buddhas. His heart filled with joy and he sang a song: "My simple gift of gruel to the Buddhas brought me this reward. The animals, gold, land, and girls divine are mine because of giving alms." From that point on, the song was sung throughout the kingdom by musicians and townspeople alike.

His gorgeous chief queen wondered what his song was about, but she dared not ask. However, one time the Bodhisatta granted her a wish, and she said she didn't want elephants or horses or anything like that, she wanted to know the meaning behind his song. The Bodhisatta agreed, but instead of just telling her, he built a jeweled pavilion at his palace door and told a great multitude of people the tale of his transition from poor worker to king. Then the Bodhisatta asked his queen what she had done to become the most beautiful, graceful

woman in the land, and she said that in her past life she was a royal slave and had given rice as alms to a holy man. Their stories told, the Bodhisatta and the queen then built six alms halls around the city and were generous and righteous throughout the rest of their lives.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Before marrying King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, the exceptionally wise Queen Mallika was just the daughter of a garland-maker. One day she and some friends were walking to a flower garden when she saw the Buddha coming into the city. She gave him three portions of sour gruel that she had packed to eat later, and after he received it, the Buddha smiled. Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, asked the Buddha why he smiled, and he answered that, thanks to her modest offering, she would become chief queen by the end of the day.

Mallika continued on to the flower garden, and soon after, the king heard her singing. Struck by her beauty, he asked if she was married. Finding that she wasn't, he took her back to his palace and made her his queen. They were a happy, loving couple. Everyone in the city heard how her simple offering had led to great prosperity.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Queen Mallika's path to the palace, he explained just how great the virtue of Buddhas is and told them this story so they knew that something similar had once happened to him in the past.

The queen of the past was an earlier birth of the Buddha’s wife.

Parantapa Jataka (#416)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince, respected by everyone except his father. During his education in Taxila, the Bodhisatta learned a spell to understand animal language. Late one night, while the Bodhisatta sat in his bedroom, a man lay down to sleep just outside the palace. A jackal saw the man and told her two hungry cubs to be quiet because she was going to sneak up and steal his shoes for the three of them to eat. The Bodhisatta, hearing the jackal talking, yelled out his window telling the man to take his shoes off the ground and hang them up high. The thwarted jackal was angry at the Bodhisatta.

Another night the same jackal saw a man who had drowned in a lotus pond. The mother jackal told her cubs to be quiet, the man had one thousand coins and wore a ring, and they were going to eat his body. Hearing the jackal's plan, the Bodhisatta shouted out to a man nearby, ordering him to collect the man's property and make the body sink to the bottom of the pond, again foiling the jackal. The angry jackal told the Bodhisatta that in three days a rival king would attack the city, and the Bodhisatta would be beheaded; then she would get her revenge by drinking his blood.

The jackal's prediction came true, and as the city was encircled, the king ordered the Bodhisatta to fight. He explained that he could not go due to the prophecy, but the king answered, "I don't care if you live or die. Go!" Following his father's orders, the Bodhisatta took his soldiers and went quietly out a back gate to set up camp. Out of respect, every

man in the city followed the Bodhisatta. The king now realized he would be killed, so he took his pregnant chief queen, chaplain, and a servant and fled in disguise. When the Bodhisatta learned of his father's escape, he returned to the city, took the throne, and defeated the hostile king.

The four people who fled lived in the forest in leaf huts. The king and his chaplain gathered food while the pregnant queen and the servant stayed back and took care of their home. Eventually the queen and servant began an affair. The queen feared being discovered, which would surely result in their execution, so she told the servant to kill the king. The next time the king went to bathe, the servant sliced off his head, chopped his body into pieces, and buried them. The chaplain had been in a nearby tree picking wild fruit and saw the murder, so he quickly slid down and hid in a thicket. The servant heard the rustling of branches, but saw no one and assumed there was no witness.

Fearing for his life, when the chaplain returned home he pretended to be blind, claiming a snake had spit venom at his face. When the servant asked what had happened, the chaplain answered as if he were speaking with the king, and this feigned ignorance convinced the servant that the chaplain did not know about the murder. The chaplain missed his wife dearly, but remained living in the forest and feigning blindness, letting the servant care for him.

The queen gave birth, and her son grew up believing the servant was his father; he had no idea he was a prince. But when the son came of age, the chaplain revealed everything

to him, taught him to use a sword, and told him to murder the servant; which he did in the same manner that his father had died. The prince rebuked his mother, then the three of them returned home where the Bodhisatta appointed the young prince, his half-brother, as viceroy.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the assassination attempts, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past, but had not even made him afraid.

Kaccani Jataka (#417)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. After a young man's father died, he dedicated himself fully to caring for his mother, from serving her food to cleaning her teeth. His mother told him to find a wife who could attend to her so he could work and make money. But he took great pleasure in caring for her and had no interest in anything else—he planned to stay with her until she died, and then go off and become an ascetic. But his mother insisted, and when she could not convince her son to do it, she chose a wife for him. And because he would not oppose his mother, the man married her.

Wanting to please her husband, the woman cared for her mother-in-law with as much attention as he had. Pleased by this, the man gave his wife all the best foods, but she foolishly misinterpreted this attention to mean he wanted to get rid of his mother, and she set out to make it happen. She made the mother look like an intolerable, implacable complainer. She started serving the mother's rice either too hot or too cold, or too salty or without salt. When the mother complained, she changed the rice to the opposite extreme, and the mother would complain again. She did the same with her bathwater, hot and then cold. And when the mother asked for the fleas to be shaken out of her bed, the wife added more. But hearing his mother's constant complaining was still not enough to upset the man. Finally, the wife scattered phlegm, mucus, and grey hairs around the house and blamed the mess on the mother. She said this was the final straw—either the old witch had to leave, or she would. Believing his

mother had been the one causing strife, the man finally told her to leave. With tears, she went to live with a friend and took a job to support herself.

Soon after her mother-in-law was sent away, the wife got pregnant. She told her husband and all their neighbors this blessing would not have happened if her wicked mother-in-law had not left. This upset the mother greatly, and she believed that if those terrible people could have a good life after what they did to her, then righteousness must have died. So she went to a cemetery and burned some sesame and rice in an oven made of three human skulls as a death offering for righteousness.

The Bodhisatta saw her distress and came down to earth to help her. He explained that righteousness can never die, and said he would restore her family's happiness and harmony. He magically made the couple think of the mother and all the good she had in her heart, so they went out to find her. The couple threw themselves at the mother's feet and got her forgiveness. Reconciled, they all went home in delight and lived together happily.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The man who loyally supported his mother and his wife were earlier births of a man and wife who did the same things in the present. But this time when the wife gave her ultimatum, the man chose his mother and told his wife to go back to her family because she was still young and could care for herself; his mother could not. The wife was shocked and afraid,

knowing life away from her husband would be miserable. So she reconciled with her mother-in-law and began to properly care for her, as she had done in the past.

Later, the man visited the Buddha, who asked about his mother. He related how his wife had behaved, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that they had gone through something similar in the past.

Atthasadda Jataka (#418)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. One time he went down to a city to get salt and vinegar, and he slept in the royal park. At midnight the king heard eight ominous sounds—from a crane, a crow, a weevil, a cuckoo, a deer, a monkey, a gnome, and a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others)—and was terrified. The next morning he consulted his brahmins, who told him this was an ominous warning of impending danger and said performing a large sacrifice was the only way to stop it. The king told them to arrange it, so they began gathering animals.

A wise student of the eldest brahmin urged him to cancel the cruel slaughter, which would lead to rebirth in hell. But the brahmin told the student to shut his mouth because they wanted to eat the abundant fish and flesh that would come after the sacrifice. The student went to find a pious ascetic who could change the king's mind, and he met the Bodhisatta in the royal park. He told about the king hearing eight sounds, and the Bodhisatta said he knew their meanings, but it was not proper for him to go address the king. If the king came to see him in the park, he would explain them. The student went to the palace and told the king there was an ascetic who understood what the king had heard, and the king rushed to his park to meet him.

The king saluted the Bodhisatta, who explained the sources of the sounds and assured him they were in no way connected to danger.

- The crane moaned because the pond where it lived had dried up and it was half-dead of hunger; but this was its ancestral home, and it did not want to leave. At the Bodhisatta's suggestion, the king ordered an advisor to fill the pond with water.

- The crow nested over the doorway of the elephant stable, and a one-eyed mahout destroyed its nest with his hook every time he rode his elephant through the door, so the distressed crow angrily vowed to peck out his other eye. The king replaced the mahout.

- The weevil was trapped at the peak of the palace roof and had eaten all the fig wood, but could not eat the harder woods, so it lamented its fate. The king sent a servant to set the weevil free.

- The cuckoo lived as a pet in the palace, and it wanted to escape its cage and return to the forest. The king set the bird free.

- The deer lived as a pet in the palace, and it both missed its mate and yearned to lead its herd again. The king set the deer free.

- The monkey lived as a pet in the palace, and it was filled with passion and wanted to enjoy the company of females again. The king set the monkey free.

- The gnome lived as a pet in the palace, and he missed his wife, a fairy, dearly. One time they had climbed to the peak of a mountain and played with flowers, not noticing the time until the sun was setting. She safely led him down the mountain in the darkness, and this memory made him cry from the pain of desire. The king set the gnome free.

- The private Buddha lived in the Himalayas and had reached his end. He chose to enter nirvana in the king's park so there would be a sacred festival to honor his relics. He flew to the palace, sang the song of ecstasy that lights up the entrance to nirvana, and died under a flowering sal tree. The Bodhisatta took the king to see his body.

Hearing the truth put the king at ease. He set all the sacrificial creatures free, threw a seven-day sacred festival to burn the private Buddha's body, and built a stupa for the relics where the four high roads met. The Bodhisatta preached about righteousness to the king, then returned home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One night King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, heard the cries of four beings who dwelled in hell—the sounds "Du," "Sa," "Na," and "Su;" one from each of the four—and was terrified. His brahmins told him this was an ominous warning of impending danger to either his kingdom, property, or life and said performing the fourfold sacrifice (killing four of each kind of living creature;

from humans, bulls, horses, and elephants down to small birds) was the only way to stop it. The king told them to arrange it right away. Excited that they would be paid very well for the ceremony, they dug a sacrificial pit and began gathering victims.

King Pasenadi's exceptionally wise chief queen, Mallika, noticed the brahmins were very happy, and when the king told her what had happened, she suggested he consult the Buddha. So the king went to the monastery and told the Buddha what he had heard and what his brahmins were going to do about it. The Buddha explained that these cries from hell did not foretell danger; rather they came from men who were condemned to eons of boiling liquid torture in iron cauldrons for committing adultery, and they wanted to send warnings to people on earth. They had risen like foam to the edge of the cauldron and tried to yell out words of warning, but were only able to speak the first syllable before sinking back down. The first, who uttered "Du," was trying to say, "Due to living an evil life, we are suffering." The others wanted to say, "Sad fates we are suffering ceaselessly;" "Nay, we are doomed by fate for the bad things we did on earth;" and "Soon we will be reborn and live virtuously." The Buddha then told King Pasenadi this story about another king in a similar situation who had called off a large animal sacrifice. The king was relieved and set all the victims free.

The king and the eldest brahmin's student were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sulasa Jataka (#419)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. A strong, bold thief broke into the homes of many wealthy families, and people pleaded with the king to catch him, so detachments of men were posted around the city. When the thief was arrested, the king ordered his head cut off.

As the thief was being led to the place of execution, Sulasa, a high-class prostitute who earned one thousand coins a night, saw him and fell in love at first sight. She offered a thousand-coin bribe for his release, but the thief was too notorious to just be set free. The governor said if she could find a man as a substitute, he would do it. So when one of her daily customers, a wealthy young merchant, arrived at sunset, she lied that the thief was her brother and said she wanted to save him. The merchant agreed to deliver a thousand-coin bribe for his release, but when he handed it over, he was seized and hidden away, and the thief was secretly sent to Sulasa's home in a covered carriage. The execution was delayed until very late that night so nobody would see it was another man beheaded in place of the thief. Then the merchant's headless body was impaled and the matter was over; the thief was free.

Sulasa stopped her liaisons, and she and the thief lived together happily. But after a few months, the thief tired of this life. He decided to rob and kill Sulasa and leave. He told her that while he was being hauled away by the king's men, he had promised to make an offering to a tree fairy who lived on a mountaintop, and the fairy was now threatening him

because he had not yet done so. He had his wife put on all her best jewelry, and they went to the mountain with a crowd of people in tow. When they arrived, the thief told their followers to stay down below, and the couple climbed the peak alone.

At the summit, atop a tall cliff, the thief told Sulasa his real intent. Shocked, she reminded him that she had saved his life and been completely dedicated to him, pleading with him to spare her life—she would give him her jewels and money and serve as his slave if he did. But he only wanted the valuables and would not let her live, so she quickly devised a plan to kill him. “I have never loved any man more than you,” Sulasa said. “Let me give you a proper goodbye.” She walked around him three times, kissed him, got on her hands and knees, and laid her head on his feet. She then crawled to show honor on all four sides, and when she got behind him, she leaped up and threw him over the cliff to his death. Seeing this, the Bodhisatta noted that sometimes women can act wisely.

Sulasa walked down the mountain, and when her servants asked where her husband was, she told them it was none of their business and went home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The prostitute was an earlier birth of a servant of Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity. One feast day when the servant was going to the royal park, Anathapindika’s wife gave her expensive jewelry to wear. A thief (the thief of the past was

an earlier birth of him) wanted to steal it, so he flirted with her during the day, giving her fish, meat, and alcohol.

That evening, when people lay down to sleep, the servant went to find her suitor, and he suggested they go someplace more private further away. She felt they were already in a place private enough to do anything they wanted to do and realized he must want to kill her and steal her jewelry, so she needed to act. She told the thief she wanted to drink some water and took him to a well. As he stooped over to draw the bucket up, the servant pushed him hard down the well and threw a brick at his head, killing him.

Back home, the servant told Anathapindika how she almost lost the jewelry, and later he told the Buddha about it. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that it was not the first time the servant had been clever and killed that thief.

Sumangala Jataka (#420)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. A private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) came to stay in the royal park, and the Bodhisatta, always righteous, made sure he had everything he needed. One time the private Buddha traveled to a village, and he told the park-keeper he would be away for a few days. He returned after dark and took a seat on a stone slab. That same night, some guests came to visit the park-keeper, and he went to the park to shoot a deer for dinner—but he shot the private Buddha by mistake. Full of remorse, the park-keeper apologized and tried to save him by pulling the arrow out, but the private Buddha died in great pain. Fearing the Bodhisatta's wrath, the park-keeper fled with his family.

After a year, the park-keeper came back to the city and asked one of the Bodhisatta's advisors to find out what the Bodhisatta thought of him. The next time he saw the king, this advisor spoke the park-keeper's praises, but the Bodhisatta did not reply. So the park-keeper returned to the countryside and tried again a year later, with the same result. In the third year, when told by the advisor that the park-keeper was in the city, the Bodhisatta summoned him and listened to his story. Satisfied the killing was a mistake, the Bodhisatta gave the park-keeper his old job back. The advisor asked the Bodhisatta why he had not said anything the two times before. He answered that he did not want to do anything hastily in anger. In response, the park-keeper and the entire court sang the Bodhisatta's praises.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while rebuking a king, the Buddha told this story as a lesson on how kings should act.

The park-keeper was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Harita Jataka (#431)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived alone in the Himalayas, eating fruits and roots. One time he went down to a city to get salt and vinegar, and he slept in the royal park. The next morning, the king saw the Bodhisatta out collecting alms and, impressed by his demeanor, invited him into the palace for a big meal. After they talked, the king invited the Bodhisatta to remain in the city and live permanently in his park. The Bodhisatta accepted the offer and stayed there, being fed and cared for by the king, for twelve years.

When the king needed to go put down a rebellion in a border region, he told his queen to look after the Bodhisatta. One morning, the Bodhisatta was late departing to the palace for his meal, so the queen took a bath and lay down on a small couch to dry off in the wind. Because he was late, the Bodhisatta flew through the air instead of walking. When the queen heard him arrive at her window, she hastily rose to greet him and her robe slipped off. The Bodhisatta saw her naked and was overcome by the sight: his heart filled with lust and his insight vanished. He took the queen's hand and drew a curtain, and they had sex. Then he ate and returned to his hut. The Bodhisatta continued to burn with lust, and the two continued their misconduct day after day.

The affair became known around the city, and the king's advisors sent him a letter informing him what was going on in the palace. But the king respected the Bodhisatta so much that he refused to believe it. Once the battle was won, the king returned and asked his queen about it, and she

confessed. But the king still did not believe the Bodhisatta would do such a terrible thing, and he went to ask him directly. The Bodhisatta knew that if he lied, the king would believe him, but he would lose his path to Buddhahood—lying being much worse than fornication—so he confessed. The king respected his honesty and forgave him. Having recovered his power of concentration, the Bodhisatta gave a final sermon to the king and returned to the Himalayas, where there were no women to tempt him.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began lusting for a woman he saw wearing beautiful clothes. He grew depressed and decided to leave the sangha. When the Buddha heard about his problem, he told the disciple that lust can cause a man to be born in hell, and then he told this story from his past so the disciple knew that he himself had also once succumbed to lust, but was able to overcome it. After that, the disciple chose to stay.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Padakusalamanava Jataka (#432)

The Bodhisatta was once a boy skilled in tracking footsteps. His mother was a goblin. As a chief queen in her previous life, she sinned with another man. To hide her guilt, she swore an oath to the king that if she really did it, she would be reborn as a goblin in her next life; and so it came to be.

She lived in a cave deep in the forest and ate people who traveled the road near her home. One day she captured a wealthy, handsome brahmin and fell in love, so instead of devouring him, she got married. The man had feelings for her too, and they lived together happily in the cave; him getting food, clothes, and the like from the travelers she killed. But not taking any chances of her husband escaping, the goblin sealed the mouth of the cave with a boulder every time she left.

Eventually they had a child, the Bodhisatta. He was an exceptionally strong, smart child. One day, while his mother was away, he opened the cave door because he did not want to sit in darkness. Because his mother loved her son so dearly, she allowed it. Later, the Bodhisatta asked his father why the two of them looked so different from their mother, and he explained that they were human and she was a goblin. Knowing this, the Bodhisatta felt they should live among other humans. And though his father said his mother would kill them if they tried to escape, the Bodhisatta was determined to go.

The next morning, when his mother was away, the Bodhisatta picked up his father and fled. But when she returned and found them gone, she gave chase and brought them back. Not giving up, the Bodhisatta figured that Vessavana, the goblin king, must have given his mother a limited range over which she was allowed to kill people. So sometime later, when his mother wouldn't suspect anything, he asked her what land he would inherit in the future. She pointed out the mountains, rivers, and other landmarks—thirty leagues long by five leagues wide—demarking her realm. Using this information, the Bodhisatta worked out the ideal escape route, and a few days later, he put his father on his shoulders and ran as fast as possible toward the river.

When his mother returned home and saw them gone, she again gave chase, but she didn't catch up to them until the Bodhisatta was standing in the middle of the river, out of her reach. She broke down in tears due to the love of her family and begged them to stay. Her husband chose to do so, but the Bodhisatta said he was not meant to live there and he would never return. His mother warned him that life with humans was difficult. And since he had never learned a craft, it would be hard for him to find work, so she gave the Bodhisatta a magical charm that allowed him to follow anyone's footsteps, up to twelve years after they had walked there. And then, overwhelmed by sadness, her heart broke and she fell dead.

The Bodhisatta and his father performed a solemn cremation ceremony, then they walked in tears to the city. They went right to the palace and told the king of the Bodhisatta's

special skill. Impressed, the king hired him for one thousand coins a day. But after some time had passed and the Bodhisatta's services had not been needed, the king and royal chaplain decided to test his claimed skills. That night they took the most valuable royal jewels and walked a long winding route before hiding them in one of the palace's water tanks.

There was a great outcry the next morning when the "theft" was discovered, and the king, pretending to be shocked, summoned the Bodhisatta. He promised to get the jewels back and got right to work, announcing that there were two thieves. His perception led him down the terrace, around the palace three times, and then to a wall where he announced, "There are footsteps in the air, my Lord. Bring me a ladder." They all climbed out of the palace grounds and followed the Bodhisatta to the Hall of Justice, then turned around back over the palace wall to the water tank. After circling it three times, the Bodhisatta pulled the jewels out of the water as if he had put them there himself.

The gathered crowd snapped their fingers and waved cloth in admiration, but the king wanted more and asked the Bodhisatta if he knew who the thieves were. The Bodhisatta said the thieves were among them right now, but he would not identify them. The arrogant king, however, did not believe Bodhisatta could do it, and he insisted: "I pay you one thousand coins daily. For me, catching the thieves is more important than recovering the treasure."

The Bodhisatta told the king that he would not name names, but he would tell him a story: “If you are wise, you will understand what it means.”

- Once upon a time, the Bodhisatta began the tale, when a famous minstrel got drunk, he tied his lute around his neck and took his wife swimming in the river. As the minstrel should have predicted, water filled the lute and weighed him down, so he began to sink. His wife swam back to shore and could see that her husband was about to drown. She called out, asking him to quickly teach her one song so she could earn a living when he was gone. But he said he could not—water usually keeps people alive, but at that very moment, due to his foolishness, it was killing him.

After hearing the story, the king said, “I cannot understand cryptic messages like this. Just catch the thieves and bring them to me.” But the Bodhisatta was determined to protect the foolish king, so he told another story.

- A village potter got all his clay from a deep pit inside a cave. One time while he was inside digging, a large storm sprang up and the heavy rain caused a flood that collapsed the pit, so the clay that gave the potter his livelihood crushed his head.

Again the king said he did not want to interpret hidden meanings. “Catch them and hand them over to me,” he said. But to avoid publicly naming the king, the Bodhisatta told another story.

- A man's house caught fire, and he ordered another man to run in and save his property. But he didn't get out in time, so fire, which usually cooks food and keeps people warm, killed him.

The king did not understand and said, "Just bring me the thieves." Instead, the Bodhisatta told another story.

- A man once ate so much food he could not digest it. So that which normally sustains life killed him.

As before, the king said, "If you are able, bring me the thieves." Still hoping to make the king understand, he told another story.

One time a strong wind, which usually provides comfortable relief from the heat, arose and broke a man's limbs. Again the king said, "Bring me the thieves." But the Bodhisatta told him yet another story.

- A huge flock of birds lived in a tree. Two of its branches rubbed together, starting the tree on fire. So the chief bird told the others to flee. What had once been their refuge was now their torment.

The king said, "I don't want anything else. Just bring me the thieves." But the Bodhisatta persisted and told another story.

- His father dead, a dutiful only son cared for his mother. She found her son a wife, and she and her own mother

moved into the house. At first the wife showed affection for her mother-in-law, but after having many children, the wife wanted her gone. So she turned her husband against his mother by speaking often of her faults, and convinced him to kill her. They schemed to carry her bed to the river, so she would not wake up, and throw her to the crocodiles. The two mothers slept in the same room, so to avoid taking the wrong bed in the dark, the wife tied a rope to her mother-in-law's bed. But the husband switched the rope, and that night they killed his wife's mother, not his.

- In the morning, after the wife found that her mother was dead, she told her husband they needed to kill his mother next. So they built a funeral pyre in the cemetery and that night carried her bed there to burn her alive. But they forgot to bring fire, and as they walked home to get it, the old woman woke up and realized she was about to die. She put a corpse on her bed, which successfully tricked her son and daughter-in-law into believing they had killed her, and escaped to a nearby cave.

- A thief stored his loot in this cave, and when he saw the old woman there, he thought she must be a goblin. The thief fetched a witch doctor to cast the goblin out, but when he came, the old woman insisted she was not a goblin and suggested that they share the thief's loot. To prove she was human, she told the witch doctor to put his tongue on top of hers. When he did, she bit a piece off and spit it to the ground. The frightened witch

doctor, now certain that she was a goblin, fled, leaving all the treasure for her alone.

- The next day, the man's mother returned home with the loot. The surprised daughter-in-law asked where she got these jewels, and she said that everyone who gets burned alive on a pyre in a cemetery gets some. Without telling her husband, the greedy wife went to the cemetery and set herself on fire. When the man asked where his wife was, his mother told him that a daughter-in-law is supposed to care for her mother-in-law, not try to kill her, and she got the fate she deserved.
- Getting irritated with the delay, the king said, "I don't understand the things you are telling me. Just bring me the thieves!" But remaining intent on shielding the king, the Bodhisatta told one last story.

A man prayed for a son, and eventually he had one. He cherished his son as he grew up, but when the man grew too old to work, his son threw him out of the house, making him survive on alms.

- This time the angry king said, "Whether this is fact or fiction, I don't understand. If you can't bring them to me, then you must be the thief."

Exasperated at the king's idiocy, the Bodhisatta finally gave up and announced in front of the assembled crowd that the king and the chaplain were the thieves who stole the jewels. "Protect yourselves," he urged people. "Those who should provide safety are your curse." The people were aghast that

not only was the king the thief, but that he had tried to force the blame onto somebody else. They rose up with sticks and clubs and beat the king and chaplain to death. And they chose the Bodhisatta as their new king.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A lay follower of the Buddha had a seven-year-old son who was skilled in tracking footsteps, and he liked to test him. One day this man took a long, winding route to the Buddha's monastery, stopping at several homes and circling the city along the way. While he sat and listened to a sermon, his son showed up, and the Buddha heard about his ability. The Buddha said the boy's skill really wasn't very impressive; in the past he himself could follow footsteps even through the air. Then he told this story.

The Bodhisatta's father was an earlier birth of Maha Kassapa, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Lomasakassapa Jataka (#433)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was the son of the king's chaplain and was educated along with the crown prince. The two men were very close friends, and when the prince became king, the Bodhisatta knew he would be given great power. But he didn't want this, so he went off to the Himalayas to live as an ascetic. He subdued his senses and lived in such grim austerity that the throne of Indra, king of the gods, was shaken. When Indra saw the Bodhisatta's intense virtue, he worried that the Bodhisatta would soon replace him, so Indra schemed to destroy his righteousness.

At midnight Indra appeared in the king's bedchamber, floating in the air and radiating light, and told the king he could become immortal and rule all of India if he got the Bodhisatta to make an animal sacrifice. The king eagerly agreed to try, and the next morning he sent an advisor out to the forest to make the Bodhisatta an offer—perform an animal sacrifice in exchange for all the land he desired. Without hesitation, the Bodhisatta refused.

After the Bodhisatta said no, Indra returned to the palace and told the king to offer his daughter, who was as lovely as a celestial nymph, as a wife to the Bodhisatta if he agreed to do the sacrifice. When the Bodhisatta saw her, Indra said, he would be struck with lust and be unable to resist. The next day, the king sent his daughter with his advisor to the forest, and Indra's prediction proved correct. The moment the Bodhisatta saw the princess, he lost his moral sense, and

trembling with the power of passion, he agreed to do the sacrifice.

Back at the palace, the king greeted his old friend and prepared the ceremony. The next morning, they went to the sacrificial pit where hundreds of four-footed beasts stood in a line awaiting their fate. People gathered there and urged the Bodhisatta to reconsider, but he didn't listen. As the Bodhisatta raised his sword to strike the royal elephant in the neck, it let out a terrified cry. Then through fear of death, all the other animals did the same. This commotion caused the Bodhisatta to reflect on his life, and filled with remorse, he didn't kill the elephant.

The eager king added his entire kingdom and a pile of the seven precious jewels to his offer, but the Bodhisatta had recovered his mystic insight and refused. He sat cross-legged in the air and gave the king a sermon on proper behavior, and encouraged him to spend the rest of his life doing good deeds, starting with destroying the sacrificial pit. Then the Bodhisatta flew back home and never again succumbed to temptation.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began to long for the worldly life he had given up. To convince him to stay, the Buddha told him this story about a time when he himself had lost his direction and slid into sin. After hearing it, the disciple reached enlightenment.

The king’s advisor was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha’s top disciples.

Cakkavaka Jataka (#434)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden goose. A greedy crow grew tired of eating dead elephants, so he went to feed on fish on the bank of the Ganges River, and then to have wild fruit in the Himalayas. There he saw the Bodhisatta and his mate in a lotus pond. Because they were so beautiful and so beloved by humans, he figured they must eat the best food (like rice, salt, oil, fruit, and meat), and he wanted to eat it too, so he could also become golden-hued like them. The crow greeted and complimented them and asked where to find the fruits and flesh that they ate, but the Bodhisatta explained that they only ate seaweed. It was their virtuous behavior, never harming other creatures, that gave them their beauty; it had nothing to do with food. The crow decided this was not the life for him and flew away.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crow was an earlier birth of a disciple of the Buddha who was greedy. He went out for alms early each morning so he could eat excellent food at the houses of some of the Buddha's top supporters, including Visakha, his top female lay supporter; Anathapindika, a wealthy patron known for his extreme generosity; and King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler. One day the Buddha summoned the greedy disciple and told him this story to help him overcome his craving.

The Bodhisatta's mate was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Haliddiraga Jataka (#435)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a wealthy brahmin, but after his wife died, he took his young son to live an austere religious life deep in the Himalayas. Many years later, some bandits from the border region raided a town to take plunder and slaves. One beautiful but wicked woman fled their attack, and during her journey she came upon the Bodhisatta's hut. He was away gathering food, but his son was at home and the woman wanted him as a husband. She knew that virtue was protected in the forest, but if she could get him to come live with her in civilization, she could corrupt him and get him under her power. So the woman convinced the son that if he could resist temptation in a town, he would rise to a far nobler life than if he did so living in the forest. He agreed to go with her, but needed to say goodbye to his father first. The woman knew that if she was still there when the Bodhisatta returned, he would kill her, so she left right away, leaving a trail for the son to follow later. The rest of the day he sat meditating.

When the Bodhisatta returned, he immediately realized his son had fallen under the power of a woman because he did not come out to greet him and had not done his duties. He told his father he was going to test his virtue in the world of men, where his practice would be more fruitful. But having come to the Himalayas as a child, he did not know what life was like there, and he asked his father which group of people he should befriend. As a way of warning his son what life was like outside the forest, the Bodhisatta answered that he should find people who are reliable, trustworthy, and patient

and avoid anyone who is foolish and impulsive. The son knew it would be very difficult to find people like this, so he decided not to leave. The Bodhisatta then taught his son mystic meditation, and they both stayed in the wilderness for the rest of their lives.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked woman who tempted the Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of a plump, lascivious young woman who had no suitors for marriage. Her mother decided to entice one of the Buddha's disciples into falling for her. That morning, as she offered alms to the disciples walking past her house, the mother looked for one who could be tempted by a craving for good food. Eventually she saw a disciple who had not given up concern with his appearance: the corners of his eyes were anointed with oil, some hair hung down, his robes were of fine fabric and immaculately clean, and his bowl was colored like a precious gem. The mother knew she could corrupt him, so when he came to the door she took his bowl and invited him into the house to eat the best food she could provide. When he finished eating, she told him to come by again anytime. He took up her offer and they got to know each other well.

When she thought it was the right time, the mother took the next step in her plan by telling the disciple that theirs was a happy household, but she had no son or son-in-law to maintain it. The next time the disciple came, she had her daughter adorn herself and begin seducing him with womanly tricks and wiles—and it worked. He fell under her

power and wanted to leave the sangha. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that this same woman had harmed him and tried to lure him away from a spiritual life in an earlier birth, when he was the young ascetic living in the Himalayas.

Samugga Jataka (#436)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. A demon lived nearby and occasionally listened to the Bodhisatta preach, though he never fully accepted his ideas and still went down to the road to eat men. Once, while attacking a chariot, the demon fell in love at first sight with the gorgeous noblewoman riding inside. He took her back to his cave and made her his wife. He gave her robes and jewelry and brought her good food to eat. To keep her safe, he put her in a box that he swallowed and stored in his stomach.

One day while bathing, the demon threw up the box with his wife, and after she took a bath, he let her stay out in the open a while. While the demon was in the water, the woman saw a magician walking through the air and she silently signaled for him to come down and join her, which he did. When she saw the demon returning, she got in the box and lay down on top of the magician, using her robe to hide him. Suspecting nothing, the demon swallowed the box again and headed home.

As he walked home to his cave, the demon realized it had been a long time since he met the Bodhisatta and he went to pay his respects. Through his supernatural powers, the Bodhisatta knew what was in the demon's stomach, so he said, "Welcome to all three of you." The demon didn't understand the comment and, wondering if the Bodhisatta was going crazy, asked why he said it. The Bodhisatta told him who was in his stomach. Worried the magician would wield

his sword and kill him from the inside, the demon quickly threw up the box. And just a moment after it left his mouth, the magician cast a spell and sprang into the air. Thankful the Bodhisatta had saved his life, the demon threw himself at his feet and praised him. The demon set both the woman and the magician free and returned home alone.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples considered quitting the sangha so he could be with a woman. The Buddha told the disciple this story to remind him that women are wicked and ungrateful and cannot be faithful to just one man. This convinced him to remain.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Putimansa Jataka (#437)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. Many hundreds of goats lived in a cave on the slopes of the Himalayas. A pair of jackals lived in a nearby cave, and over time they ate all the goats, except one wise she-goat who they tried and failed to kill many times. Taking a new tack, they devised a plan to have the she-jackal befriend the goat, and when they reached a degree of confidence, her husband would pretend to be dead. She would cry and ask the goat, her only friend, to help her bury his body. And when the goat came, he would leap up and bite the goat's neck.

The she-jackal succeeded in befriending the goat, and when the time was right, they faked her husband's death. But the goat was afraid and would not help with the burial since he had killed her whole family. But with further prodding, the goat changed her mind, figuring he couldn't hurt her if he was dead. But she remained suspicious and approached his body cautiously, making the she-jackal walk in front. When the reclining jackal heard the two approaching, he lifted his head to have a look. The goat saw this and fled back to her home.

The jackal was angry with his wife for failing to bring the goat to him, and she was angry with him for moving. But she promised to find another way to lead the goat to him. She visited the goat at her home and thanked her for helping her husband regain consciousness. And she invited the goat to chat with him, but instead of rejecting the offer, the goat deceived the she-jackal. She promised to bring four of her

dog friends and two thousand of their guard dogs—and if there was not enough food to feed them all, the dogs would eat the two jackals. Fearing this, the jackals quickly fled, never to return.

The Bodhisatta observed this happen.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha had many disciples who failed to subdue their senses, so he called an assembly to criticize them and warn them that focusing on their appearance was a path to hell. Then he told this story as an example of how straying from the proper path causes failure.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Tittira Jataka (#438)

The Bodhisatta was once a partridge. He lived inside the leaf hut of a world-renowned teacher who taught the sacred texts to five hundred students. A lizard and her two children also lived in the teacher's home, a dairy cow and her calf stayed outside, and a lion and tiger who were friends with the teacher lived nearby in the surrounding forest.

When the teacher died, his students performed funeral rites and built a mound over his ashes. They wondered how they could continue their studies. The Bodhisatta was very wise, and from listening to the teacher's lessons he had mastered the three Vedas, so he took over teaching the students. The Bodhisatta was an excellent teacher; his explanations of complex issues flowed like a stream down a mountain, and his students were delighted. They built him a golden cage and served him honey and parched grains.

When a festival was being celebrated, all the students left the school to join in with their families. While they were away, a wicked ascetic wandering through the region came to their school. Not knowing his true nature, the lizard invited him to stay and told him where to find rice and oil, then she went out to find her own food. During the day, the ascetic killed and ate the Bodhisatta, the young lizards, and the cows; then, in the late afternoon, he fell fast asleep.

The lizard returned and searched frantically for her children. A tree fairy told the lizard what the wicked ascetic had done and urged her to bite him on the neck and kill him. But the

lizard feared he would wake up and eat her, so she fled into the forest.

Shortly after the lizard left, the tiger stopped by to visit his friend the Bodhisatta. He saw the wretched ascetic sleeping with feathers stuck to his matted hair and a pile of bones at his side and realized what must have happened. He woke the ascetic up with a kick and asked if he had killed these creatures. Hoping his life would be spared, the frightened ascetic admitted to killing the lizards and cows, but denied killing the Bodhisatta. The tiger didn't believe him and marched him off to see the lion, and then the ascetic made a full confession. The lion wanted to let him go, but the tiger felt he deserved to die and tore him apart.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked ascetic was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When he heard some of his disciples discussing the three times Devadatta had tried to kill him, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past.

The teacher, lizard, tiger, and lion were earlier births of Maha Kassapa, Kisagotami, Moggallana, and Sariputta, four of the Buddha's top disciples.

Catu-Dvara Jataka (#439)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. The mother of a wealthy merchant once pleaded with him, her only son, to give alms, be virtuous, observe the holy days, and follow the teachings; but the merchant rejected religion and righteousness. One full-moon holy day, she offered him one thousand coins to keep the vows and go to an overnight sermon. For the love of money, he agreed, but that night he slept instead of listening. When the merchant returned home the next morning, he rudely demanded the money from his mother, refusing to eat her food until he got it.

Later, the merchant decided to sail on a trading voyage to faraway lands. His mother begged him not to go because there were many dangers at sea. And she added that they already had plenty of money, so this new business was unnecessary. When she grabbed his hand to stop him from going, he struck her and left.

On his seventh day at sea, the winds died and the ship wouldn't move. The crew cast lots to see who had cursed them, and when the greedy merchant drew the lot three times, he was set afloat on a raft. The moment he was jettisoned, the ship began to sail again.

The merchant's raft drifted to an island where four female spirits of the dead (specifically vimana petas, ghosts whose blissful lives are regularly interrupted by hell-like tortures) lived in a crystal palace, and he stayed with them until they needed to leave for a week of penance. Next, he encountered

eight more such spirits in a silver palace, then sixteen in a jewel palace, and finally thirty-two in a gold palace; and he always left when the spirits did.

Then the merchant arrived in a city with a massive wall and four gates. He was told it was one of the lesser hells, but to him it appeared beautiful. He went inside, arrogantly believing he would become its king. Right after he entered the gate, a man hauling a wheel as sharp as a razor on his head passed by, but the greedy merchant saw it as a lotus flower. He also thought the chains around the man's body were a beautiful robe, the blood dripping from his head was perfume made from sandalwood powder, and his groaning was a sweet song. The merchant ordered the man to give him the lotus. When told what it really was, he figured the man holding it was lying because he wanted to keep it for himself. Told to hand it over a second time, the suffering man gladly gave it to him, thrilled that his punishment was over and another man who had also hit his mother was there to begin his. The instant the razor wheel touched the merchant's head, he felt a piercing and tearing pain, like a pestle crushing mustard seeds.

At the moment the punishment began, the Bodhisatta walked by, and the merchant cried out, asking what he had done to deserve this. The Bodhisatta told him that centuries of misery carrying this wheel on his head was the price for a life of utter greed.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The greedy merchant was an earlier birth of a disobedient disciple of the Buddha, who told him this story of his past so he knew that his defiance had once led to great suffering.

Kanha Jataka (#440)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a wealthy brahmin who gave away everything he owned and forsook the world in the hope that he would go to heaven after death. He went off to the Himalayas, where he lived alone as an ascetic without compromise—he slept under a tree without a hut; took just one meal a day; and ate nothing but uncooked fruits, flowers, leaves, and bark picked from his tree. He developed great powers and lived in pure bliss without any desires.

By the power of the Bodhisatta's virtue, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm. When he divined the reason, Indra decided to go listen to the Bodhisatta preach, then reward him with a wish and by making his tree bear fruit endlessly. But he began by testing the Bodhisatta's integrity. He appeared out of sight behind the Bodhisatta and insulted him for having such ugly dark skin. But the Bodhisatta, knowing it was Indra without even turning around, explained that his blackness came from sins of the past; in this life he was pure of heart and thus began a discourse in praise of virtue.

The Bodhisatta had few needs, so for his wish, he asked to be free from malice, hatred, desire, and lust. Indra was impressed by his dedication and gave him two more wishes; the Bodhisatta asked for good health and that all creatures might live free of harm. Indra returned to heaven after saluting the Bodhisatta, who never once broke his ecstasy for the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while the Buddha and a band of disciples were out walking, the Buddha smiled. Ananda, one of his top disciples, asked why he smiled, and the Buddha answered that he had once lived in this exact spot as an ascetic so resolute that Indra's throne grew warm. And then he told this story.

Indra was an earlier birth of Anuruddha, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Catu-Posathika Jataka (#441)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Vidhurapandita Jataka (#545), while the Catu-Posathika Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. Four great kings—a naga king; a garuda king; Indra, king of the gods; and the Bodhisatta's king—were friends in their previous lives, and one day, after keeping the holy-day fast and meditating, they sat down to chat. Indra wondered what their greatest virtues were. The naga king said he had great patience: garudas are the mortal enemies of nagas, but anger never arose in him when he saw one. The garuda king said he possessed great self-restraint: nagas are the garudas' favorite food, but he remained hungry rather than kill and eat one. Indra said he kept great abstinence from desire: he left behind the glory of heaven, where every sort of happiness can be found, and came to earth to focus on the holy day. The human king said he maintained great devotion to religious perfection: he went to his park to observe the holy day instead of letting loose in his harem, which had sixteen thousand dancing girls.

Each king felt his virtue was superior to the others, so they went to the palace to ask the Bodhisatta which of them was truly the greatest. After all four kings shared their stories of virtue, the Bodhisatta declared them equal, like the spokes of a wheel. All greatly pleased with this answer, they praised the Bodhisatta's incomparable wisdom and gave him gifts: a jewel (the naga king), a golden garland (the garuda king), a robe

made of heavenly silk (Indra), and one thousand cows (the human king).

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he was so quick-witted that he always crushed his opponents' arguments, even reducing revered sages to silence. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he said it was no big deal that he could convince others because he had reached enlightenment. Then he told them this story so they knew that he'd also been able to do the same in the past.

Indra, the naga king, the garuda king, and the Bodhisatta's king were earlier births of Anuruddha, Sariputta, Moggallana, and Ananda, four of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sankha Jataka (#442)

The Bodhisatta was once a wealthy merchant who gave alms generously: six hundred thousand coins' worth daily. He began to worry about going bankrupt, so he built a ship and sailed to a faraway land to trade, expecting to return with lots of money. On the day his journey began, he left his wife and child in charge of giving alms and walked to the port. A private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) divined that the Bodhisatta's ship was going to sink, so he went to assist. He flew from his home in the Himalayas, landed near the Bodhisatta, and walked toward him through sand as hot as burning embers, making sure the Bodhisatta saw him. As he'd expected, the Bodhisatta told the private Buddha to take a seat under a tree, and without being asked gave him his shoes and parasol. His work finished, the private Buddha flew back home.

On the seventh day of the voyage, the Bodhisatta's ship sprang a leak, and many passengers died. The Bodhisatta picked a random man to be his servant, and the two of them covered their bodies with oil, filled their stomachs with powdered sugar and ghee, and jumped into the ocean to swim toward home.

The goddess assigned to save virtuous people from shipwrecks had been shirking her duties, but on the seventh day she scanned the seas and saw the Bodhisatta in trouble. Jumping into action, she flew over the waters and gave him a golden plate of divine meats, but the Bodhisatta refused it

because it was a holy day. She told the Bodhisatta that she was there to rescue him because he had offered his shoes to a private Buddha. She gave him a three-hundred-fifty-meter-long ship built of and filled with treasures—golden oars, silver sails, sapphire masts—and led him home. He lived out his days in righteousness, distributing alms without end.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time after hearing a sermon from the Buddha, a lay follower invited him to his house for alms on seven straight days. On the last day, he gave the Buddha and five hundred disciples a special gift of shoes. The Buddha thanked the man and told this story about the time he himself had donated shoes to a Buddha.

The goddess and the servant were earlier births of Uppalavanna and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Culla-Bodhi Jataka (#443)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived with his wife in the Himalayas. She was as beautiful as a nymph and as righteous as the Bodhisatta. They had been married by their families against their will, and even before giving away their vast wealth and renouncing the world, they lived a pure, celibate life completely free of desire and sin.

One time while down in the city to get salt and seasoning, they took up residence in the royal park. When the king went there, he saw the Bodhisatta's wife and fell in love at first sight. The king asked the Bodhisatta what their relationship was, and he answered, "In the past she was my wife, but she is nothing to me now." The king was skeptical of the Bodhisatta's detachment, but nevertheless, he had his men seize her and take her back to the palace. He showered her with honor, but she resisted by yelling about the wicked king's lawlessness and her disdain for extravagance. The Bodhisatta heard her cries, but did nothing.

Unable to win her favor, the king decided that the Bodhisatta must be plotting against him, so he returned to the park to confront him. The Bodhisatta sat calmly sewing his cloak and did not address the king when he approached. The king accused him of having anger festering quietly inside his heart. The Bodhisatta denied it and explained how anger brings nothing but ruin and misery; by cherishing kindness, he had learned to rise above anger's influence.

The king was impressed by this lesson and set the woman free. He asked for forgiveness and told them they could stay in his park as long as they wished; he would provide for all their needs. They remained until she died, then the Bodhisatta returned to live out his final years in the Himalayas.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples was stubborn and filled with anger. The Buddha told him this story as a lesson about the problems caused by anger and the benefits of learning to overcome it. Upon hearing the story, the disciple's state of mind greatly improved.

The Bodhisatta's wife was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife, and the king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kanhadipayana Jataka (#444)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a wealthy brahmin who, along with an equally wealthy friend, gave away everything he owned and forsook the world. The pair lived together in the Himalayas, eating wild fruits and roots, but never managed to attain full insight. After fifty years in the wilderness, they went down to a town to get salt and seasoning, and stayed in a cemetery for a while. Then the Bodhisatta went to stay at a friend's house in another town, while his companion remained behind.

One day a thief was caught in the act, and the homeowners and guards gave chase. The thief fled through the sewer into the cemetery, where he dropped his haul in front of the ascetic's hut. When the homeowners saw it lying there, they assumed the ascetic was the thief. They beat him and hauled him off to the king who, without investigating the matter at all, ordered the ascetic executed by impalement.

The king's men first tried to impale him with a stake made of acacia wood and then stakes made of neem wood and iron, but none of these would pierce the ascetic's skin. The ascetic was as surprised about this as the executioners, so he scanned his memories looking for the cause and saw that as a child in a previous life he had pierced a fly with a splinter of ebony. Knowing he could not escape the karma of this past sin, he told the men they must use a stake made of ebony, which they did.

At this time, the Bodhisatta thought about his fellow ascetic and went back to visit. Finding him hanging along the roadside, the Bodhisatta asked what he had done. He answered that he had done nothing wrong, but he did not feel any hatred toward his accusers or the king. The Bodhisatta was pleased and said the shadow of such a virtuous person was delightful, so he sat down next to the stake and remained there into the night, not minding the drops of blood that fell upon his skin.

When the king heard about the Bodhisatta's action, he realized he had acted rashly. The king rushed to the scene, and the Bodhisatta rebuked him for not examining both sides before declaring guilt. The king did so then, and he found the ascetic innocent and ordered the stake removed. But it would not come out—this was due to the same past action with the fly, after which he stuck a small piece of diamond into a duct so it would not die until the natural end of its life. The apologetic king had his men saw off both ends of the stake, keeping the part inside his body intact.

The Bodhisatta took care of his fellow ascetic until his wound healed, and then he returned to his friend's house. As the family listened to the Bodhisatta tell them about his friend's ordeal, their young son was bitten by a venomous snake and fell unconscious. The parents asked the Bodhisatta to heal him, but he said he knew no magical chants. So they asked him to speak an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result), and as he did, some of the venom fell out of the boy's chest, reviving him. Because he needed to speak the whole,

complete truth, the Bodhisatta admitted in front of the others that he did not enjoy the ascetic life. Then the Bodhisatta told the father he must also speak truthfully, and he proclaimed his generosity, but admitted that selfishness was his true nature and he gave reluctantly. More venom came out of the boy's back and he sat up, but remained weak and could not stand. The mother followed with an admission that she did not love her husband, and all the rest of the venom drained out. The boy got up and began to play normally.

They were all taken aback by each other's admissions and explained themselves. The Bodhisatta did not give up the ascetic life after starting it because he did not want to be judged a fool. The husband was only generous because his father and grandfather had been so. And the wife was just a young girl when her family married her off, and she did not want to disappoint them. But after discussing these things, they found new perspectives and changed from disappointment with their lives to happiness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man of noble birth gave up his easy life to become a disciple of the Buddha and was completely dedicated to dharma. One day during an alms round he met a beautiful woman and fell in love at first sight. Overcome by passion, he became so depressed that he stopped cutting his hair and nails and cleaning his robes, became thin and weak with yellow skin and veins sticking out of his body, and no longer took joy in his life of solitude.

The Buddha criticized the disciple's behavior and told this story as an example of how he himself had stopped caring about the holy life in the past but didn't stop living with proper conduct. Hearing this, the disciple got back on the right path.

The Bodhisatta's fellow ascetic and good friend were earlier births of Sariputta and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples. The friend's wife and son were earlier births of the Buddha's wife and son.

Nigrodha Jataka (#445)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. His mother was infertile, and she fell out of favor with her husband, a wealthy merchant, because of it. Eventually, frustrated by all the gossip about her not having children, she faked being pregnant, and after nine months she said she wanted to return home and give birth at her father's house. While traveling there, she found a baby (the Bodhisatta) abandoned under a banyan tree, and with the help of her lady-in-waiting she faked giving birth, claiming the child as her own.

The Bodhisatta was raised with two other children born on the same day. The three grew up together in the palace as very close friends and were sent to Taxila to complete their education. When they finished their studies, they wandered through the land to get new experiences.

One morning, one of the Bodhisatta's companions awoke early and heard a conversation between two chickens roosting in the tree above them. The one at the top had defecated on the back of a chicken perched below him. The offending chicken apologized, but the soiled chicken remained angry and proclaimed that he was very important, boasting that anyone who killed and ate him would get one thousand coins that morning. The upper chicken scoffed and said anyone who ate his fat would become a king, his middle meat would become commander-in-chief, and his meat by the bones would become treasurer. The man quickly and quietly climbed the tree and grabbed the uppermost chicken, killing and cooking it for his friends. He served the fat to the

Bodhisatta, the middle meat to his other friend, and ate the meat near the bones himself.

After the early riser told the Bodhisatta and his friend about their fortuitous fates, they walked to the city and took a nap in the royal park. It was a week after the king had died without an heir, and his chaplain sent the royal chariot out of the palace without a driver—a foolproof method to find someone with sufficient merit to be a great king. The horses walked to the park and stopped in front of the Bodhisatta. The chaplain examined his feet and saw the marks of royalty, which showed he was destined to not only be a king, but to rule all of India. The chaplain ordered all the gongs and cymbals struck to wake the men up, then he got on one knee to offer the kingdom to the Bodhisatta. He accepted the crown then and there and brought his friends to the palace as commander-in-chief and treasurer. He ruled righteously.

One day the Bodhisatta thought of his parents and told his commander-in-chief to bring them to the city, but he felt this task wasn't his responsibility and refused. So the Bodhisatta told his treasurer to do it, and he agreed. He went back to their hometown and invited the Bodhisatta's parents, as well as his and the commander-in-chief's, but none wanted to leave, and the treasurer returned to the palace alone.

The treasurer first stopped to see the commander-in-chief, who resented the treasurer for not choosing to make him king on that fateful day. Full of spite, he ordered his men to beat the treasurer severely. The injured treasurer went immediately to report this to the Bodhisatta, who greeted

him warmly with fancy clothes, fine foods, a shave, and such things. Hearing what had happened, the Bodhisatta was furious at the commander-in-chief for becoming a worthless traitor and ordered him speared to death. But the treasurer begged him to show mercy, so the Bodhisatta forgave him. As a reward for the treasurer's good character, the Bodhisatta put him in charge of all the merchant guilds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The commander-in-chief was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. One day some of the Buddha's other disciples told Devadatta he ought to be grateful to the Buddha for all he had learned from him. But Devadatta picked up a blade of grass and said the Buddha had not even done this much good for him.

When the Buddha later overheard these disciples discussing it, he told them Devadatta had also been ungrateful and treacherous in the past, and told this story as an example.

The treasurer was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Takkala Jataka (#446)

The Bodhisatta was once a young son of a village householder. For many years the Bodhisatta's father dedicated himself fully to caring for his own father, from serving him food to cleaning his teeth. The aged father told his son to find a wife to help him, but he did not want the aggravation of having a woman around—he planned to care for his father until he died. But the father ignored his son's wishes and sent for a wife. She was good-hearted and cared for her father-in-law with as much attention as her husband had. In appreciation, the Bodhisatta's father bought many things to please her, and she passed them all on to her father-in-law.

Eventually the wife thought that because her husband gave all his attention to her, he no longer cared for his father; and if she got rid of him, her husband would be pleased. So she started provoking her father-in-law by making his bathwater too hot or too cold, his food with too much or too little salt, and his rice too hard or too soft. She also spit all over the floor and blamed the mess on him. Finally, she let her husband know she was sick and tired of her father-in-law's anger and constant complaining, and she could no longer live in the same house as him. Someone that old and frail was bound to die soon, she said, so they should just kill him. Not knowing that his wife had been the one causing the strife, the Bodhisatta's father agreed.

Following his wife's instructions, the Bodhisatta's father told his father, speaking loudly so the neighbors heard him, that

he had tried to collect one of his debts, but the borrower would not pay, so they should go together to see the man early in the morning and get the money. Instead, he took his father to the cemetery to kill and bury him.

The Bodhisatta was just seven years old when this happened, but very smart. He heard his wicked mother telling his father the plan, so that night, to stop his father from doing evil, the Bodhisatta slept in his grandfather's room. And in the morning, he jumped in the cart to go with them. At the cemetery, the Bodhisatta played ignorant and asked his father why he dug a hole in a spot that had no herbs or roots to eat. His father answered that his grandfather was old and weak and suffered pain, so they needed to kill him. Then the Bodhisatta took the spade from his father's hands and began to dig another hole. He told his father that in the future he would follow the family tradition and bury him there. Then the Bodhisatta explained to his angry father he could never undo such a great sin and would surely be reborn in hell. Now filled with shame, the Bodhisatta's father thanked his kind-hearted son for saving him.

The Bodhisatta said that to save his mother, his father must teach her a lesson by tossing her out of the house. His father agreed, and when they got back home, he beat his wife and told her never to return. A few days later, the Bodhisatta told his father to bring one of his nieces to their home, and, as expected, gossip quickly spread that the Bodhisatta's father had a new wife. The Bodhisatta's mother came to him and, falling at his feet, begged for a second chance, promising to care for her husband and father-in-law as she did initially. So,

having been tamed by the Bodhisatta, his parents lived in righteousness for the rest of their days.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's father, mother, and grandfather were earlier births of three people who lived through a similar situation in the Buddha's time. But in this case, when the wife demanded that either her father-in-law leave the house or she would, the man chose his father. This frightened the wife, and she begged forgiveness, promising to care for him as dutifully as she had in the past. The situation worried the man, so he didn't visit the Buddha for a week until he was sure his wife was sincere.

When the man did return to the Buddha's monastery, he asked why the man had been away for so long. He explained how his wife had behaved, and the Buddha told him this story so he knew that something similar had happened to the three of them in the past; only back then the man made the wrong choice about how to handle it, and the Buddha had to save them.

Maha-Dhamma-Pala Jataka (#447)

The Bodhisatta was once a student. He studied with a world-renowned teacher in Taxila and was at the top of his class. When his teacher's eldest son died, everyone cried except the Bodhisatta. The other students asked about his lack of sadness, and the Bodhisatta replied that the boy couldn't really be dead because people only die after they have grown old, not in their tender years. This is how it had always been in his family.

When the teacher heard about this marvelous thing, he went to the Bodhisatta's village to find out if it was true so he could follow their example. He told the Bodhisatta to teach the other students while he was away. At the Bodhisatta's house, the teacher introduced himself to the Bodhisatta's father. After a proper greeting, the two sat down to talk, and the teacher said the Bodhisatta had died. His father clapped his hands and laughed and told the teacher he must be mistaken because his son was too young to die. When the teacher showed a bag of goat bones as proof, the father called him a liar, and everyone in the room laughed.

The teacher, now knowing beyond any doubt that what the Bodhisatta had said was true, asked what caused people in this family line to never die young. It was living a virtuous life, the father answered: never lying, avoiding bad people, giving alms, being faithful to their wives, and educating their children. Practicing righteousness, he added, brings happiness and good fortune. Pleased to have heard these

words, the teacher apologized for his ruse and asked the father to write this all down.

Later, when the Bodhisatta finished his lessons, he left Taxila with many followers.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother. After reaching enlightenment, the Buddha returned home to visit his family. His father told him that one time during the Buddha's pre-enlightenment years, when he was practicing extreme self-denial, some gods came and announced that he had died of starvation. But his father knew that his son would not die before reaching enlightenment, so he didn't believe them. After hearing this, the Buddha told his father this story so he knew that in the past he had also not believed his son was dead.

The teacher was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the Bodhisatta's followers were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Kukkuta Jataka (#448)

The Bodhisatta was once a fowl. He was the chief of a large flock, and over time a falcon ate all the birds but him. Wanting to eat the Bodhisatta too, the falcon needed to find a way to draw him out of his bamboo thicket. So he landed on a branch, apologized for his past sins, told the Bodhisatta he wanted to be his friend, and invited him to dine together at a place with lots of food. The Bodhisatta told him they could never be friends, and then he gave a sermon about not befriending those who are deceitful, selfish, and walk in evil ways for all the deities living in the forest to hear. He then threatened the falcon with harm if he didn't leave, so the falcon flew off to a new place.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The falcon was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about Devadatta's attempt to hire archers to kill him, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him in the past.

Matta-Kundali Jataka (#449)

The Bodhisatta was once a god in heaven. On earth before this, he was the son of a wealthy brahmin, and he died as a teenager. His father mourned his son's death deeply, choosing to walk around his son's ashes in the cemetery instead of doing his duties. The Bodhisatta saw his father's sorrow and wanted to console him, so he went down to the cemetery in the form of a young man and began crying loudly.

The father asked the Bodhisatta why he was lamenting, and he answered that he had lost the wheels to his golden chariot. The father said he would find him a new set of wheels, but the Bodhisatta said he wanted the moon and the sun to be his wheels. The father said he was a fool for wanting something that cannot be attained, but the Bodhisatta replied that at least he longed for something that can be seen; nobody sees the ghost of a dead person. The father understood the Bodhisatta's message and thanked him for quenching the pain of his desire and ending his grief. Then the Bodhisatta revealed his true identity and urged his father to be virtuous for the rest of his days. And this he did.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When a landowner's son died, he was so depressed that he stopped eating, bathing, and visiting the Buddha. One day the Buddha divined that this man was ready for a spiritual breakthrough. So the next morning, after completing his alms round, he went to the man's house and told him this story so

he understood that nothing can bring back what is lost, and thus grieving is pointless. Understanding the message, the father did have a breakthrough and overcame his sorrow.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Bilari-Kosiya Jataka (#450)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. In his earthly life before this, he was a wealthy merchant. After pondering his life, he built an alms hall and gave lots of money to the poor. And before he died and became Indra, he instructed his son to continue being charitable every day, and he did. And so did the next three generations of his sons. And for their virtue, these four men were born in heaven as Chandra, the moon god; Surya, the sun god; Matali, Indra's charioteer; and Pancasikha, one of heaven's top musicians. But the next in line, Bilarikosiya, was greedy: he destroyed the alms hall and beat the beggars away, keeping all the money for himself.

One day the Bodhisatta wondered if his family had carried on his almsgiving. When he saw that the tradition had been broken, he assembled his four heaven-dwelling descendants, and they went down to earth to teach the wicked Bilarikosiya the value of charity. Taking the forms of brahmins, they approached Bilarikosiya one by one asking for something to eat. At first he refused, claiming to have no food. But after they each recited a poem about the vileness of greed and the virtue of generosity, he relented and begrudgingly invited the five men into his house.

Bilarikosiya told his servant to give each of them some unhusked rice and send them out to cook it elsewhere, but they refused it. Then he sent them husked rice, but they said they wouldn't accept anything uncooked. So Bilarikosiya had them served a pot of cow food. They each ate a mouthful and let it stick in their throats, then pretended to die. Knowing

that other people would blame him for their deaths, Bilarikosiya was struck with fear. He ordered his servant to replace the food in their bowls with the finest food available, then he invited people into his house to see that he was guiltless. Bilarikosiya lied and told the assembled crowd that the brahmins were greedy and tried to eat so fast they choked and died. But at that moment, the five men rose and the Bodhisatta declared that Bilarikosiya was a liar and explained what had really happened, spitting out the cow food they had eaten as proof.

The crowd rebuked Bilarikosiya for his greed, asking if he would take all his wealth with him when he died. Then the Bodhisatta revealed their identities and they all rose into the air in a blaze of light to tell what great rewards they had received in heaven for their generosity and encouraged others to be like them.

Hearing that these five gods had come to earth to save him from hell, Bilarikosiya vowed to change, distributing alms and sharing his food, water, and even tooth-cleaner with others. And he did so until his final days; then he joined his ancestors in heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Bilarikosiya was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who was fully devoted to giving. He wouldn't even drink water unless he could share some of it. When the Buddha heard about this disciple's immense generosity, he told him this story so he and everyone else knew that in the

past this disciple had been a wicked man, not even giving anyone so much as a drop of oil from the tip of a blade of grass, and the Buddha had humbled and converted him back then.

The descendants of the Bodhisatta who came before Bilarikosiya were earlier births of Sariputta, Moggallana, Maha Kassapa, and Ananda, four of the Buddha's top disciples.

Cakka-Vaka Jataka (#451)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden goose. A greedy crow grew tired of eating dead elephants in the city and so flew off to see what kinds of food he could get in the forest. But he did not enjoy eating wild fruit, so he went to see what there was at the Ganges River. There he saw the Bodhisatta and his mate. They were exceptionally beautiful, and the crow figured if he ate the same foods as them, he could have their beautiful color. The crow greeted and complimented the Bodhisatta and his mate and asked where to find the fish that they ate, but they explained they only ate weeds. It was their virtuous behavior, never harming other creatures, that gave them their beauty; it had nothing to do with food. The crow decided this was not the life for him and flew back to the city's dunghill.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The crow was an earlier birth of a disciple of the Buddha who was greedy; during morning alms rounds, he only went to houses that served good meat. One day the Buddha summoned the greedy disciple and told him this story to help him overcome his craving.

The Bodhisatta's mate was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Bhuri-Panha Jataka (#452)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Bhuri-Panha Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. After four of King Vedeha's other advisors framed the Bodhisatta for stealing from the king, he fled to save his life. The goddess who lived in the royal parasol missed hearing the Bodhisatta preach and threatened to kill the king if he did not bring the Bodhisatta back. The terrified king sent men out to find the Bodhisatta, and when one of them did, he was covered in clay from having just finished working at a potter's wheel. The man, being from the faction of the king's chief advisor, insulted the Bodhisatta for having sunk so low despite supposedly possessing such wisdom, and the Bodhisatta shot back that he would restore his prosperity when the time was right. And, he added, the fact that he was needed to answer the goddess's riddles proved that wisdom is superior to riches.

The Bodhisatta rushed back to the palace without cleaning up. Seeing that the Bodhisatta arrived dirty with neither pomp nor entourage, the king knew he was not a thief or an enemy. To show respect and forgiveness, the king gave him a grand welcome. Then the king asked why he showed no anger, and the Bodhisatta answered that this is what wise men do; it would be foolish to cut off a tree branch that shades a man, and the king had been very good to not only him, but also his parents. But, after promising his loyalty, the

Bodhisatta rebuked the king's actions and implored him to think carefully before acting in the future.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another. Senaka was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha, and the other three advisors were earlier births of Potthapada, Ambattha, and Pilotika, three ascetics who respected the Buddha.

Maha-Mangala Jataka (#453)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived in the Himalayas, eating roots and fruits, and over time many people came to study with him. One rainy season his five hundred students went out of the mountains to get salt and seasoning, but the Bodhisatta remained behind. They stayed in the royal park and were shown great honor and hospitality.

One day a group of men had gathered with the king at the royal rest house, and one of them got up and left the room with the words, “This is a day of good omen.” One of the men asked what a good omen was, and another replied that it was the sight of something that appeared lucky, like a white bull, a pregnant woman, a red carp, or rice porridge. Some of the men agreed with him, but another dismissed his answer and said good omens are what you hear; for example, a man saying “full-grown,” “eat,” or “chew.” Some other men agreed with him, but another dismissed this answer and said good omens are what you touch, such as green grass, fresh cow dung, gold, or a clean robe. And some of the men agreed with this third opinion.

When the men couldn’t settle the matter, they went to ask the ascetics in the park, and they too didn’t know the answer. But they said their master would know, so they all returned to the Himalayas to ask him. The Bodhisatta described the true nature of good omens, which included honoring the kind-hearted, being modest among one’s friends, being generous, having a friendly wife of similar age who bears many children, spreading joy, and striving for virtuous living.

A week later, the ascetics went back to the city to share this wisdom.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time a group of men were discussing what a good omen was; whether it was something a person sees, hears, or touches. The group of men debated the three proposals, but could not decide, and even the gods in heaven couldn't agree on an answer. So Indra, king of the gods, went to ask the Buddha to solve the question, and he recited the thirty-eight great omens for all the world to hear, and all of heaven and earth was impressed.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing this as an example of the Buddha's boundless greatness, he told them that explaining omens was no marvel since he possessed perfect wisdom. It was more impressive, he said, that he settled a similar debate in the past before he had reached enlightenment and told them this story.

The ascetics studying with the Bodhisatta were earlier births of the Buddha's followers. The senior among them who asked the Bodhisatta the question about omens was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Ghata Jataka (#454)

The Bodhisatta was once co-king, along with eight of his brothers, over all of India. On the day his mother, a princess, was born, brahmins foretold that a son of hers would someday destroy the kingdom and the entire royal lineage. But the king loved his daughter and chose not to kill her, instead leaving any decision about her fate to his two sons when they were older. After the king died and the sons became king and viceroy, they decided that instead of killing their sister, they would imprison her in a tower and not let her marry. A husband-and-wife team of servants was put in charge of caring for and guarding her.

At this time, the brother of a king from a nearby realm was caught making use of the royal harem and fled to the kingdom where the Bodhisatta's mother lived, and he was welcomed with great honor. When he heard about the princess banished to the tower, he fell in love immediately, sight unseen. And when the princess saw him walking outside, she fell in love at first sight. This man bribed the princess's lady-in-waiting to arrange a meeting, and the two became lovers. When the princess became pregnant, her two brothers questioned the lady-in-waiting, and she told them the truth. Still unwilling to execute their sister, they let the pair marry and live together in a village: any girls born to them would be spared, while boys would be killed. In the end, a daughter was born, and everyone was happy.

Soon the princess was pregnant again, and this time so was her lady-in-waiting. The princess bore a son, and on the same

day, her lady-in-waiting had a daughter; so they swapped children. And over the years, the princess bore nine more sons, and each time swapped them with a daughter born at the same time to her lady-in-waiting—and the two couples never told another soul about their arrangement. The second to last son was the Bodhisatta.

The ten boys grew big and strong and became wicked, notorious thieves. The king repeatedly rebuked the servant he thought was the boys' father. Fearful that the king might kill him, the servant eventually confessed that they were the princess's sons, not his. Struck with fear, the king asked his advisors how to execute the brothers, and they decided to host a wrestling match and seize them when they came to compete.

The brothers arrived wearing bright robes, earrings, floral wreaths, and perfume; all of which they stole from shops while they walked to the match. When the contest began, the second oldest of the brothers stepped into the ring and threw a thick strap around his opponent, lifted him up, and smashed him dead on the ground. Another wrestler jumped into the ring and had his eyes gouged out before being smashed to death. Before this second man died, he prayed to be reborn as a goblin in order to one day get revenge, and his wish was granted.

When the king called out to his men to seize the brothers, the eldest, Vasudeva, threw a disk and cut off the king and his brother's heads. The wicked brothers took over their kingdom and promptly set out with great success to conquer

the whole of India, killing sixty-three thousand kings. But they were unable to vanquish one final city. It was along the sea, and each time they approached, it magically rose into the air and landed on an island, returning to the shore after its foes were gone. Not knowing what to do, they asked a wise ascetic who told them the city was inhabited by goblins, and one, in the form of a donkey, was always on watch. When invaders came, he brayed a warning and the city would move. To conquer the city, they must plead with the donkey to help them.

The brothers returned to the goblin city and fell at the donkey's feet, begging it not to bray when they came to invade. He answered that he couldn't stop himself from braying, but advised them to insert great iron posts and plows into the ground, and when the city began to rise, throw an iron chain fastened to the plows over the posts: the city would be unable to move. The donkey stayed quiet until the brothers had finished working, and only then brayed the warning. The city remained in place and the brothers stormed in, killed the king, and finally ruled all of India.

The brothers divided India into ten shares before they remembered their sister. But instead of re-dividing their domain into eleven shares, the youngest brother said he preferred being a businessman to being a king and they could give his share to her, as long as they sent him his tax profits every year. They all agreed.

The nine kings ruled together for ages (at that time, humans lived for twenty thousand years) and had many children.

When a beloved son of King Vasudeva died, he was overcome with grief and lay half-dead from neglect on his bed. The Bodhisatta realized that only he could restore his brother's health, so he roamed the city gazing up at the sky and crying out, "Give me a hare! Give me a hare!" People noticed that one of their kings had gone crazy, and when King Vasudeva was told about it by one of his courtiers, he got up quickly and confronted the Bodhisatta, asking what he was doing and who had taken his hare. But the Bodhisatta did not reply, he just kept repeating his cries into the night. King Vasudeva promised to get his brother any sort of hare he desired: gold, silver, brass, jewel, shell, stone, or coral. Then the Bodhisatta answered that he wanted the hare that lived on the moon, and he called out to the gods to grant his wish. King Vasudeva now believed his brother really was crazy and told him he would die if he asked the gods for such a thing.

Hearing this advice, the Bodhisatta ceased his act and said, "My brother, if I will die by asking for something impossible, then why do you mourn for your dead son?" Since nothing—no mystical charms, no magical roots, and no amount of money—could bring him back to life, mourning was pointless. The king, accepting this wisdom, thanked the Bodhisatta for quenching his grief.

Sometime later, the brothers' sons went to test the wise ascetic who had advised their fathers about the floating city. They dressed up a young boy with a pillow around his stomach to make him appear pregnant and asked the ascetic when this woman would give birth. At that moment, the ascetic divined that all ten brothers would die soon, and that

he himself was going to die that very day. He told the sons that in seven days the “pregnant” boy would expel a knot of acacia wood, and even though it would be burnt to ash and tossed into the river, that knot would destroy the royal lineage. The boys decided that this ludicrous answer proved the ascetic was a fraud, so they killed him.

When the brothers heard what their sons had done, they were frightened. They had guards keep watch over the boy, and, as predicted, he passed a knot of acacia wood out of his belly. They burnt it and threw it into the river, and as the ashes floated downstream they stuck to the shore near the palace’s back gate. A cattail plant grew from the clump.

One day the brothers went out of the palace’s back gate to swim and relax by the river. They started to wrestle, and things escalated. One of the brothers picked a leaf off the cattail, and it magically transformed into a club made of acacia wood, and he started to hit people with it. The other brothers did the same thing, and they began to beat each other to death. The eldest two brothers, their sister, and the royal chaplain fled in a chariot and were the only ones to survive.

These four came to the forest where the murdered wrestler had been reborn as a goblin; and he, knowing that his killer was approaching, magically created a village. When they arrived, the goblin took the form of a wrestler and jumped around, asking who wanted to fight. The second oldest brother ignored his elder’s advice and accepted the challenge. But as soon as he stepped into the ring, the goblin

seized him in his hand and devoured him up like a radish bulb.

King Vasudeva, his sister, and the chaplain fled the forest, riding all night and reaching a frontier village at sunrise. King Vasudeva lay down under a bush outside the village and sent his sister and the chaplain to get food. A hunter named Jara ("Old Age") saw the bush shaking and, assuming there was a wild boar in it, threw his spear, piercing the king's foot and putting him in great pain. When he heard the king's cries, the hunter took off in fear. But the king told him to come back and not be afraid. He asked the hunter to bandage his wound, and then let him go. Knowing the adage that anyone wounded by old age is sure to die, King Vasudeva gave his sister some advice for living out the rest of her life and sent her away. He died immediately after: the prophecy from his grandfather's time had come true.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When a landowner's son died, he was so depressed that he stopped eating, bathing, and visiting the Buddha. One day the Buddha divined that this man was ready for a spiritual breakthrough. So the next morning, after completing his alms round, he went to the man's house and told him this story so he understood that nothing can bring back what is lost, and thus grieving is pointless. Understanding the message, the father did have a breakthrough and overcame his sorrow.

King Vasudeva and the courtier who told him about his brother acting crazy were earlier births of Sariputta and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mati-Posaka Jataka (#455)

The Bodhisatta was once an elephant. He lived in the Himalayas, and a herd of eighty thousand followed him as their leader. But whenever he asked other elephants to deliver wild fruit he had gathered to his blind mother, they always ate it themselves. So he left the herd with his mother and went to live in a cave where he could care for her full-time.

One day the Bodhisatta heard a man crying in the forest and went to help. He said he'd been lost for seven days, so the Bodhisatta told him to climb on his back, and he carried him out of the forest where he could find his way back to the city.

At that time, the king's state elephant had died, and the king announced to his subjects that they should inform him if they knew of any elephant fit for a king. The forester told the king about the magnificent white elephant that had saved him, and said he could lead the king's mahouts to capture it.

The king sent the forester with a large group of men, and they found the Bodhisatta feeding at a lake. Though he had the strength to defeat an entire army, the Bodhisatta chose to neither fight nor flee so as to not damage his virtue. He was seized and led down to the city where the king had decorated the streets and prepared a special stable. The Bodhisatta was served all manner of fine food, but he declared, "Without my mother, I will eat nothing." The king was moved by this devotion and set the Bodhisatta free. He walked back home and continued to care for his mother.

In honor of the Bodhisatta, the king had a stone image of his likeness made for worship and created an annual elephant festival. The king also built a town near the Bodhisatta's lake so he could provide him with food. And after his mother died, the Bodhisatta went to a monastery to live with its five hundred ascetics, and the king also supported them.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The parents of one of the Buddha's disciples had been reluctant to let their son adopt a religious life, but he begged them and they agreed. After five years, he fully mastered dharma, so he went out to live alone and meditate in the forest to reach spiritual insight. But after twelve years of striving, he still had not achieved it. One day another disciple visited him at his hut and told him that his parents had fallen into ruin. With no children around to protect them, their servants and workers had stolen everything, and they were now homeless beggars, clothed in rags. The son began to cry, and realizing he had labored in vain for the past twelve years, he decided to leave the sangha and return home to care for his parents.

The depressed disciple went to listen to the Buddha preach one last time before returning home. The Buddha divined this disciple's situation and made his morning talk about the virtues of parents. Listening to the sermon, the son realized that, though it would be difficult, he could remain a disciple and still support his parents, and he resolved to do so. He took up abode near their hut, and from then on he made two

daily alms rounds: one for them and a second for himself. He usually got little food for himself, and some days he got none, so he grew pale and thin.

When some other disciples learned what he was doing, they told him that sharing alms with people who are not disciples was an offense, and they reported him to the Buddha. The accused disciple was summoned back to the monastery, where he admitted sharing the alms he collected with his parents. But, to the surprise of the other disciples, the Buddha praised the caring son instead of rebuking him. He then told this story to explain that caring for others was always a good thing, and that in the past he himself had once made a great sacrifice in support of his needy mother by not eating.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the elephant mother was an earlier birth of the Buddha's birth mother.

Junha Jataka (#456)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. One dark night when he was a prince off studying in Taxila, he accidentally bumped into a brahmin priest, knocking him down and breaking his alms bowl. The Bodhisatta apologized and said he had no money to give him then, but if the priest ever came to his kingdom, he could get some.

Not long after, the Bodhisatta's father abdicated and gave him the crown. When the priest heard about it, he traveled to see the Bodhisatta and get compensation for his broken bowl and spilled food. As the Bodhisatta rode his elephant around the city in a solemn procession, the priest called out "Victory to the king!" but the Bodhisatta did not recognize or acknowledge him. So the priest yelled that he had come with cause and that priests should not be ignored. Hearing this, the Bodhisatta turned his elephant around to go ask what he wanted. The priest explained who he was and asked for five villages, one hundred slave girls, seven hundred cattle, more than one thousand gold ornaments, and two wives of status equal to him. The Bodhisatta did remember the priest and gave him all that he asked for.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The brahmin priest was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. For twenty years, various people served as the Buddha's personal attendant, but one day the Buddha asked his disciples to choose one of them to look after him full-time. Ananda was nominated, and he said he

would do it under eight conditions, four negative and four positive. “I will attend to the Buddha if he will not give me any of his robes, not give me any of his food, not allow me to sleep in his private chamber, and not bring me to places he is invited; but will go with me when I am invited somewhere, will let me introduce foreigners who come to visit, will allow me to discuss my doubts when they arise, and will repeat his teachings if I miss them because I am away.” The Buddha agreed to them all, and Ananda served him faithfully for the next twenty-five years, until the Buddha entered nirvana.

After Ananda was chosen, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the matter and he told them this story so they knew that he had also granted wishes to Ananda in the past.

Dhamma Jataka (#457)

The Bodhisatta was once a god in heaven. His name was Dhamma ("Right"), and after the evening meal on holy days, he rode around the world with a multitude of nymphs in his celestial chariot telling people they would be destined for heaven if they did good deeds (like taking care of their parents) and avoided evil (such as killing living creatures). While the Bodhisatta promoted righteousness, another god, Adhamma ("Wrong"), went out promoting killing and other evildoing.

One day these two gods' chariots met in the air, and the Bodhisatta, proclaiming his virtue, told Adhamma to move aside and give him the right of way. When Adhamma refused, he plunged head-first toward the earth, which opened up to send him to the deepest hell.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Adhamma was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Devadatta's wickedness had caused the earth to swallow him up and he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also been cast to hell for challenging his moral authority in the past.

The followers of the Bodhisatta and Adhamma were earlier births of the followers of the Buddha and Devadatta.

Udaya Jataka (#458)

The Bodhisatta was once a king, and then Indra, king of the gods, in back-to-back lives. As a prince, he was virtuous and wise without an iota of sin in his heart and never thought of women, not even in his dreams. His father wanted to hand over the crown to the Bodhisatta, but he was not interested in being king. After repeated pleas, the Bodhisatta had a golden statue of a woman made and told his parents he would become king only if they found him a wife as beautiful as it. They sent the statue out across India, but no match was found. Then the Bodhisatta's parents noticed that his half-sister, born to another of the king's consorts, was even more beautiful than the statue, and they forced the two to wed.

Though the Bodhisatta and his queen resided together, they lived a virtuous, celibate life. They made a vow that whichever of them died first would come down from heaven and tell the other about it.

When the Bodhisatta was seven hundred years old, he died and became Indra. For the first seven days (equal to seven hundred earth years) of his celestial life the Bodhisatta could not remember the past. But after this week had passed, his memories returned and he went down to earth to keep his promise, and also to test his wife with a temptation of riches.

During the night, when his wife was alone meditating in her palace, the Bodhisatta appeared before her, claiming to be a magical goblin, and offered a golden bowl full of gold coins if he could sleep with her that night. She told him to get out,

adding that she had no interest in relations with anyone; goblins, gods, or men. The Bodhisatta tried again the next night with a silver bowl, and this time she did not speak, hoping this would show her resolve and he would not return. He left, but came back again the third night with an iron bowl. This time she asked why he offered less each time, and the Bodhisatta said it was because her beauty fades with age. However, he added, the beauty of gods in heaven grows with time, and by living a virtuous life full of generosity and free of sin she would become one. The Bodhisatta then revealed himself, and his wife broke down with tears of happiness at seeing her beloved husband. He urged her to remain righteous, and then he returned to heaven.

The next morning, his wife left the palace to live as an ascetic. When she died, she was reborn in heaven as the Bodhisatta's servant.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man of noble birth gave up his easy life to become a disciple of the Buddha and was completely dedicated to dharma. One day during an alms round he met a beautiful woman and fell in love at first sight. Overcome by passion, he became so depressed that he stopped cutting his hair and nails and cleaning his robes, became thin and weak with yellow skin and veins sticking out of his body, and no longer took joy in his life of solitude.

When the Buddha found out about his problem, he told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past he himself had

lived with a woman as beautiful as a heavenly nymph for seven hundred years and didn't once look at her with desire. Hearing this, the disciple overcame his lust and regained his health.

The Bodhisatta's wife was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Paniya Jataka (#459)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. Two farmers each took water with them while out working in their fields. One of the men, while taking a break, drank the other's water in order to conserve his own. But at the end of the day, he was overcome with grief for having stolen the water. He meditated on the theft and reached enlightenment as a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others). Magically, he was suddenly wearing a red robe and an alms bowl hung from his shoulder. He rose into the air and gave his friend a sermon, then flew to Nandamula Cave deep in the Himalayas.

Elsewhere, a villager sitting in a market saw a very beautiful woman approaching and was aroused. He felt shame about this, and as he thought about his desire, he reached enlightenment as a private Buddha. He rose into the air, gave a sermon to those around him, and then flew off to the same cave.

A father and son traveling together came to a forest where thieves were known to kidnap pairs of travelers, such as brothers or fathers and sons, so they could keep one and send the other back for a ransom. When he saw thieves approaching, the father told his son to act like they didn't know each other, and thanks to this little deception, the thieves let them pass. That evening, safely out of the forest, the son felt guilty about his lie, and while thinking about what he had done, he reached enlightenment as a private

Buddha. He lectured his father while floating in the air, and then flew off to the cave.

A tax collector prohibited slaughtering animals in his village, but when it was time for an important local ceremony to appease goblins, the people came and asked for permission to slay deer, pigs, fish, and other animals. Because it was an ancient tradition, the man agreed. But when he saw all the carcasses, he felt deep regret. As he repented for his mistake, he reached enlightenment as a private Buddha. He rose into the air, gave a sermon, and flew off to the cave.

A tax collector in a different village prohibited the sale of strong alcohol. But when it came time to celebrate an ancient drinking festival, he granted a waiver. Things got rowdy and drunken fighting led to many broken bones and ripped-off ears. Seeing the widespread misery he had caused, the tax collector was overcome with remorse, and he reached enlightenment as a private Buddha. He gave an airborne sermon and flew off to the cave.

Sometime later, these five private Buddhas went to the gate of the Bodhisatta's palace asking for alms. The king was impressed by their demeanor and invited them in for a meal. Hearing their stories of how they reached enlightenment inspired the Bodhisatta, and he stopped eating fancy food and spending time with his wives and began meditating. He had never before in his life been so happy, and so, despite his chief queen trying to change his mind and the citizens crying in sorrow, he announced that he was giving up the throne to

live as an ascetic. He rose into the air, delivered a sermon, and flew off to the same Himalayan cave.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred friends had heard the Buddha discuss dharma, and they renounced the world together to become his disciples. One night thoughts of desire filled their heads, and the Buddha knew about it, so he lectured them, explaining that there is no such thing as a petty sin. Every wrong thought, he said, no matter how small, must be considered. Then he told them this story as an example of how contemplating small sins can lead to great attainment. When the Buddha was finished, all five hundred disciples became arahants.

The chief queen was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife.

Yuvanjaya Jataka (#460)

The Bodhisatta was once a crown prince, the eldest of over one thousand sons. Early one morning as he rode his chariot to the royal park, he saw water drops hanging like pearls from blades of grass, spiderwebs, and other things, and he asked his charioteer what these were. He answered that it's called dew and it comes during cold weather.

After relaxing at the park for the day, the Bodhisatta returned home and saw that the dew was gone. Again he asked his charioteer about it, and learned that as the sun rises higher in the sky the dewdrops evaporate. This distressed the Bodhisatta because he realized life was impermanent like a dewdrop. He decided to live as an ascetic so he wouldn't need to worry about disease, old age, and death.

Back at the palace, he asked his parents for permission to renounce the world. They tried hard to dissuade him, promising to give him anything he desired and telling him they would miss him. But he insisted, and his father reluctantly agreed. His youngest brother joined him, and they went to the Himalayas where they built a hut and lived on fruits and roots from the forest.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the magnificence of his Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment. He told them this

story so they knew that he had also forsaken the throne for an austere religious life in the past.

The brother who joined him was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the king and queen were earlier births of the Buddha's parents.

Dasaratha Jataka (#461)

The Bodhisatta was once a crown prince. He had a younger brother and sister. When their mother died, their father, a righteous and wise king, picked another of his sixteen thousand wives to be the new queen consort, and they had a son. The king loved this boy, the Bodhisatta's half-brother, very much and so granted his queen a wish. She waited seven years to claim it, and then asked that when the time came he appoint her son as king instead of the Bodhisatta. This angered the king, and he refused her request. Day after day she asked, and the king, knowing that women are inherently wicked, worried that she would scheme to get the Bodhisatta killed through a forged letter or a bribe. So the king told both his sons they must leave the palace and stay away for twelve years—this being how much longer his fortune-tellers predicted he would live—before returning to rule. Their sister joined them, and all three left with tears of sadness. They went to the Himalayas and lived on wild fruits, the two younger siblings taking care of the elder Bodhisatta.

Saddened from missing his children, the king died after just nine years. The queen ordered the royal umbrella raised over her son, but the palace advisors were loyal, and they refused. Her son, who was also honorable, said he would go get the Bodhisatta so he could take the throne as intended. In the company of a large army, he took the five royal emblems (crown, umbrella, sword, slippers, and fan) and went into the forest, arriving when the Bodhisatta's brother and sister were away gathering food. Though his half-brother wept as he told of his father's death, the Bodhisatta did not show any

emotion when he heard about it. But he knew that his younger siblings lacked his all-comprehending wisdom and they would be unable to bear the pain, so when they returned, he ordered them to stand in a pond. And, as expected, they fainted into the water when they heard the news. Then they wept and wailed together.

Their half-brother asked the Bodhisatta why he did not grieve. He explained that all things are impermanent and death is inevitable; and since sorrow cannot bring the dead back to life, it serves no purpose. Everyone who heard the Bodhisatta speak such wisdom suddenly lost their grief.

After this, the Bodhisatta refused to return and be king because his father had told him to stay away for twelve years. He told his siblings to go and administer the kingdom until he returned, but they respectfully refused. So the Bodhisatta gave them his straw slippers, and these sat on the throne, ruling during the three-year interim. If someone judged a case incorrectly, the slippers beat upon each other until the decision was changed to the right one.

Finally, his exile complete, the Bodhisatta returned to the city. He made his sister his queen and reigned in righteousness for sixteen thousand years.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day the Buddha divined that a certain landowner, who was so depressed over the death of his father that he stopped doing all his duties, was ready for a spiritual

breakthrough. So after completing his morning alms round, the Buddha went to the man's house and told him this story to teach him that all things are impermanent and thus sorrow is pointless. The man did understand and reached a breakthrough.

The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother. His sister and half-brother were earlier births of the Buddha's wife and Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Samvara Jataka (#462)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. He was assigned to teach Prince Samvara, the youngest of the king's one hundred sons. When the princes finished their education, each with his own teacher, the king gave them a province to rule. The Bodhisatta, however, had devised a plan for his student to take the throne when the king died, and he told Prince Samvara to ask to stay at home rather than be sent away. The king was pleased with his request and agreed. Then the Bodhisatta told the prince to grow fruits and flowers to give to the powerful men of the city, give money for food to the citizens, distribute food to the servants and soldiers in the palace, assign lodging for messengers from other countries, and manage the taxes for merchants. Following this advice, Prince Samvara was loved by all.

When the king was near death, his council of advisors asked him who he wanted to replace him. The king left the decision to them because all his sons were worthy of the throne. When the time came, the assistants unanimously chose Prince Samvara. Everyone was happy, except for his ninety-nine brothers. They all agreed that their eldest should be the king and they surrounded the city, demanding King Samvara resign or fight. Again taking the advice of the Bodhisatta, King Samvara responded that he would not fight, and he divided the royal treasure into one hundred portions and sent ninety-nine of them to his brothers. With this gesture, the brothers all changed their minds about attacking. They accepted Samvara as king, gave back the treasure, and, after a short visit, returned to their provinces.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples spent a rainy season in the forest. He built a leaf hut and eagerly began to meditate. But after three months he had no success reaching insight, so he quit trying and returned to the monastery, content to progress no further than the moderate level of understanding he had already achieved. King Samvara was an earlier birth of this quitter disciple, and when the Buddha learned that he had given up on the quest for salvation, he told him this story so he knew that with the Buddha's guidance he had reached his goal in a previous life and would be motivated to continue striving in this one.

The eldest prince was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the other princes were earlier births of other elder disciples. The Buddha's lay followers were earlier births of the provincial subjects of those princes.

Supparaka Jataka (#463)

The Bodhisatta was once a sailor. He was a master of the seas, and no ship that he helmed had ever come to harm. But over time, the exposure to saltwater robbed him of his vision, and he had to retire. He asked the king for work and was appointed as a royal appraiser.

One day an elephant was brought to the palace. The Bodhisatta passed his hand over its body and declared that it was not worthy of being a state elephant because its mother had given birth while standing up, and when the baby dropped to the ground its hind feet were damaged. The people who had brought the elephant admitted this was true, and the pleased king gave the Bodhisatta eight coins. Later, the Bodhisatta rejected a chariot because it was made from a hollow tree; a precious rug because a rat had bitten a hole in it; and a horse because its mother died on the day it was born, and without her milk it did not grow properly. In all cases, the king gave the Bodhisatta eight coins. Annoyed by the king's stinginess, the Bodhisatta quit his job.

When some merchants arranged a ship for a trade voyage, they asked the Bodhisatta to captain it because even though he was blind, there was no one wiser and more skillful at sea. He refused at first, but after the men persisted, the Bodhisatta agreed to go.

They sailed uneventfully for a week, then unseasonable winds arose and blew the ship astray over rough seas. They arrived at a primeval sea where fish with bodies like men and

sharp razor-like snouts dove in and out of the water. The Bodhisatta did not tell them the sea was full of diamonds because if they knew they would overload and sink the ship through their greed. But he lowered a net as though he were fishing and brought in a haul of diamonds, throwing wares with little value overboard to make space.

Sailing on, they arrived at a sea that radiated like a blazing bonfire and was full of gold. Next, they came to a sea that gleamed like milk and had an abundance of silver. Then a sea like a stretch of green kusha grass with many emeralds, and another like a bamboo grove rich with coral. The merchants asked about all these enchanted seas, but for safety's sake, the Bodhisatta never mentioned any of their riches. He did, though, secretly haul in a load from each and stored them on board.

After voyaging for four months, they reached a sea like a saucer, where the water got sucked away to the sides, causing a loud roar and steep precipices all around them. The Bodhisatta told the terrified merchants there was no return from this sea; any ship entering it would sink, and they cried out like those burning in the depths of hell. The Bodhisatta knew he could only save the ship and all seven hundred lives on board by declaring an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result), so he ordered the merchants to quickly bathe him in scented water, prepare a full bowl, and dress him in new clothes. When this was done, the Bodhisatta stood at the front of the ship and declared his great virtue—never having taken the life of any living creature—and asked

that the ship return to safety if his vow was true. Magically, the ship sailed back to their home port in a single day.

Once they were back, the Bodhisatta shared the riches he had collected with all the men so they never needed to travel the seas again, and he preached to them about living a good life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time when the Buddha heard some of his disciples praising his perfect wisdom, he told them this story so they knew that even in the past, when he had less-developed knowledge, he was still exceptionally wise.

The merchants were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Culla-Kunala Jataka (#464)

This past-life story is one of eight told by the Bodhisatta in the Kunala Jataka (#536) as examples of why men should never trust women.

The Bodhisatta was once a king. His beloved queen consort took a palace servant as a lover. After the Bodhisatta fell asleep, she would climb out the window to meet him; then when she returned, she'd wash up and go back to bed. One night the Bodhisatta noticed her body was cold under the covers, and he got suspicious. The next night he pretended to fall asleep, followed her when she left, and saw her getting intimate with the servant.

The next day, the Bodhisatta summoned the queen and exposed her affair in front of his advisors. Though her offense deserved death, mutilation, or imprisonment, because all women are sinners the Bodhisatta just stripped her of her high rank and chose another chief queen.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred new disciples of the Buddha felt dissatisfied. They had ordained following a quarrel between the Buddha's Sakya clan and a neighboring clan over who should get water for their crops after their shared dam ran low at the end of the dry season. The Buddha convinced everyone to settle their dispute peacefully. Then, as an act of atonement for planning to go to war, both clans sent two hundred fifty princes to become disciples. But these men had ordained out

of respect for the Buddha, not a desire for spiritual growth, and feelings for their former wives led to discontent. To help them overcome their dissatisfaction, the Buddha told them about a momentous sermon on the inherent wickedness of women he had given when he was a cuckoo in an earlier birth, and the sermon included this particular story.

Bhadda-Sala Jataka (#465)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. The king wanted a new palace that would impress everyone who saw it, and he came up with the idea of building the first-ever palace supported by a single pillar. He sent his builders off to the forest to find a tree strong and straight enough to bear the weight. They found many trees that would work, but the roads were too rough to transport any of them back to the city, so the king permitted them to take a tree out of his royal park. They chose the Bodhisatta's home, a massive sal tree known as the Lucky Tree, that was worshipped by many people, including the royal family. The builders told the king this was the perfect tree, and really wanting his special palace, he said they could take it. They decorated the tree with flowers and performed a ceremony informing the spirits that they were going to cut the tree down and they needed to find a new home.

Upset by this, the Bodhisatta went to the king's bedchamber at midnight, filling the room with the light of his divine splendor. He stood weeping next to the king's pillow and explained that he had dwelled in that tree for sixty thousand years, and he could not leave—when the tree dies, so does he. But the king was determined to take it and would not change his mind. So the Bodhisatta requested that it be cut down in pieces rather than felled whole from below so that the fall would not knock over any surrounding trees, where his children lived. This concern for his family impressed the king, and he had a change of heart, so the Bodhisatta's tree was spared.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, always provided food for the Buddha's disciples, but they did not stay and eat at the palace because the people there were not friendly. When the king found out that they went to eat at their friends' homes, he decided to marry a woman from the Buddha's Sakya clan in order to build closer relations with the Buddha and his disciples. However, the Sakya clan was arrogant and insular and did not want to marry into a relationship with the king; but because he was their leader, a request like this could not be refused without consequences. So they sent a daughter of a nobleman born to a slave woman and told King Pasenadi she was noble.

Knowing the Sakya clan's reputation, the king's assistants wanted to be sure the woman they were taking back was truly noble-born. So the family faked eating a meal together as proof. This was done by having what was claimed to be a very important letter delivered to the father at the start of the meal, so after taking just one bite he sat at the table reading rather than eating. This made it appear that he had dined with his daughter, but since he didn't actually eat, he didn't degrade himself with a slave.

King Pasenadi truly loved his new consort and made her his chief queen. Soon a son was born and he grew up receiving all the advantages a prince deserved, except he did not get gifts from his maternal grandfather's family. Not wanting her son to know about her life, his mother lied and told him they

sent nothing because they lived very far away. Once he grew up, he decided to visit his other family; and though she tried, his mother could not stop him.

Upon learning the prince was coming, the Sakya clan sent all their noble children younger than him away to the countryside so nobody would need to bow down in respect to someone born from a slave. A few days later, when the prince was leaving, one of his soldiers overheard a Sakya slave saying the prince's mother had been a slave. Now knowing how the Sakyas had disrespected both his mother and him, the prince vowed to destroy them when he became king.

When King Pasenadi heard the news about his wife, he was furious and gave her and his son nothing more than he gave to his other slaves. But a few days later, the Buddha, while admitting that his clan did wrong, explained to the king that his queen and son were children of royal men and the mother's birth was irrelevant. The king changed his mind and restored their honor.

The wife of King Pasenadi's commander-in-chief had never borne him a son, so he sent her back to her family. Accepting her fate, she went to pay respect to the Buddha before departing, and he told her not to go. Elated by his counsel, she went home and told her husband. The commander-in-chief figured the Buddha must have a good reason for it and let her stay. Soon after, she got pregnant. She told her husband she wanted to bathe in and drink the holy water

used for ceremonial sprinkling by the families of kings from another clan, so he took her to the well in his chariot.

Once there, the commander-in-chief fought off the guards and broke through the iron net, and they both bathed in the holy water before fleeing the city. Furious about this egregious violation, five hundred kings ignored the warning from their spiritual advisor that the commander-in-chief would slay them all and chased after him in their chariots. The commander-in-chief waited for all five hundred chariots to line up just right; then he shot an arrow with his special bow, one thousand times stronger than a regular bow, and it passed through all five hundred kings right at the point where they fastened their belts. The kings did not notice their injuries and continued pursuit until the commander-in-chief stopped his chariot and shouted at them that they were already dead. Still standing and feeling fine, the kings thought he was crazy. But he told them to loosen one man's belt, and upon doing so the man fell over dead. The commander-in-chief told the other men to go home and set their affairs in order before taking off their armor, and they all did, dying when they were ready.

Over time, the commander-in-chief's wife gave birth to twin boys sixteen times. All thirty-two of their sons grew up to be heroic and perfect in every way.

One day some men who lost a court case pleaded with the commander-in-chief to help them because they felt that the judges were corrupt. He looked into the matter and found that the judges really were corrupt, so he judged the men's

case himself and sided with them. The city's citizens applauded his intervention, and when King Pasenadi learned about it, he put the commander-in-chief in charge of the court system. But the judges lost so much money by not being able to take bribes that they told the king his commander-in-chief was planning to overthrow him. Believing this lie, the king decided he must kill him. He hired some men to pillage towns in a border region and sent his commander-in-chief and all thirty-two of his sons to capture these bandits. King Pasenadi also ordered some of his soldiers to behead the commander-in-chief and his sons while they were away; and they did.

When she learned of her husband and sons' executions, the commander-in-chief's wise wife summoned all thirty-two daughters-in-law and told them not to be angry or upset. Though their husbands were pure and innocent now, this must have resulted from misdeeds in their former lives. Seeking revenge would be a sin even worse than the king's. King Pasenadi's spies reported this meeting to him, and after hearing about their reaction he was overcome with remorse. The king went to see the Buddha, and while he was away from the palace, his new commander-in-chief, angry about the assassination, pulled a coup and put the half-slave prince on the throne. King Pasenadi vowed to reclaim his kingship and set out for his city, hoping to muster some troops. He arrived after the gates had been closed for the evening and had to spend the night in a shed. Weak from traveling far and fast in the sun and wind, he died of exposure that night.

The new king had never forgotten his grudge against the Sakya clan for their disrespect, and now he could finally get revenge. He set out with a large army to their territory. The Buddha divined what was happening and wanted to save his clan. He went to the border and sat under a small tree that provided little shade. When the king came to this area, he stopped to greet the Buddha and asked why he didn't sit under the large, shady banyan tree nearby. The Buddha answered that the shade of his family kept him cool. The king understood this meant the Buddha was there to protect his clan, so he turned around. The king later set out on the warpath twice more, and both times the Buddha sat under the same tree, causing the king to back down.

After stopping the king's rampage for the third time, the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about how great he was for protecting his clan. He told them this story so they knew that he had also done good things for his family in the past.

Later, the king set out a fourth time hoping to destroy the Sakya clan. This time the Buddha decided that because of his clan's sins, he would not protect them anymore. The king's army slayed everyone they met, starting with babies, then returned to the palace.

The king building the palace was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the deities in the other trees were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Samudda-Vanija Jataka (#466)

The Bodhisatta was once a carpenter. He lived in a village of one thousand carpenter families, who took deposits for beds, houses, and other things, and then didn't make them. Because they kept the money, they were constantly harassed by their creditors, so they built a ship and sailed away in the middle of the night.

Eventually they reached an island out in the middle of the sea, where rice, sugarcane, coconut, and all manner of fruits grew wild. Fearful of demons, seven brave men armed themselves and explored the island before the others came ashore. As they walked, they heard a man singing and went to find him. This castaway, living on the island in pure bliss, went about naked with long hair and a beard, and when the carpenters first saw him, they feared he was a goblin and drew their bows. The castaway yelled out that he was a man, not a goblin, and begged them to spare his life.

The castaway told them the island was a perfect paradise and nobody needed to work for a living because everything they needed grew wild. Life here, he thought, was better than in India. The carpenters asked if there was anything to worry about, and the castaway told them there was only one danger: the demons who haunted the island hated seeing excrement, so after relieving themselves, everybody must always bury their waste.

The families all took up residence on the island and grew stout and sturdy. After a while, they began to distill liquor

from sugarcane juice, and they sang, danced, and played games. In their drunken state, many people fouled the island by forgetting to bury their feces.

The demons were furious and decided to flood their island on the next full moon and kill all the humans living there. One compassionate demon did not want to see anybody die, so that evening he arose in the north sky in a blaze of light and warned the carpenters they must flee the island in the next two weeks. Rejecting his comrade's righteousness and wanting the humans dead, another demon appeared in the south sky telling the carpenters that the god who had just spoken to them moments earlier was a liar and was trying to trick them into leaving. They had nothing to worry about, he assured them.

The carpenters had two leaders among them. Five hundred families followed the Bodhisatta, who was wise and good, while the other families stood behind a foolish and greedy man. After the second demon departed, the foolish leader stood up and declared there was nothing to fear and they should believe the demon from the south. Their home was a paradise, and they would not find a better one. The Bodhisatta, on the other hand, said they should not take any chances and should build a ship to be prepared, just in case the flood did come. His followers agreed and began construction, while the other five hundred families mocked them.

On the day of the full moon, the Bodhisatta's followers stood in their ship with all their belongings packed aboard. As the

moon rose in the sky, the water rose over the island; so the Bodhisatta set sail. Even as the water reached knee-deep, the followers of the fool remained convinced that the waves would not get any higher, but they did. Eventually the flood rolled over the island seven palm trees deep, and every remaining person died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The greedy carpenter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. He left the Buddha's sangha with many disciples to set up his own order and declared that he too was a Buddha. The real Buddha sent two of his top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, to preach to those wayward disciples; and while Devadatta was asleep, most of them returned to the Buddha's fold.

The defections put Devadatta in great agony, including spitting up hot blood, and he remembered the Buddha's virtue and that the Buddha had not once held any malice for him despite all the bad things he had done, including trying to kill him three times. He decided to go reconcile and asked his followers to carry him on a stretcher to the Buddha's monastery. When the Buddha heard that Devadatta was coming to make peace, he predicted he would not arrive. At one point during his journey, Devadatta asked to be set down so he could bathe and drink to relieve his fever, and as soon as he stepped on the soil, the earth opened up and the flames of hell swallowed him and the five hundred families traveling with him.

One day the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Devadatta and the five hundred families had been doomed. He told them this story so they knew that Devadatta's greed for pleasures of the present and disregard for the future had also led him and his followers to ruin in the past.

The compassionate and cruel demons were earlier births, respectively, of Sariputta and Kokalika, a disciple of the Buddha who became one of Devadatta's most devoted followers.

Kama Jataka (#467)

The Bodhisatta was once a wise young man. The king had two sons, and when he died, his eldest son had no interest in taking the throne. Instead, he left the city and lived in a remote border region. He told nobody there about his royal birth and took a job with a wealthy merchant family. But when people learned who he was, they would no longer let him work and they treated him like a prince.

Later, the merchant asked if the prince could send a letter to his younger brother, the king, asking that his taxes be waived. The prince agreed to ask, and the king did it. He also ordered everybody else in the village and the surrounding countryside to pay their taxes directly to the prince. All the money he collected and the honor he received made greed arise in his heart, and he had his brother appoint him viceroy of the region. Soon after, the prince decided he wanted to be king and he marched his troops to the palace, telling his brother to surrender the kingdom or fight for it. The king knew he would face trouble if he killed his elder brother, so he agreed to step aside.

But ruling his kingdom did not quench the new king's greed and he craved more. When Indra, king of the gods, divined the king's intent, he wanted to teach him a lesson. He took the form of a young brahmin and went to talk with the king. Indra said he could guarantee victory over three prosperous, powerful cities if the king began his conquest right away. The king agreed to his plan, but, having been put under a spell by Indra, he did not ask the young brahmin any details such as

where he came from, how he would accomplish this, or what he wanted in exchange. After the meeting, Indra returned to heaven, and the king, ready for war, sent some men to get the young man. The king's men, of course, could not find him, and this made the king depressed. Soon he had a high fever and bloody diarrhea, and his personal doctors could not cure him.

When the Bodhisatta, who had recently completed his studies, heard about the king, he went to the palace offering a cure. The king's doctors were the most renowned around, and at first the king refused to see the Bodhisatta. But when told he was offering his assistance for free, the king let him in. After showing respect to the king, the Bodhisatta asked him what had caused his sickness. This question angered the king, who demanded the Bodhisatta mind his own business and just give him medicine. But the Bodhisatta explained that he must know the circumstances to choose the right remedy. So the king described his encounter with the young brahmin and said his disease arose from his greed. The Bodhisatta did not offer a medicine; rather he explained that desire is a trap because cravings can never really be satisfied. "Be content with having wisdom," he said, "and you will not be burnt from desires within. You win happiness every time you let a craving go." And when the Bodhisatta was done preaching, the king was healed and full of joy. He heaped praise on the Bodhisatta and offered a thousand coins, but the Bodhisatta declined payment. He encouraged the king to be righteous from this point on, then he flew to the Himalayas and became an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The greedy king was an earlier birth of a brahmin who began felling trees on a riverbank so he could cultivate the land. That same morning, the Buddha divined that the brahmin was destined for a spiritual breakthrough, so while collecting alms, he went out of his way to chat with him. And the Buddha returned to talk again at each step of the growing process: clearing the roots, plowing, planting, and so on. The brahmin figured the Buddha came by so often because he wanted some of the grain after it was harvested, and he promised to give him some. The night before the brahmin was going to harvest his field, heavy rain flooded the river and swept away the entire crop. The brahmin was devastated and lay in bed crying.

The next day, the Buddha went to comfort the brahmin. He explained that there's no reason to grieve for what is lost because nothing can change the past. After hearing this lesson, the brahmin reached a new level of understanding.

Back at the monastery, the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about what he had just done, and he told them this story so they knew that he had also cured the man's grief in the past.

Janasandha Jataka (#468)

The Bodhisatta was once a king known throughout India for his extreme generosity and perfect righteousness. Sometimes he gathered all the people of the city together and preached the sorts of behaviors that prevent suffering in life, such as earning wealth, getting an education, being generous, speaking truthfully and kindly, and taking care of elders. Because they listened to his advice, all the kingdom's citizens lived happily and were destined for heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king became intoxicated by his power and increasingly reveled in sin. One day he visited the Buddha, who asked why he had not come to see him for such a long time. The king just answered that he had been busy. The Buddha preached the importance of following the ten royal virtues, and then he told this story as an example of how kings should behave. He added that he had done so back then without having had a Buddha to instruct him, but it was easier for the king to be righteous now because he was living in the time of a perfect Buddha.

The king's citizens were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Maha-Kanha Jataka (#469)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. At this time, religion had fallen into decay. Both religious disciples and laypeople lived in sin and were destined for hell. When the Bodhisatta noticed that no new deities were being born in his heaven, he looked down on the earth and saw the reason. He wondered how he could fix the problem and decided to scare humanity back onto the path of righteousness.

The Bodhisatta took the form of a forester and transformed his charioteer, Matali, into a giant hideous dog. Descending to the countryside around the city, the Bodhisatta led the dog by a leash, yelling out, “The world is doomed to destruction!” People fled in fear at the sight of the vicious dog, and the king shut the city gates, but the Bodhisatta just leaped over the walls and continued to terrorize people. The dog roared and lunged at everyone he saw. When they reached the palace, the dog found where the king was hiding and stared him down through a window, letting out one of the three loudest roars ever heard in India.

The king worked up the courage to ask the Bodhisatta what he wanted, and he answered that his dog was hungry. So the king gave him all the food in the palace. The dog ate it up in one mouthful and roared again. Then the king had all the food for his horses and elephants fed to the dog, but still it roared. And after eating all the food in the city and roaring again, the king realized the dog was actually some sort of demon and asked the Bodhisatta about this. The Bodhisatta said they had come to punish the wicked, and once set loose,

his dog would eat everyone. The Bodhisatta discussed humanity's evil ways, and then revealed his true self. Floating in the air in a blaze of light, the Bodhisatta warned people they were all destined for hell, and he preached the truth, restoring humanity's faith in religion for another thousand years.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples sat around discussing how great the Buddha was: how he kept a simple life, was kind to all (even nagas and garudas), converted many people, and always lived for the benefit of the world. When the Buddha heard their discussion, he told them this story so they knew that he had also acted in the interest of others in the past.

Matali was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kosiya Jataka (#470)

The Kosiya birth will be given under the Sudhabhojana Jataka (#535).

Mendaka Jataka (#471)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Mendaka Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. One day King Vedeha went for a morning walk and saw a goat and a dog, natural enemies, being friendly. The goat fed on the grass thrown to the elephants at their stable, running in to eat before the elephants arrived. But when the mahouts saw the goat, they beat him away. The dog lived on the bones, skin, and other scraps from the royal kitchen, but that same day, he lost patience and snuck inside the kitchen to eat cooked meat. The cook saw the dog and beat him with sticks and stones. The two suffering animals met and shared their tales of woe, both depressed because they would never be able to return to their feeding spots for risk of death. But as they talked, the goat came up with the plan that he would go to the kitchen and bring back meat, while the dog would go to the elephant stables for a bundle of grass. Nobody would pay them any attention because their species don't eat those foods, and they could bring them to the palace wall and eat together.

The king was astonished by their friendship and wondered if his advisors could figure out how it happened. When they next met, the king asked them, "Two natural enemies have become inseparable friends: what is the reason?" and said he would banish any of them who couldn't figure it out because he didn't want stupid men around him. Knowing the king

wasn’t smart enough to create a riddle, the Bodhisatta realized he must have seen something. He went to ask Queen Udumbara where King Vedeha had been for most of the day before, and she mentioned he had done a lot of walking alongside the palace wall and staring out his window. The Bodhisatta went to the palace wall and found the dog and goat, and he watched them to figure out their story.

The other four advisors came to the Bodhisatta, knowing he would find the answer, and asked for help. He agreed, but instead of telling them the answer directly, he taught them each a stanza in a language they didn’t know but that the king did. And the next day, when they were asked to give answers, they recited the stanzas by memory, and the king believed they knew. After the Bodhisatta gave a longer, more detailed answer, the king showed his pleasure by giving each of the men a chariot, a mule, and a wealthy village.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha’s disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he’d also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another. The king’s chief advisor

was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha, and the other three advisors were earlier births of Potthapada, Ambattha, and Pilotika, three ascetics who respected the Buddha.

Maha-Paduma Jataka (#472)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince, righteous and beloved by all. When his mother died, his father took a new queen. Soon after, the king traveled to put down a rebellion in a border region. Just before the king returned to the palace, the queen tried to seduce the Bodhisatta, but he refused her advances, even when she threatened to have the king execute him.

Before the king came to see her in her bedchamber, the queen scratched her skin and feigned illness. When the king asked what was wrong, she lied, saying the Bodhisatta had demanded sex and beat her when she refused. The king was enraged and had his son beaten, bound, and brought before him. The Bodhisatta protested his innocence and asked why his father would believe a woman. But the king did not feel an investigation was necessary and ordered him immediately thrown over the thieves' cliff. The entire city was distraught. Men and women wept and pulled out their hair, and nobles and warrior chiefs rebuked the king, reminding him that it was his duty to act wisely and cautiously. But the king was not moved, and the Bodhisatta was thrown down.

The spirit that lived in the hill caught the Bodhisatta before he hit the ground and took him to the home of a naga king, where he was shown great honor. He stayed there for a year before returning to the realm of man to live as an ascetic in the Himalayas. Then one day a forester from the city saw the Bodhisatta, and after spending some days with him, he returned home and told the king that his son was alive. The king, his anger having faded with time, set out to meet him.

The Bodhisatta welcomed him, and they discussed what had happened, then the king invited him to return and become king. But the Bodhisatta said he was happy in his simple religious life and had no desire to rule. He criticized his father's behavior and urged him, from this point forward, to stop doing evil and start following the ten royal virtues. The king, now fully recognizing his son's righteousness, left in tears and asked his advisors who had caused him to try to kill his own son. They reminded him that it was his queen, so when he returned to the palace, he had her thrown over the cliff, and from that point on he ruled in righteousness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

As the Buddha's fame grew and his disciples multiplied, other religious teachers lost most of their followers. Upset over this, some heretics enlisted a beautiful woman named Cinca-Manavika to destroy the Buddha's reputation so they would receive more praise and alms. The scheme she devised began with her sleeping in the countryside near the Buddha's monastery, then walking toward the city early in the morning so the people she passed would believe she had actually been spending the night there. After four months of this, she started wrapping cloth around her stomach and announced that she was pregnant with the Buddha's child. Some people believed her.

As the ninth month approached, Cinca-Manavika added pieces of wood to her belly bundle and beat her hands and feet with the jawbone of an ox to induce swelling. She then

walked up to the Buddha during a sermon and cursed him for having a sweet voice but bad behavior. As she publicly denounced him for denying being with her and for not providing a chamber to stay in until she gave birth, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm and he divined what was happening. He and four other gods came to earth in the form of mice and gnawed through the ropes that held Cinca-Manavika's fake stomach up: The wood fell down, severing her toes and revealing her deceit. As she fled the Buddha's angry followers, the ground split open and the flames of hell dragged her down. The religious leaders who had helped her lost what little support they still had.

The wicked queen was an earlier birth of Cinca-Manavika, and after her lie was exposed, the Buddha told this story so his disciples knew this was not the first time she had tried and failed to destroy him.

The king was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times, and the spirit who rescued him and the naga king who helped him were earlier births of Sariputta and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mittamitta Jataka (#473)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. When his other advisors slandered someone who the king considered a good man, the king asked the Bodhisatta how to tell if somebody is friend or foe. He answered that foes do not greet you politely, they honor your enemies and despise your friends, they neither share secrets with you nor keep yours in confidence, they never praise you, they rejoice in your misfortune, they don't share good things with you, and they don't pity you when you're suffering misfortune. Then he explained that friends do the opposite of all these things. The king was delighted by this explanation and gave the Bodhisatta high praise.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king showed great honor to a courtier who was very helpful, and this made some others jealous, so they falsely accused the courtier of doing bad things. The king looked into the matter and found no fault with the courtier. Unsure how to tell if somebody was friend or foe, the king went to ask the Buddha. The Buddha said the king had pondered this very problem in the past, and he told this story as his answer.

The king of the past was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Amba Jataka (#474)

The Bodhisatta was once an untouchable. He knew a magic spell that gave him sweet, luscious mangoes out of season, and he made a good living selling them. A young man whose late father had been a royal chaplain was traveling around India and came to the Bodhisatta's village. When he saw him selling ripe mangoes, he resolved to learn the spell.

At first sight, the Bodhisatta could tell this man was a bad person; however, he agreed to let him work as his servant. The man diligently cooked and cleaned, gathered wood, pounded rice, and washed the family's feet. One night, unable to find a stool to support the Bodhisatta's feet, he sat up all night so the Bodhisatta could rest them on his thighs. Later, when the Bodhisatta's wife gave birth to a son, the man was very helpful during the delivery.

The Bodhisatta's wife wanted to reward the man for his excellent service and suggested giving him the magic spell. The Bodhisatta agreed and taught it to him with the condition that if anyone ever asked where he learned it, he must not, out of shame, deny that it came from an untouchable. If he lied, the spell would no longer work for him. The man swore he would never do such a thing and thanked the Bodhisatta.

The man moved to the city and earned a good living selling mangoes. One day the king ate one and loved it so much that he hired the man to supply the palace, making him very wealthy. Eventually the king asked the man how he found mangoes out of season, and the man told of his magic spell.

When the king asked to see it in action, they went to the royal park and approached a mango tree. The man stood seven feet back, spoke the spell, and threw a handful of water on the tree, causing a shower of ripe mangoes to fall to the ground.

When the king asked what marvelous person had taught him this spell, the man feared losing his prestige with the king, so he lied and said he learned it from a world-renowned teacher in Taxila. And at the very moment that he denied the Bodhisatta, the spell was gone.

A few days later, when the king wanted more mangoes, the man went to the park to perform the spell, but he could not remember it. He told the king that the planets were not aligned properly, and he would bring some mangoes later. But the king, having heard nothing of the planets being part of the spell before, called out his lie. Ashamed, the man confessed and gave credit to the real teacher, and admitted he had been warned about such deception.

The king rebuked the now despondent man for being stupid and sinful and explained that birth status has nothing to do with such a great treasure. The king ordered him to go back to the Bodhisatta and seek his forgiveness, and to not return to the city without use of the spell.

The man returned to the village and confessed his mistake, begging the Bodhisatta to teach him the magic spell again. But the Bodhisatta said an ungrateful fool such as he did not

deserve to know it, and told him to never ask again. His life ruined, the man walked into the forest and died alone.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The young man was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, declaring that he would become a Buddha himself. Devadatta's pattern of bad behavior following this led to the earth opening and swallowing him into the depths of hell.

When the Buddha heard his disciples discussing Devadatta's downfall, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also come to ruin after deserting his teacher in the past.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Phandana Jataka (#475)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. He lived in a giant flame of the forest tree, and a black lion often came to rest under it when he was out hunting. One day a strong wind snapped a branch off the tree, and it fell on the lion's shoulder. In great pain, the lion cursed the Bodhisatta and vowed to have his tree ripped out of the ground and chopped to bits. Then he sought a man who would do it.

At that time, a carpenter who built oxcarts was in the forest to get wood, and he came upon the Bodhisatta's tree. The lion stood under the tree, and when the carpenter saw him, he fled in fear. But the lion called out asking what type of tree he was looking for, and the carpenter, astonished to hear an animal talk, stopped. Figuring a creature of the forest would have excellent knowledge of trees, he asked which tree was best for making wheels. The lion, of course, told him flame of the forest trees have the best wheel wood, and by luck there was one right here. The carpenter raised his axe and started to chop the tree down. The lion's heart was filled with joy, and he walked away.

His home about to be destroyed, the Bodhisatta wanted to get revenge on the lion. He materialized into the form of a forester and struck up a conversation with the carpenter, who told him that a black lion had recommended this tree. The Bodhisatta told him attaching a thin strip of skin from a black lion around the outer edge of a wheel would make it very strong. The carpenter thought this was a good idea, but didn't know where he could find a black lion. The Bodhisatta

called him stupid and said this tree wasn't going to get up and run away. He should find the lion who recommended this tree and ask him which parts to cut. Then when the lion suspected nothing, strike him with the axe. Feeling this was his lucky day, the carpenter killed the lion, then came back and cut down the tree.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha's Sakya clan was quarreling with another clan over who should get water for their crops after their shared dam ran low at the end of the dry season. As tempers flared, people came to blows and the two clans declared war.

The Buddha went to quell the feud, and when they saw him, every man threw down his weapon to listen to him speak. The Buddha said life was more valuable than water, then taught them lessons encouraging unity and self-control, while denouncing fighting and blindly following others. He told them this story to explain that war is mutually destructive, and it helped convince them to settle their dispute peacefully.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Javana-Hamsa Jataka (#476)

The Bodhisatta was once a goose, the king of a flock of ninety thousand. The King of Varanasi once saw the Bodhisatta and his flock flying across the sky and guessed that he too was a king. Wanting to meet this special goose, the king gathered garlands, perfumes, and lotions and set out in a procession with many musicians to find him. Thankful for the esteem he expressed, the Bodhisatta befriended the king, and one time even sprinkled him with water and sandalwood powder. The king loved him so much that he would sometimes sit and watch the sky, hoping the Bodhisatta would come that day.

One time the two youngest geese in the Bodhisatta's flock planned to fly a race against the sun. The Bodhisatta told them they would die if they tried, and he ordered them not to go. But the young geese were fools and wouldn't listen. One morning before sunrise, they snuck off to a mountain peak, and when the sun rounded the horizon, they flew off. But the Bodhisatta heard about it and joined them.

Not long after they set out, the youngest goose felt faint, so the Bodhisatta put him on his back and took him home, then quickly flew back to the other. The second young goose grew faint just before midday and was also rescued by the Bodhisatta. Since he had already flown with the sun for half the day, the Bodhisatta decided to finish the race, and he circled the whole globe while the sun remained in the sky. While flying, the Bodhisatta pondered the pointlessness of racing, so when he was done, he went off to give the king a lesson on righteousness.

When the Bodhisatta landed at the palace, the king brought his friend a golden seat, fed him sweet rice and sugared water, and rubbed him with refined ointments. He told the king about his day, and the king asked to see him fly faster than the sun. The Bodhisatta said it was not possible for a person to see this, but he came up with a demonstration. The king's four best archers stood with their backs against a stone column in the royal courtyard and simultaneously shot arrows in the four directions. The Bodhisatta sat atop the column with a bell around his neck, caught all four arrows before they reached the ground, laid them at the archers' feet, and returned to his perch. He flew so fast that the king never saw him move, but he did hear the tinkling of the bell.

The impressed king asked if anything was faster than the Bodhisatta. He answered that the decay of elements of life in living beings is one hundred thousand times faster; the world of form is constantly crumbling away, he explained, and everyone dies.

Pondering his own inevitable death, the king fainted. When he was brought around, he asked the Bodhisatta to stay in the city and be his teacher, helping him live in righteousness. The Bodhisatta answered that friendship is fleeting, and if he lived in the palace, the king would lose interest in him, and might even get drunk and eat him. Saying he would probably return again someday to visit, the Bodhisatta flew back to his mountain home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha told the Parable of the Strong Men to his followers. Imagine four archers of great skill standing at the four points of the compass and shooting arrows in the four directions, he told them, and a man being able to catch all four arrows before they fell to the ground. This man would have perfect swiftness. But there is something faster than this man and even faster than the gods who can outrun the sun and moon: the decay of the elements that make up life. And because death is coming, you must learn to be careful.

Two days later, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how great he was for giving such a brilliant lesson on impermanence. He told them it was not a significant feat because Buddhas possess perfect knowledge. Then he told this story to show he had once done the same thing before he reached omniscience as a Buddha.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda and the two young geese were earlier births of Moggallana and Sariputta, three of the Buddha's top disciples. The other geese of the flock were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Culla-Narada Jataka (#477)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a wealthy brahmin, but after his wife died, he took his young son to live an austere religious life deep in the Himalayas. Many years later, some bandits from the border region raided a town to take plunder and slaves. One beautiful but wicked woman fled their attack, and during her journey she came upon the Bodhisatta's hut. He was away gathering fruits, roots, and other foods, but his son was at home and the woman quickly charmed him into sleeping with her. Then she told him they should leave and live in civilization. He agreed to go with her, but needed to say goodbye to his father first. The woman knew that if she was still there when the Bodhisatta returned, he would beat her and drag her into the forest by her feet; so she left right away, giving the son directions how to get to her village. He became sad and lay down without doing his duties.

When the Bodhisatta returned, he saw the woman's footprints and knew his son's virtue had been lost. He asked his son why he was acting pitiful, and he answered that he had decided to give up the difficult forest life and return to the kingdom. Having come to the Himalayas as a child, he knew nothing of the world of men and he asked his father to teach him what life was like there. The Bodhisatta answered simply, "Avoid poison, precipices, mud, and snakes." Not understanding, the son asked for an explanation. The Bodhisatta went on at length about each of these four worldly dangers—poison being wine, precipices being women, mud being honor and fame, and snakes being

kings—and others as well. All this alarming advice changed the son's mind, and he never did give up his ascetic life in the wilderness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked woman who tempted the Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of a plump, lascivious young woman who had no suitors for marriage. Her mother decided to entice one of the Buddha's disciples into falling for her. That morning, as she offered alms to the disciples walking past her house, the mother looked for one who could be tempted by a craving for good food. Eventually she saw a disciple who had not given up concern with his appearance: the corners of his eyes were anointed with oil, some hair hung down, his robes were of fine fabric and immaculately clean, and his bowl was colored like a precious gem. The mother knew she could corrupt him, so when he came to the door she took his bowl and invited him into the house to eat the best food she could provide. When he finished eating, she told him to come by again anytime. He took up her offer and they got to know each other well.

When she thought it was the right time, the mother took the next step in her plan by telling the disciple that theirs was a happy household, but she had no son or son-in-law to maintain it. The next time the disciple came, she had her daughter adorn herself and begin seducing him with womanly tricks and wiles—and it worked. He fell under her power and wanted to leave the sangha. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that this same woman had harmed him

and tried to lure him away from a spiritual life in an earlier birth, when he was the young ascetic living in the Himalayas.

Duta Jataka (#478)

The Bodhisatta was once a student. He studied with a master in Taxila, and when his education was finished, he traveled around seeking alms to pay his teacher. Gold was in very short supply because the king had taken most of it for himself, but eventually the Bodhisatta honorably obtained a few ounces and went to see his teacher. However, while crossing the Ganges River, the Bodhisatta's boat swayed to and fro, and he dropped his gold in the water.

Rather than go around begging again, the Bodhisatta devised a plan to get gold from the king. He sat on the riverbank like a statue and neither talked nor ate. People came to ask what he was doing, but he did not answer. As time went by, word of the Bodhisatta's strange behavior spread, and people came from far away to see him. Finding him in such an exhausted condition, they felt pity, but there was nothing they could do. Eventually the king heard about the Bodhisatta and sent his advisors to ask why he was doing this, but still he would not speak. So, as the Bodhisatta had predicted, the king came to inquire himself.

The Bodhisatta finally broke his silence and told the king he had not spoken because there was no point in discussing his sorrow with someone who could not relieve it; then he explained his plight. Hearing what the Bodhisatta had done, the king gave him twice as much gold as he'd lost, and the Bodhisatta went to pay his teacher's fee. And from then on, the king was generous giving alms, and he ruled in righteousness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing his resourcefulness in teaching lessons to people. The Buddha said that he was also wise and clever in the past and told them this story as an example.

The king and the Bodhisatta's teacher were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Kalinga-Bodhi Jataka (#479)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. Fortune-tellers had made two predictions about the king's younger brother; first, that he would someday live as an ascetic, and second that he would have a son become a universal monarch. Because of these prophecies, the younger brother, who served as viceroy, was unbearably arrogant. Eventually the king could no longer tolerate it and ordered his younger brother jailed. But the man sent to arrest him let him escape. Before fleeing, the younger brother showed this man his signet ring, rug, and sword and said someday he would send his son back to claim the throne with these three items as proof of his identity. Then he escaped to the forest and lived as an ascetic along the Ganges River.

The fortune-tellers of another king had predicted that his daughter would live as an ascetic and her son would be a universal monarch. When other kings heard of this prophecy, they surrounded the city, demanding he marry his daughter to them. Knowing that choosing any one king would anger the others and create problems, he instead fled in disguise with her and his queen to the forest, and they also lived as ascetics along the Ganges.

One day the daughter, alone at their hut while her parents were out gathering wild fruit, wove a floral wreath. She took a seat in a mango tree along the river and accidentally dropped the wreath in the water. It floated down past the exiled brother while he was bathing. When he saw it, he fell immediately and deeply in love with its maker and walked

upstream until he found her, still up in the mango tree. She was so beautiful he had to ask if she was a human or a god, and as they talked, she fell in love too. When her parents returned, they agreed to let them marry; and the couple soon had a son named Kalinga.

Kalinga grew up righteous and wise, and when his father divined from the stars that his elder brother had died, he sent his son to claim the throne. He gave Kalinga the signet ring, rug, and sword and told him where to find the man who had helped him those many years ago. By the power of his virtue, Kalinga flew through the air to the city, and, after proving his identity, was promptly crowned king. The Bodhisatta led the new king through the ceremonies that a universal monarch needs to perform, and fifteen days later, by the power of the magical wheel of empire, King Kalinga had received the allegiance of all the people in the world, from ocean to ocean, fulfilling his destiny.

One day, as King Kalinga traveled out of the city with a massive entourage to visit his parents, his huge, powerful elephant suddenly stopped and would not walk any further. The Bodhisatta got down to investigate the cause and saw that they were next to the sacred Bodhi tree, under which all perfect Buddhas reach enlightenment. The Bodhisatta told King Kalinga that nobody, not even Indra, king of the gods, could pass this hallowed ground without showing proper respect. But the king did not believe him and drove his goad stick into the screaming elephant again and again until he killed it. He mounted another, and it dropped dead instantly.

Finally believing the Bodhisatta's words, the king praised his wisdom for recognizing this spot, but the Bodhisatta said all glory should go to the virtue of the past Buddhas who had full insight, which he did not. Delighted by his new knowledge, King Kalinga had everyone stay there for seven days to honor all these Buddhas with music, flowers, and building a wall. Then they continued on to the king's parents' home and brought them back to the palace.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When the Buddha went away on alms pilgrimages, the people who lived near his monastery laid their wreath and garland offerings for him at the entrance to his perfumed chamber. Anathapindika, a wealthy supporter of the Buddha known for his extreme generosity, thought there ought to be a proper place for making these offerings and asked Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples (King Kalinga was an earlier birth of him), to discuss this matter with the Buddha. The Buddha said a shrine to him could not be built while he was still alive, but a Bodhi tree could serve the same purpose.

Ananda arranged a ceremony with the king and many elders at the monastery gates. Anathapindika planted a seed taken from a fruit that fell from the original Bodhi tree and was caught before reaching the ground. Immediately the tree grew twenty-three meters tall and wide. They built a wall with a bejeweled gate around it and sprinkled gold dust about. The Buddha inaugurated the tree by meditating under it for one night.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples talking about what came to be called Ananda's Bodhi Tree, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time Ananda had worshipped and organized a festival for a Bodhi tree.

Akitta Jataka (#480)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a wealthy, powerful merchant. When he decided to renounce the world, he threw open the doors of his house and let people take everything. Then, along with his sister, he headed out to a forest and lived in a leaf hut.

Over time, many others from the city followed them and became ascetics in the same location, and people gave them great honor and many gifts. But the Bodhisatta was not interested in admiration and wanted to be alone, so without telling anyone, he walked away and found a new home. And here he was so respected that local people gave him abundant alms, so again he left. This time he settled on a remote, oppressively hot island, living on fruit when he could find it and just leaves sprinkled with water when he couldn't.

The Bodhisatta's virtue was so pure that the throne of Indra, king of the gods, grew warm. When he saw the reason, Indra wanted to know if the Bodhisatta's goal for living this austere life was to replace him in heaven. So he went down to earth in the form of a brahmin to test the Bodhisatta. That morning, as the Bodhisatta was about to eat his wet leaves, Indra appeared at his hut. The Bodhisatta was filled with joy for the chance to offer alms, and he gave away all the leaves in his bowl. Indra returned the next day, and again the Bodhisatta gave away his whole meal, and then once more on the third day. That afternoon, though weak from not eating for three days, the Bodhisatta sat in heartfelt joy reflecting about the gifts he had given.

Indra still did not know the Bodhisatta's intention for being so generous and so appeared before him in blazing divine glory to ask. The Bodhisatta answered that his only goal was nirvana. Indra was so pleased by this answer that he granted the Bodhisatta a wish, with which he asked to never be tempted by treasures or family. Impressed, Indra offered more wishes, and the Bodhisatta asked to not become infirm as he grew old, to never need to talk to foolish people, to have conversations with wise men, to be free from lust, to meet people seeking alms, and finally he wished that Indra would leave and never return because he had everything he needed already and didn't want to be distracted in his quest. Indra apologized and agreed; and the Bodhisatta remained in bliss on his island home for the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Over seven days, a lay supporter of the Buddha gave many gifts to him and his disciples. The Buddha praised his generosity and explained that gifts should be given to holy men no matter whether the donor has wealth or lives in the forest with nothing, and he told this story to illustrate his point.

Indra was an earlier birth of Anuruddha, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Takkariya Jataka (#481)

The Bodhisatta was once a student of a king's chaplain. The chaplain was toothless and had tawny brown skin, and his wife was having an affair with a man of similar appearance. Try as he might, the chaplain could not get his wife to stop seeing him, so he decided to have his rival killed. The chaplain's plan began by convincing the king that the city's southern gate was unlucky and should be rebuilt with suitable sacrifices done during the proper celestial alignment. The king had the gate pulled down and started constructing a new one. When it came time, the chaplain told the king the stars were aligned for the sacrifice, and a tawny-skinned, toothless, pure-blooded brahmin must be killed and buried under the gate the next day.

Back at home, the chaplain couldn't contain his excitement, and he told his wife how her lover would be dead tomorrow. She, of course, sent her lover a message warning him to flee. And he spread the news, so all other men with tawny skin also left town. The next morning, the chaplain told the king where to find a suitable victim, and he sent his men to get the wife's lover. When this man could not be found, the king's men searched all around the city for another tawny-skinned, toothless, pure-blooded brahmin, but there were none—except for the king's chaplain. The king said a religious man couldn't be killed, but his men reminded him that his chaplain had said the next auspicious day was a year away, and they could not leave the city undefended that long: someone needed to die now. The king's men also told their

lord that the chaplain had a student who could replace his master.

The king took their advice and had the Bodhisatta summoned and the chaplain tied up. As the two walked into the pit, the condemned former chaplain lamented his self-inflicted demise, confessing what he had done. The Bodhisatta replied that not being careful with one's words was a common cause of misery and told him four stories as examples, and also one story where speaking carefully saved lives.

- A high-class prostitute earned one thousand coins a day. Her brother was a good-for-nothing drunk, though she supported him despite his faults. But one time after he lost everything, including his clothes, in a game of dice, she'd had enough and ordered her servants not to let him into the house or even give him clothes to wear. One of her regular customers arrived for a night of pleasure and saw the brother crying outside the door, wearing just a rag for a loincloth. He could not convince the woman to soften her heart, so he gave the brother his own clothes to wear since he didn't need them until the next morning. The brother ran off to the tavern and had not returned when the customer left the next morning. The customer walked home naked and ashamed, wishing he had not opened his mouth the day before.

- Two goats were fighting quite fiercely in their pasture. A small bird who had no part in their quarrel was concerned they would smash their heads and die, so he

told them to stop. But the goats paid the bird no mind and continued battling. The bird climbed on their backs, and then on their heads, imploring them to listen to him, but they did not. Finally, the bird flew between the goats and said, “If you want to keep fighting, you’ll need to kill me first!” and was promptly crushed to death.

- While a man was in a tree gathering fruit, a snake crawled up the trunk, and the people down below were unable to knock it off with their sticks. The man in the tree was terrified, and people grabbed a strong cloth by its corners and told the man to jump down. He landed right in the middle, and the men holding the cloth were pulled together by the force. They smacked their heads together and died.

- Some thieves stole a goat and hid it in a bamboo clump until they could cook it. The next day, when they went to kill it, they realized they had forgotten to bring a knife. So they set the goat free. Earlier, some basket weavers had come to cut bamboo and left a knife behind. Instead of fleeing, the goat played in the bamboo and kicked the knife loose, knocking it to the ground. When the thieves saw it, they killed the goat and ate it.

- A hunter had captured two fairies in the forest and presented them to the king, telling him they sang and danced better than any human. The king ordered the fairies to perform, but they would not do it because they could not perform to their very best ability in that situation, and they did not want to be criticized. The king

begged them repeatedly, but the fairies just remained silent. Eventually the king grew angry and ordered the fairies killed, cooked, and served to him for dinner. Hearing this, the female fairy explained the reason for their silence, and the king, pleased with her answer, set her free. Then the male did the same, making it clear their silence was not meant as disrespect to the king. And the king also set him free.

After telling the stories, the Bodhisatta told his former teacher he would secretly set him free. He delayed the execution by telling people the proper alignment would come in the dead of night. Then, when nobody was there to see, he let the former chaplain escape to a faraway place and buried a dead goat under the gate instead.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The tawny-skinned brahmin was an earlier birth of Cula Kokalika, a greedy disciple of the Buddha. Two of the Buddha's top disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, spent one rainy season at Cula Kokalika's home, with the instruction not to tell the locals they were there. After the three months had passed, they set off back to the Buddha's monastery. Right after they departed, Cula Kokalika boasted to people about who had been staying with him. They quickly gathered food and robes to donate and rushed after the departed disciples to pay respect. Knowing that Sariputta and Moggallana were very frugal and would not accept the gifts, Cula Kokalika followed, expecting that the things would be given to him.

But the elder disciples just told the people to keep everything, and this angered Cula Kokalika.

A short time later, Sariputta and Moggallana led a thousand disciples on an alms pilgrimage. When they passed through Cula Kokalika's town, the laypeople greeted them enthusiastically and donated many robes and other things. Again, Sariputta and Moggallana gave nothing to Cula Kokalika, and this time he was so furious he began insulting them for being greedy and selfish. So the disciples left the town. People begged them to stay, but could not change their minds. The angry people told Cula Kokalika to fix the problem he had created; and if he could not convince Sariputta and Moggallana to return, he would have to go live elsewhere. Fearful of losing his home, he tried to persuade them. But he failed.

Forced to leave, Cula Kokalika went to the Buddha's monastery. When he got there, he immediately began to tell the Buddha how wicked Sariputta and Moggallana were, not stopping even after being rebuked by the Buddha for his inappropriate words. Moments later, bloody boils erupted on his body and he fell over in pain. One of his former teachers heard his cries and came down from heaven, encouraging him to make peace with the elders. But Cula Kokalika would not let go of his anger, and he died and went to hell.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing Cula Kokalika's downfall, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time Cula Kokalika's own words had caused his destruction.

Ruru Jataka (#482)

The Bodhisatta was once a deer, golden in color and perfect in every way. A wealthy merchant spoiled his son and never taught him anything useful, so all he knew in life was singing, dancing, and feasting. When his parents died, he spent his days with drunks, gamblers, and other reckless good-for-nothings and lost all his money. He got so deep in debt that he wanted to end his life.

The merchant's son invited his many creditors to come with him to a spot on the bank of the Ganges River, where he said the family treasure was buried. He feigned looking for the hiding place, then threw himself into the river, yelling out as the torrent dragged him away. The Bodhisatta heard his cries and swam out to the man, got him on his back, and rescued him. The man stayed with the Bodhisatta, resting and recuperating for a few days before returning to the city. As they parted ways, the Bodhisatta asked the man to never tell another soul about him, and he promised to keep the secret.

On the night before the man returned to the city, the queen consort had a dream about a golden deer preaching to her. She went to the king and insisted she must have the opportunity to listen to the sermons of a golden deer, or there was no point in her living anymore. The king discussed the matter with his chaplains, who assured him that such creatures existed. So he had a proclamation engraved on a golden tablet and read across the city, saying anyone who could lead him to a golden deer would get one thousand

coins, a gold casket, an elephant, beautiful women, and a village of his choice.

The merchant's son heard the proclamation as he entered the city, and he told the courtier he knew where to find a golden deer. He was taken to the palace, and the king was pleased by the news, so they traveled together with the army to find the golden deer.

When the Bodhisatta heard the noise of the soldiers forming a ring around his patch of forest, he picked out the king and ran straight toward him. The king drew his bow, but before he could fire, the Bodhisatta called out, "Stand still; please do not hurt me." Enchanted by his voice, the king and the soldiers lowered their weapons. The Bodhisatta came up to the king, and the two talked pleasantly.

The Bodhisatta asked the king who told him where he lived, and the king pointed to the merchant's son. The Bodhisatta rebuked his treacherous friend and said it would have been better to rescue a log than this man. The king took the Bodhisatta's side and prepared to shoot the merchant's son, but the Bodhisatta, ever virtuous, asked that he not be killed. Respecting the Bodhisatta, the king fulfilled his promised reward to the man, then told him to go away.

The Bodhisatta went to the palace and preached to the queen and the entire court, specifically urging the king to follow the ten royal virtues. In gratitude, the king granted the Bodhisatta a wish, and he asked that people stop killing all living creatures—the king agreed and ordered his subjects to

protect all animals. From that time on, nobody dared harm any beast or bird. Deer, no longer afraid of men, began to eat people's crops, and nobody could drive them away. They complained to the king, but he refused to back out of his promise to the Bodhisatta, even if it meant being dethroned.

When the Bodhisatta heard about the problem, he ordered all deer to stop eating crops and told the people to put up signs on their land so the deer knew where not to go. And ever since then, deer stopped eating people's crops.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The merchant's son was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. Some of the Buddha's loyal disciples told Devadatta he ought to be grateful to the Buddha for all he had learned from him. But Devadatta answered that he'd learned everything on his own and hadn't got even one blade of grass worth of knowledge from the Buddha.

When the Buddha later overheard some of his disciples discussing this, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also been ungrateful in the past, even after he'd saved his life.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sarabha-Miga Jataka (#483)

The Bodhisatta was once a deer. The king was an avid hunter, and considered himself the manliest man in the kingdom. During a hunt in the forest, his courtiers surrounded a thicket and beat the ground with clubs, driving the Bodhisatta out and straight toward the king. The king let an arrow fly, but the clever Bodhisatta rolled safely out of its path. When the king saw the Bodhisatta dive down, he assumed he had hit him and yelled out a cheer. But when the Bodhisatta rose and ran off, the courtiers loudly mocked the king.

The angry king chased after the Bodhisatta. He didn't notice a deep pit full of water because it was obscured by weeds, and he fell in. The king couldn't swim, and the Bodhisatta saw him struggling. He felt pity, not anger, toward the king and rescued him. The king was deeply grateful and he invited the Bodhisatta to come rule over the kingdom. But the Bodhisatta only asked that the king follow the five precepts and encourage his subjects to do the same.

The king was so taken by the Bodhisatta's righteousness that his eyes filled with tears. When he returned home, he proclaimed by the beat of a drum that everyone in the city should follow the five precepts—though he told nobody about the near-death experience that prompted his conversion. However, early the next morning, his chaplain heard the king in his bedroom chanting his aspirations to live a righteous life and was able to guess everything that had happened the day before. The king was so impressed by his chaplain's wisdom that he gave him a big gift.

Without fail, the king dedicated himself to giving alms and doing good deeds, and the people followed his lead so faithfully that heaven began to fill up with many new gods. Wondering what was causing the heavens to swell, Indra, king of the gods, saw the king's devotion and divined how the Bodhisatta had set everything in motion due to his perfect virtue. Indra felt people should know about the Bodhisatta's greatness, so one time when the king went target shooting, he made the Bodhisatta appear in front of the target. Then Indra entered the chaplain's body, urging the king to shoot and kill because deer meat is for warriors. To explain why he didn't shoot, the king told those around him how this noble deer had rescued and preached to him. Then Indra appeared floating in the air and praised the king.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

After Pindola Bharadvaja, one of the Buddha's top disciples, had risen into the air to reach a sandalwood bowl, the Buddha rebuked him for using his supernatural powers to do a cheap, pointless trick and issued an order forbidding his disciples from using their powers. After this order was given, some heretics who wanted to create a schism among the Buddha's followers wrongly assumed the Buddha would no longer do miracles, so they said if he performed one, they would do one that was twice as good. To the shock of the heretics, the Buddha accepted their challenge since he was not a disciple and the rule did not apply to him. He had the king send his town crier out announcing that in seven days the Buddha would perform a masterpiece called the Twin

Miracle under a mango tree. To thwart him, the heretics cut down all the city's mango trees.

On the day of the show, the royal gardener gave the Buddha a delicious mango. After eating it, he had the gardener plant the seed in the ground, and it grew instantly into a giant, perfectly formed tree full of ripe fruit. A vast crowd of humans and gods gathered around the tree, and the Buddha ascended onto a jeweled pavilion built by Indra and began the Twin Miracle, so named because it featured opposites. Flames shot from one half of his body and water streamed from the other, alternating between top and bottom and left and right; and all the while, six-colored rays of light shone out of every pore of his skin, lighting up both heaven and hell. The whole multitude was in awe and filled with faith. (The Buddha performed the Twin Miracle twice; the other time is discussed in Jataka #547.)

After the miracle finished, the Buddha spent the rainy season in heaven preaching to the gods, including his birth mother. When it came time to return to the realm of men, the Buddha sent word so people could come greet him. Then he descended on a triple staircase, one each made of jewels, silver, and gold, accompanied by Indra, Brahma, and Suyama. The Buddha was greeted first by Sariputta (who had been the chaplain in an earlier birth), his wisest disciple, and he thought everybody should know that Sariputta was the wisest. So he began to ask people questions, each one more difficult than the next. Only Sariputta could answer the final question, and he answered in full detail just as if the Buddha had spoken himself.

The next evening, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Sariputta's excellent wisdom, and he told them this story as an example of Sariputta's wisdom from the past; being able to guess the full story about the rescue from just a tiny bit of information.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Salikedara Jataka (#484)

The Bodhisatta was once a parrot. His father was the flock's king, and when he got old and could no longer fly far away, he passed the torch to the Bodhisatta. From this point on, the Bodhisatta brought back food for his parents every day.

A wealthy brahmin grew rice on one thousand acres near the forest where the parrots lived, and he hired a guard to watch over his land. When some parrots reported that the rice in the brahmin's fields was ripe, the Bodhisatta led the flock there to eat. The guard ran about trying to shoo the birds away, but he could not. When the parrots returned home, the Bodhisatta carried away some rice for his parents in his beak. The parrots returned to these fields for several days in a row, and the guard worried they might eat up so much rice that the brahmin would not pay him. So he went to tell the brahmin exactly what was happening.

When the brahmin heard that the flock's leader took rice back with him every day, he felt a fondness for this particular parrot and told the guard to snare him unharmed. The guard set the trap at the spot where the Bodhisatta landed each time, and it caught him immediately. But the Bodhisatta was so caring, he waited until the other parrots had eaten enough food before crying the call of capture. After enough time had passed, he yelled out, and was disappointed that every bird flew away: not one came to help him. Hearing the cry of the Bodhisatta and the whoosh of the fleeing flock, the guard came and saw he had succeeded. He tied up the Bodhisatta's feet and took him to the brahmin.

The brahmin, thinking the Bodhisatta was being greedy or spiteful, asked why he took away more rice than he could eat. The Bodhisatta explained that he did not take it for any selfish reason, he used it to feed his parents and some other birds that needed help. The brahmin was deeply impressed that a bird could be more righteous than most humans, so he rubbed oil on the Bodhisatta's feet, sat him on a seat of honor, fed him sweetened grains and sugar water, and offered to give him the rice fields. The Bodhisatta accepted just eight acres as a feeding ground for his flock, which the brahmin marked out with boundary stones. The Bodhisatta encouraged the brahmin to continue being generous, then returned home where everyone was astonished and happy that he had survived.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The parents of one of the Buddha's disciples had been reluctant to let their son adopt a religious life, but he begged them and they agreed. After five years, he fully mastered dharma, so he went out to live alone and meditate in the forest to reach spiritual insight. But after twelve years of striving, he still had not achieved it. One day another disciple visited him at his hut and told him that his parents had fallen into ruin. With no children around to protect them, their servants and workers had stolen everything, and they were now homeless beggars, clothed in rags. The son began to cry, and realizing he had labored in vain for the past twelve years, he decided to leave the sangha and return home to care for his parents.

The depressed disciple went to listen to the Buddha preach one last time before returning home. The Buddha divined this disciple's situation and made his morning talk about the virtues of parents. Listening to the sermon, the son realized that, though it would be difficult, he could remain a disciple and still support his parents, and he resolved to do so. He took up abode near their hut, and from then on he made two daily alms rounds: one for them and a second for himself. He usually got little food for himself, and some days he got none, so he grew pale and thin.

When some other disciples learned what he was doing, they told him that sharing alms with people who are not disciples was an offense, and they reported him to the Buddha. The accused disciple was summoned back to the monastery, where he admitted sharing the alms he collected with his parents. But, to the surprise of the other disciples, the Buddha praised the caring son instead of rebuking him. He then told this story to explain that caring for others was always a good thing, and that in the past he himself had collected food for his needy parents.

The brahmin was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, while the guard was an earlier birth of Channa, Prince Siddhartha's charioteer, who later became a disciple. The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother, and the flock of parrots were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Canda-Kinnara Jataka (#485)

The Bodhisatta was once a kinnara, a half-human, half-bird deity. He lived with his wife on a silver mountain in the Himalayas, and one day they went down from their home to play in a stream, covering themselves in flowers, singing and dancing, and swinging in vines.

A king who had come to the Himalayas to hunt heard their sweet voices and snuck up silently to watch them. He immediately fell in love with the Bodhisatta's wife and shot the Bodhisatta with a poison arrow so he could have her for himself. He fell unconscious with blood oozing out of the wound, and his wife, assuming he was dead, cried out in agony.

When the king stepped out of the bushes, the Bodhisatta's wife angrily condemned him, but he told her not to grieve because he would make her his queen. She answered, loud as a lion's roar, that she would kill herself before having anything to do with him. Hearing this, the king lost his infatuation and walked away without an ounce of shame or regret.

The Bodhisatta's wife embraced his body, and she noticed it was still warm. She cried out, begging a god to save him before it was too late. Her pleas caused the throne of Indra, king of the gods, to become warm. And when he divined the cause, he rushed down from heaven in the form of a brahmin and sprinkled water on the Bodhisatta. The poison was instantly neutralized, the wound disappeared, and he stood up completely healed.

His wife fell at Indra's feet in praise, and Indra told them they should not come down the mountain to the realm of man again, and they forever after followed his advice.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's kinnara wife was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife. One time after reaching enlightenment, the Buddha returned home to visit his family. His father praised the Buddha's wife, saying that while the Buddha was gone, she had refused all gifts sent by other kings and remained good and faithful at heart. The Buddha said this was no surprise because even in the past when she was born as an animal, she was completely devoted. Then he told this story to explain.

The king was an earlier birth of Anuruddha, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Maha-Ukkusa Jataka (#486)

The Bodhisatta was once a lion. He lived on the north shore of a lake. Two hawks, one male and one female, lived on the south and west shores, and the male hawk asked the she-hawk to be his wife. First, she wanted to know if he had any friends. When he answered no, she told him a good husband must have friends to defend against any dangers that arise, and she would only marry him if he befriended the osprey that lived on the lake's east shore, the turtle that dwelt on a small island, and the Bodhisatta. And so he did. Then the hawks built a nest in a tree on a small island and had two young sons.

One day some villagers were out hunting and they stopped on the hawks' island. The men built a smoky fire for some relief from gnats and mosquitoes, and the smoke also irritated the fledgling hawks, who could not yet fly. The men heard these birds' cries and started building a proper fire so they could cook and eat them.

The she-hawk sent her mate to get help from the osprey. The osprey dove into the lake and sprinkled water from his wings to douse the fire. The men, who were climbing the tree to get the birds when the osprey arrived, came down without them. They built another fire, and when they started climbing again, the osprey returned with more water. Again and again, the osprey doused their fire, and the men came down the tree empty-handed to light it anew.

By midnight, the osprey grew weak and thin, so the she-hawk sent her mate to get the turtle. Hearing their predicament, he agreed to come, but his son told his father he would go save the hawks instead. He dove into the lakebed, took some mud to the island, and quenched the flames with it. The men decided to eat the turtle instead and tied it up with vines and strips of fabric torn from their clothes. But the turtle was so strong it dove into the water, pulling the men in with them.

The men scrambled back to the island and decided to sleep, then catch the young hawks in the morning. This time the she-hawk sent her mate to ask the Bodhisatta for help, and he said he would kill the hunters. They saw the Bodhisatta swimming toward them and fled.

The osprey, turtle, and hawks all joined the Bodhisatta on the island to celebrate their victory. The Bodhisatta spoke to them about the value of friendship and told them to never break its bonds; and for the rest of their lives, none of them ever did.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The hawks were earlier births of a poor man and woman. When he proposed to her, she wanted to know if he had any friends that would help them in times of need. He had none, so she told him to come back after making some. The man began by striking a friendship with the city's four gatekeepers. He then went on to successively befriend town guards, astrologers, nobles of the royal court, the commander-in-chief, the viceroy, and eventually through

these others, the king. The man then became close to the Buddha's eighty chief elders, and finally the Buddha himself.

Now known as the "man of many friends," he wed the wise young woman, and they received many gifts from the king on down. On the seventh day, they invited the Buddha and five hundred disciples to their home and offered them great gifts. The Buddha thanked them and gave a sermon, after which the couple had a breakthrough in understanding dharma.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing what great things resulted from the husband following the wife's advice, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that it was not the first time they benefited from this woman telling her husband to make friends.

The father and son turtles were earlier births of Moggallana, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the Buddha's son. The osprey was an earlier birth of Sariputta, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Uddalaka Jataka (#487)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's chaplain. One day, while out in a park, he saw a slave and became enamored with her. They became intimate, and she got pregnant. She told the Bodhisatta she wanted to name their child after his grandfather, but he said it would be wrong to give a noble name to a slave's bastard child. He told her instead to name the child Uddalaka, after the golden shower tree he was conceived under. The Bodhisatta gave the woman his signet ring and told her that if she had a girl she could sell the ring and use the money to raise her child. But if she had a son, she should bring him to the palace after he had grown up.

When Uddalaka came of age, he asked his mother who his father was, and she told him. Because his father was a chaplain, he was inspired to study the holy books and went to do so with a world-renowned teacher in Taxila. But while living there, he saw a group of ascetics and instead went off to study with them. He began by serving them in return for lessons, but eventually his knowledge eclipsed them all and he became their leader and teacher.

One day Uddalaka convinced the others to leave the forest and go on an alms pilgrimage, and they eventually ended up in his hometown. They all stayed in the royal park, and word spread about the wise teacher visiting. When the king heard the news, he wanted to meet him. Uddalaka told the other ascetics to help him impress the king by doing austerities, such as lying on a bed of spikes and worshipping fire.

When the king saw the ascetics' rigorous activities and the fancy seat that Uddalaka sat on, he said these must be supremely learned and advanced men. But the Bodhisatta told the king he was being deceived by sham tricks and a facade of grandeur. After the Bodhisatta explained proper religion, including the importance of studying the scriptures and the correct behavior of a brahmin priest, Uddalaka told the Bodhisatta he was his son, showing the signet ring as proof. The Bodhisatta asked the king to allow his son to serve as an assistant chaplain and the others to become soldiers if they renounced their heretical ways. They all agreed and entered royal service.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Uddalaka was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who claimed to dedicate himself to seeking salvation, but was known by other disciples to be dishonest. When the Buddha heard some of them discussing the dishonest disciple, he told them this story so they knew that he had also been this way in the past.

Bhisa Jataka (#488)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He was born into a wealthy family, but was uninterested in worldly things and would not let his parents fix him up with a wife. When his parents died, he gave away the family fortune and became an ascetic, as did his six younger brothers and one sister. They went to the Himalayas, taking a friend, a male slave, and a maid with them, and lived a holy life near a lotus lake, eating the fruits and roots of the forest.

They took turns collecting food (though the Bodhisatta, his sister, and the maid were exempt from this duty), and whoever gathered it in the morning laid out eleven portions and banged a gong to signal the food was ready to be picked up.

The family's perfect virtue caused the throne of Indra, king of the gods, to shake. When Indra divined the cause, he ran a test to determine whether they were just free of desire or if they were proper sages. For three days in a row, Indra caused the Bodhisatta's share of food to disappear. On the first day, the Bodhisatta assumed it had been a mistake. On the second day, he figured someone was subtly informing him of some fault in his behavior, and on the third day, he sounded the gong and summoned the others to a meeting. The three brothers who had gathered food over the last three days denied withholding his share, so the Bodhisatta figured it must have been stolen. Everyone felt agitated by the possibility. At this point, three other beings who lived near them—the forest's chief tree fairy, an elephant who had

escaped from his owner to live free in the forest, and a monkey who used to perform in a snake charmer show—joined the meeting. All thirteen of them swore an oath that they had not taken the food and invited curses to befall the guilty. They hoped the thief would have great treasures, a big family, sweet food to eat, a heart full of desire and pride, and faith in the stars and lucky days—all things that would ruin an ascetic's life.

Indra, who had been watching the proceedings, revealed himself and asked the Bodhisatta why they all disdained the things that bring most humans such joy. He answered that desires were chains that bound men, leading to sin and misery. Indra was pleased by this answer and confessed his experiment. The Bodhisatta rebuked Indra for making sport of them, but accepted his apology. Indra saluted them all and returned home to heaven. And for the rest of their lives the band of ascetics never wavered from their righteous path.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man of noble birth gave up his easy life to become a disciple of the Buddha and was completely dedicated to dharma. One day during an alms round he met a beautiful woman and fell in love at first sight. Overcome by passion, he became so depressed that he stopped cutting his hair and nails and cleaning his robes, became thin and weak with yellow skin and veins sticking out of his body, and no longer took joy in his life of solitude.

When the Buddha found out about his problem, he told this disciple that the woman was wicked and he should get her out of his mind. Then the Buddha told the disciple this story to explain how in the past he himself had not wavered from the righteous path when he was an ascetic. Hearing this, the disciple overcame his lust and regained his health.

The Bodhisatta's brothers were earlier births of Sariputta, Moggallana, Punna, Maha Kassapa, Anuruddha, and Ananda, six of the Buddha's top disciples. His sister and maid were earlier births of Uppalavanna and Khujjuttara, one of the Buddha's top female disciples and top lay followers respectively. The tree fairy was an earlier birth of Satagira, a goblin who supported the Buddha and worked hard to spread his message; the slave was Citta, one of the Buddha's most devoted lay followers; the elephant was Parileyya, an elephant who cared for the Buddha during a time he stayed alone in a forest; the monkey was Madhuvasettha, a prominent brahmin from the Buddha's time; and Indra was Kaludayi, another of the Buddha's top disciples.

Suruci Jataka (#489)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. Two kings, friends since they were young, had once made a pact to someday marry two of their children to each other. Because he loved his daughter Sumedha so dearly and wanted her to have the utmost happiness, when the time came for her engagement, he insisted she must be the prince's only wife. His friend rejected this audacious proposal since a king of a realm as large and powerful as his should have at least sixteen thousand wives. But his son, Suruci, had heard about Sumedha's incredible beauty and agreed to the demand. After taking the throne, King Suruci ruled righteously, and they lived happily.

Ten thousand years passed, and Queen Sumedha had not yet borne a child. This worried the citizens so much they gathered in the palace courtyard and implored King Suruci to assemble a proper harem. But he told them he would not break the promise he had made to his wife. The queen heard what people were saying, and though she appreciated her husband's devotion, she knew they were right. So she chose four thousand concubines for him. After another ten thousand years, the king still had no children, so she gathered another four thousand women. She did this four times in total, but after fifty thousand years and sixteen thousand and one wives, the king was still childless.

The townspeople gathered again and suggested King Suruci tell his concubines to pray for a son. He took their advice, but nothing changed. Later, he told Queen Sumedha to pray, and

she agreed. As she sat meditating in her room, the Bodhisatta's palace trembled, and when he divined Queen Sumedha's wish, he confirmed she was sufficiently virtuous and decided to give her a son. He chose a god endowed with abundant merit and sent him to her womb.

When their son, Maha Panada, was born, the people rejoiced, bringing coins to the king so the prince would never lack anything. He was raised amidst the utmost splendor and was perfect in every way. When the prince reached age sixteen, the king decided to pass the crown to him and wanted to build a new palace for the occasion. After the king sent men out to find the best location, the Bodhisatta's throne grew warm. When he saw the reason, he sent Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, to join them. Vissakamma told the others to go eat breakfast; then when he was alone, he struck the earth with his staff, causing a massive palace to rise.

Prince Maha Panada's consecration ceremony was held alongside the ceremonies for his marriage and palace blessing; and no expense was spared. After seven years of feasting and celebrating, people began to grumble and wanted the festivities to end. King Suruci told them it could not end until his son laughed. So thousands of acrobats and jugglers were brought before him—even one so clever he had himself chopped into bits and reassembled—but none could spark a smile because Maha Panada still remembered the entertainment he'd had in heaven. This made people angry, so the Bodhisatta intervened again, sending down one of his divine dancers. He did the half-body dance—where only one

hand, foot, eye, and tooth flick and throb about while the others stay stone still—and this put a little grin on the prince's face. This was sufficient for King Suruci, and he closed the festival, which officially ended his own reign. King Maha Panada ruled with as much wisdom, generosity, and righteousness as his father.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Queen Sumedha was an earlier birth of Visakha, the Buddha's top female lay supporter. One day she invited the Buddha and some of his disciples to her home. Heavy rain began the night before and caused waist-deep flooding near the Buddha's monastery. The Buddha told the disciples to get themselves drenched to the skin because it was his last worldwide storm. Then he magically transported the group to her home, and he arrived completely dry. After the meal was eaten, Visakha said she hoped that for all her life she would be able to support the Buddha's disciples, as well as sick people; and the Buddha gave her eight wishes, saying for sure she would be able.

Later, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how great Visakha's virtue must be in order to receive eight wishes from the Buddha. He told them this story so they knew that she had also received wishes from him in the past.

Maha Panada and Vissakamma were earlier births of Bhaddaji and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Panc-Uposatha Jataka (#490)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived in a forest and had a pigeon, snake, jackal, and bear as neighbors, and they used to listen to him preach. One day, while these animals were out seeking food, each suffered misfortune; afterward they went to the Bodhisatta's hut.

While the pigeon was foraging with his mate, a hawk swept in and carried her off and ate her. The pigeon was tormented by his loss, and he vowed not to eat again until he had learned to subdue his desire.

A gorgeous white bull having fun tossing dirt with his horns scared the snake, and when he tried to crawl back into his hole, the bull accidentally stepped on him. Angered, the snake bit and killed the bull. Villagers came in sadness and buried the bull with honor, and the snake felt terrible guilt over killing another creature. He vowed not to eat again until he had learned to subdue his anger.

The jackal found a dead elephant. He tried to eat the trunk, tail, belly, and tusks, but these were all too hard. Then he bit into the anus, which was as soft as ghee. He ate all the way into the belly and stayed there for days in total contentment, eating when hungry, drinking the blood, and sleeping on the lungs. When he was ready to leave, the jackal found that the wind and sun had shrunk the elephant's skin, and his rear entrance was closed. He was trapped for many days and grew thin and yellow. But then it rained, and the skin softened, opening his path ever so slightly. He backed into the head and

ran at top speed, forcing himself through a hole so tight that his body was bruised and his fur was scraped completely off. Ashamed, he vowed not to eat again until he learned to subdue his greed.

The bear left the forest and went to a village for food. When the villagers spotted him, they beat him away. Covered in blood and with a fractured skull, he vowed not to eat again until he learned to subdue his greed.

While the animals were lying in misery beside the Bodhisatta's hut, a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) living up in the Himalayas divined that the Bodhisatta was destined to be a perfect Buddha, but had not yet reached mystic ecstasy in this life because he remained full of pride for his noble family. He came down to help the Bodhisatta quench his pride and perfect his wisdom, and he took a seat on the Bodhisatta's stone slab. "Curse you, you good-for-nothing, bald hypocrite!" the angry Bodhisatta yelled when he saw him there. "Why are you sitting on my seat?" The private Buddha calmly introduced himself and said the Bodhisatta would someday fulfill the ten perfections of character and become a perfect Buddha named Siddhartha. Knowing this, he said, there was no reason for the Bodhisatta to take pride in his present noble birth. The Bodhisatta was shocked and speechless. His lesson taught, the private Buddha floated off through the air back to his home. The Bodhisatta was overcome with grief that his pride had robbed him of the chance to kiss the private Buddha's feet and ask

about his future, so he vowed not to eat again until he learned to subdue his pride.

The Bodhisatta went to his leaf hut and sat on a pile of twigs, meditating until he entered a mystic trance and overcame his pride. Then he came out to talk with the four animals, asking why they were fasting. They told him. The animals noticed that the Bodhisatta was also fasting, which he usually did not do, and he told them about his encounter with the private Buddha. Because they managed to change their attitudes, all five ended up in heaven when their time came.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha preached about the importance of observing the holy days to a crowd of both disciples and lay followers. His sermon focused on the latter, and he told this story to show that keeping the holy-day traditions, including fasting, is an ancient practice and can help subdue passion and lust.

The pigeon, snake, jackal, and bear were earlier births of Anuruddha, Sariputta, Moggallana, and Maha Kassapa, four of the Buddha's top disciples.

Maha-Mora Jataka (#491)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden peacock, the leader of his flock. One day, seeing his reflection in a pool of water, he thought he was the most beautiful of all peacocks and realized that if he remained in the human realm, he would someday fall into danger. So that night, without telling anyone, he snuck away to the Himalayas, settling in a distant cave that was impossible to climb to, either from below or above.

Every morning at sunrise, and again at sunset, the Bodhisatta sat on a hilltop and recited two protection spells in worship of the sun. A hunter once saw the Bodhisatta sitting there, and on his deathbed told his son about it, just in case the king ever wanted to have a golden peacock.

Not long after the hunter died, the chief queen dreamed that she sat listening to a golden peacock preach; and when she awoke, she longed to have this in real life. Knowing that if she just told the king of her dream he wouldn't care, she pretended to be pregnant and told him this was one of her cravings; and she would die if she did not get her wish.

When the king's chaplains assured him that such creatures existed, he assembled all the hunters from across the kingdom and asked if any of them knew of a golden peacock. Only the man informed by his deceased father answered, and the king gave him money and sent him out to capture it.

The hunter followed his father's directions and found the Bodhisatta. Day after day, the hunter set snares on the hilltop, but the Bodhisatta was protected by his daily chants, and even when he stepped into one it wouldn't close. The hunter died without ever capturing the Bodhisatta, and then the queen died of grief over her wish going unfulfilled. Angry with the Bodhisatta, the king wrote an inscription on a golden tablet telling people that a magical golden peacock lived in the Himalayas' fourth range and anyone eating it would be forever young and immortal.

The next king read the tablet. Wanting immortality, he sent a hunter to the forest, but the quest for a golden peacock proved equally futile for him and the next four kings. After seven years, the hunter sent by the seventh king wondered why he had no success. So he watched the Bodhisatta throughout the day and saw that he did morning and evening prayers. Now that the hunter knew it was tremendous holiness counteracting the snares, he came up with a new plan. He caught a peahen and trained it to dance when he clapped his hands and cry out when he snapped his fingers, and he took it to the hilltop early in the morning. When the Bodhisatta arrived, the hunter snapped his fingers. Upon hearing the peahen's song, the Bodhisatta was seized by lust for the first time in seven thousand years. Instead of reciting his spells, he went off to find the female and got caught in a snare.

The hunter instantly regretted what he had done and decided to set the Bodhisatta free. In order to not frighten the Bodhisatta, which could cause him to break a leg or wing

while struggling to get away, the hunter was going to cut the snare from a distance with an arrow. Just as the hunter drew his bow, the Bodhisatta spied him in the trees and begged to be taken to the king alive. The hunter explained what he was actually doing, and then the two discussed the nature of virtue so profoundly that the hunter became a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others).

Concerned about birds encaged back at his home, the hunter spoke an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result), and not only were his many hundreds of birds set free, but so was every captive creature in all of India. The hunter then flew off to Nandamula Cave to live out his life, and the Bodhisatta remained in his same home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples began lusting for a woman, and the Buddha told him this story to show how he himself had suffered this problem in the past but was able to overcome it. Upon hearing the story, the disciple became an arahant.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Taccha-Sukara Jataka (#492)

The stories of the past and the present are the same as the Vaddhaki-Sukara Jataka (#283).

Maha-Vanija Jataka (#493)

The Bodhisatta was once a merchant. One time, while leading an oxcart caravan to a distant land, he got lost in a remote forest and ran out of food and water. All the merchants sat down in the shadow of a huge banyan tree and noticed it was very moist. They cut off a branch on the east side, and out flowed water. The men joyously bathed and drank. Then they cut a branch to the south, and out came rice, meat, porridge, ginger, lentil soup, and other choice foods. They ate their fill. Then they cut away a western branch, and out sprang a bevy of beautiful women, wearing fine clothes and exquisite jewelry. They all took their pleasure. Lastly, they cut off a branch to the north and out streamed gold, silver, jewels, fabrics, rugs, and other valuables. They gathered as much as they could carry.

Still wanting more, the men decided to cut the roots and bring down the whole tree. The Bodhisatta was the only one who stood against their cruel plan, but he could not stop their axes from swinging. The naga king who lived there saw what was about to happen to his tree and called forth an army of three hundred archers and six thousand swordsmen to slay the greedy men, sparing only the Bodhisatta. Then the naga soldiers filled five hundred carts with treasure and led them back to the city, putting everything in the Bodhisatta's house.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A group of merchants got together to lead an oxcart caravan to a distant land. Being men of virtue, they went to see the Buddha before setting out and promised to honor him if they returned safely.

Eventually the merchants got lost without food and water in the same remote forest as the merchants of the past, and they came upon the same banyan tree. Noticing the leaves were wet, they cut off branches and got water, food, women, and treasures, enough to fill all five hundred of their carts.

Back home, they took great gifts to the Buddha and told him they renounced the merit gained from their donation in favor of the spirit who provided it. When the Buddha heard how they received the treasure, he said they were successful because of their moderation and told them this story so they knew what would have happened if they had been greedy.

The naga king was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sadhina Jataka (#494)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He always observed the holy days and was so righteous and generous—giving six hundred thousand coins worth of donations daily from six alms halls around the city—that he became known across India and throughout the heavens.

When Indra, king of the gods, heard some others praising the Bodhisatta, he sent his charioteer, Matali, down to earth with an invitation to visit heaven. The chariot, pulled by one thousand horses, shone in the sky as bright as the full moon, and everyone knew that the gods were summoning their king, who at the moment the chariot came was preaching to his courtiers about righteousness and justice.

The Bodhisatta received a hearty welcome in heaven, and Indra gave him half of the glorious city so he could live in immortal pleasure. The Bodhisatta stayed there in bliss for seven hundred years, but when his merit was exhausted he grew dissatisfied. Indra offered to share his own merit with the Bodhisatta, but he rejected the gift, saying he did not want anything that he didn't earn himself.

The Bodhisatta returned to earth, landing in the royal park. He told the park-keeper who he was and sent him to get the present king, the seventh generation descended from the Bodhisatta. The king saluted the Bodhisatta and offered to give up his throne to him, but the Bodhisatta refused. He said he only wanted to do good deeds, and the king arranged for it. For seven days the Bodhisatta gave away vast treasures for

alms. And on the last day, he died and was born right back into Indra's heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha praised some lay followers for observing the holy day and told them this story to show that doing so can bring great rewards.

Indra and the king were earlier births of Anuruddha and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Dasa-Brahmana Jataka (#495)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. The king's generosity was legendary across India, but he was disappointed that people who got alms from him were wicked and did not keep the five precepts. He asked the Bodhisatta to find him the most righteous men in the land so he could give them alms and make lots of merit. After describing various kinds of holy men, all deemed unworthy of the king's great gift, the Bodhisatta told the king about five hundred private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) who lived in Nandamula Cave deep in the Himalayas. The king asked the Bodhisatta to invite them to his palace. The Bodhisatta told the king the first step was to order every citizen to decorate the city, give alms, follow the holy-day vows, and pledge themselves to virtue.

At dawn the next day, the Bodhisatta and the king got on the ground and invited the distant private Buddhas by throwing eight handfuls of flowers into the air: they magically traveled across the land and fell on the private Buddhas. Knowing that this invitation came from one with the seed of Buddhahood within him, the private Buddhas accepted. And since the flowers did not return, the Bodhisatta knew the private Buddhas would come. The next morning, the private Buddhas flew to the palace courtyard, where the king gave them great honor and grand gifts for a whole week. When it was time to leave, they thanked the king and flew back to their mountain home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, gave him alms and invited the city's citizens to watch. The next day, the people arranged to give even more alms to the Buddha, and they invited the king to watch. Not wanting to be outdone, the king made another alms offering, and then again the people gave one larger than the last. Six times the people bested the king, but then Queen Mallika, his exceptionally wise chief queen, took charge of creating an almsgiving that the people could not surpass. She arranged for five hundred disciples to sit in a wooden pavilion with golden boats in the center. Five hundred elephants held white parasols over each disciple, and high-caste girls waved fans and spread fragrance. The king gave the Buddha everything in his alms hall plus four priceless objects: a white parasol on a jeweled stand, a couch, a stool, and a footstool.

The day after King Pasenadi and Queen Mallika presented what became known as the incomparable gift, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing it, and he told them this story so they knew that, in the past, he himself had also given an incredible gift after having thought carefully about almsgiving.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Bhikkha-Parampara Jataka (#496)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. The king was righteous and wise and always sought to improve himself, and he asked people to tell him his faults so he could correct them. But nobody, from his closest advisors to ordinary citizens living outside the city gates, ever shared any criticisms. So he left his advisors in charge of the kingdom and traveled in disguise with his chaplain out to the countryside, looking for honest answers. Still, he heard nothing but praise.

One day, out in a frontier village, a wealthy landowner saw the king. Impressed by his appearance (a dainty body and golden skin), he invited him to his house and prepared him a magnificent meal. Just as the food was being served, the Bodhisatta and a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) who lived in Nandamula Cave deep in the Himalayas arrived. The king gave his plate of food to his chaplain, the chaplain gave it to the Bodhisatta, and the Bodhisatta gave it to the private Buddha. The private Buddha began to eat, without offering to share. The landowner did not understand why they did this, so he asked them one by one and was told that each had greater virtue than they did. The king said his chaplain was his teacher and did much to help him. The chaplain said he lived in the city with a family and had many pleasurable indulgences, while the Bodhisatta lived alone in the forest without cravings. The Bodhisatta said he gathered roots, honey, herbs, scraps of meat, and other forest foods to eat, while the private Buddha never possessed anything. And

the private Buddha, when asked why he didn't share, confirmed he was superior among them all.

The landowner thanked them all for teaching him the precedence in giving alms. Then the Bodhisatta and the private Buddha both went on their ways, and the king remained at the landowner's home for a few days before heading home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The landowner of the past was an earlier birth of a landowner who faithfully supported the Buddha and his disciples. One day he decided he should show honor to dharma, but he didn't know how. When asked, the Buddha suggested the landowner give a gift to Ananda, one of his top disciples and his personal attendant, nicknamed the "Treasurer of Dharma," since he had committed everything to memory. The landowner invited Ananda to his home with great splendor and gave him a variety of choice foods and enough expensive cloth to sew three robes. Since the offering was for dharma, Ananda considered himself undeserving. He put the food in his bowl and took everything back to the monastery, where he gave it to Sariputta, one of the two chief disciples. But Sariputta also felt unworthy and gave it to the Buddha, who ate the food and kept the cloth since no one was above him.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how the gift ending up with the Buddha was the appropriate result, he told them this story so they knew that this was not

the first time food rose in successive steps to the person who most deserved it.

The king and the chaplain were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta.

Matanga Jataka (#497)

The Bodhisatta was once an untouchable. One day the daughter of a merchant was on her way to the royal park when she saw the Bodhisatta at the city gate. He stood to the side to let her entourage pass, but she thought encountering an untouchable brought bad luck, so she washed her eyes with scented water and returned home. The people with her, enraged at being deprived of a day of free food and liquor in the park, beat the Bodhisatta unconscious.

When he came to, the Bodhisatta resolved to get this woman as his wife. He lay down at the door to her father's home, telling the family that he would not leave without her. They were so disgusted at having an untouchable around that after seven days the father gave the Bodhisatta his daughter just to get rid of him. Still weak from the beating, he made her carry him on her back to his house in the untouchable village.

The Bodhisatta thought his wife deserved abundant honor, and the only way for someone like him to give it to her was to renounce the world and become an ascetic. So he left her and went to the forest, embracing the religious life with such diligence that he gained the eight attainments and five supernatural faculties in just seven days.

The Bodhisatta returned home and told his wife his plan to make her even more glorious than she had been before they were married. He would go away again and hide out deep in the Himalayas. During this time, she needed to tell everyone that her husband was really the great god Brahma, not an

untouchable, and he was currently visiting heaven, but would return by breaking through the upcoming full moon.

Seven days later, when the full moon was at its peak rise, the Bodhisatta took the form of Brahma and returned to his village in a blaze that lit up the night sky across the kingdom. He flew down and circled the city three times before landing to receive garlands and praise from the crowd that had gathered to greet him. He then went to his house, which people had covered with white cloth and filled with flowers. He touched his thumb to his wife's navel, making her conceive a son, and told her that, from then on, she would be worshipped as a goddess. Then, with a warning to be vigilant, the Bodhisatta flew back through the moon and returned to live alone in his Himalayan home.

Everything the Bodhisatta predicted for his wife came true. The people built her a magnificent seven-story palace in the city, she acquired a vast fortune, and the water used to wash her feet was reused for ceremonial sprinkling by kings throughout India. As their son grew up, he studied with the best teachers, and when he reached adulthood, he provided alms to feed sixteen thousand brahmins daily.

During a festival, the son adorned himself with jewels and golden slippers and walked around directing his servants. On that same day, the Bodhisatta wondered what had become of his son. He divined what he'd been up to and saw that he was giving alms in the wrong way, so he went down to the city to teach him proper behavior.

The son did not know his father, and when he saw an ascetic in filthy, ragged clothes in his room, he insulted him and ordered him to leave. The Bodhisatta did not reveal himself, but rebuked his son's arrogance and tried to explain that alms should be given to the poor and the worthy, not given to greedy, wicked brahmins as he was doing. The son respected the highborn and rejected this advice, and he ordered his servants to rough up the Bodhisatta and toss him out. But before they could knock him down, the Bodhisatta flew away, landing on a street where he knew his footprints could be followed. He collected alms, then sat down to eat.

Meanwhile, a band of goblins who respected the Bodhisatta was angry about the son's behavior. They seized him by the neck and twisted it half around so his head faced his back. Then they dumped him on the ground with his eyes turned up white in their sockets and body so rigid he appeared dead. They did the same to the sixteen thousand corrupt brahmins.

When witnesses told the Bodhisatta's wife about the attack on her son, she knew that the ascetic must be her husband. She went off with her ladies-in-waiting and followed the footprints to the spot where he was eating and apologized for not raising their son into a virtuous man. When the Bodhisatta heard what the goblins had done, he gave her a magical elixir mixed with some of his rice gruel and told her to feed it to their son and the brahmins. Then he flew back home.

When her son was revived, the Bodhisatta's wife called him a fool for not knowing how to give alms properly, and he felt

remorse. He swore to his mother that from then on he would only give to righteous ascetics, arahants, private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others), and others who deserved it. Together they diluted the magic rice gruel with water and poured it into the mouths of the wounded brahmins, and they were healed. But because they ate the leftovers of an untouchable, all sixteen thousand were expelled from their caste, and in shame they went to live in another kingdom.

Later, the Bodhisatta heard about an ascetic plagued by the pride of his noble birth, and he came down to humble him. He built a riverside hut upstream from the arrogant ascetic, and after cleaning his teeth with a stick, he let it float down the river, where it got caught in the ascetic's hair. Angry about this, the arrogant ascetic walked until he found the Bodhisatta; and when he realized he was an untouchable, ordered him to leave. The Bodhisatta built a new hut downstream, but his tooth sticks floated against the current and still found the ascetic's hair. The arrogant ascetic cursed the Bodhisatta: "If you don't leave in one week, your head will explode!" On the seventh day, the Bodhisatta stopped the sunrise and said he would only release the sun if the ascetic bowed down at his feet and asked for mercy. The people living there demanded the ascetic do it, so he agreed. But first, the Bodhisatta stuck a clump of mud on the ascetic's head and told him to get into the river. When the sun rose, the mud exploded instead of the Bodhisatta's head.

With this ascetic properly humbled, the Bodhisatta went to deal with the sixteen thousand wicked brahmins. He flew to

their new city and walked the streets with his alms bowl. When some of these shamed brahmins saw him, they reported him as a juggler and a swindler to the king, who ordered him arrested. The king's messengers found the Bodhisatta eating, and one of them struck him with his sword and killed him. Infuriated, the gods poured down a torrent of hot ashes and wiped the entire kingdom off the map.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of a wicked king. Pindola Bharadvaja, one of the Buddha's top disciples, spent many a day sitting peacefully in the royal park. One day the king, thoroughly drunk, came into his park with a group of women. When he fell asleep, the women put down their musical instruments and walked about the park picking fruits and flowers. They met Pindola Bharadvaja and sat down to hear him preach. When the king awoke, he was angry that the women were gone and threw a basketful of red ants over Pindola Bharadvaja. He rose into the air and rebuked the king, then flew back to the Buddha's monastery.

When the Buddha heard what had just happened, he told this story so Pindola Bharadvaja knew that the king had also abused a religious man in the past.

Citta-Sambhuta Jataka (#498)

The Bodhisatta was once an untouchable; and then a deer, osprey, and ascetic in subsequent lives. His name was Citta, and he grew up very close to his cousin, Sambhuta. One day the daughters of a merchant and a chaplain were on their way to relax in the royal park when they saw the two men doing street performances at the city gates. Believing that seeing untouchables was an evil omen, they flushed their eyes with scented water and returned home. The people with these women, enraged at being deprived of a day of free food and liquor in the park, beat the Bodhisatta and his cousin senseless. Deeply upset, the men decided that to have a happy life they should leave and go someplace where nobody knew they were untouchables. They chose Taxila and went in the guise of brahmins to study religion with a famous teacher.

One morning, their teacher was unable to accept an invitation to a man's home to receive an offering of food. He appointed the Bodhisatta, one of his top students, to take the others there and give the blessing in his place. When the food was served, the hosts told them to wait and let it cool for a moment. But Sambhuta ignored their warning, and the rice burned his mouth. He yelled out, "Hot!" and the Bodhisatta told him, "Spit it out!" In the shock of the moment, they both spoke in their untouchable dialect. Back at the school, other students beat them for their deceit, and the pair was banished from the city. They went off to the forest to live as ascetics and died not long after.

Later, the Bodhisatta and his cousin were born as deer and were always together, cuddling head-to-head and horn-to-horn when they slept, until a hunter killed them with a spear. Then they were born as ospreys and again were inseparable, lying together head-to-head and beak-to-beak, until they were snatched by a man for food.

In the next birth, the Bodhisatta was born the son of a chaplain and Sambhuta was born as a prince; and they could remember their past lives together. As adults, the Bodhisatta went off to the Himalayas to live as an ascetic and his cousin became king.

The Bodhisatta wanted Sambhuta to become an ascetic too, and after waiting fifty years for the right time, he flew down to the royal park. The Bodhisatta heard a young boy singing the king's coronation hymn (all the citizens sang it because they loved their king so much), which included the lines, "Sambhuta is doing great. Who knows if Citta is too?" And with this, the Bodhisatta devised a plan. He taught the boy a new verse of the song and told him to sing it for the king, promising that the king would be pleased.

The boy ran home, and his mother dressed him up spick and span, then took him to the palace where the king agreed to listen to his new lyrics. After the king sang the original, the boy answered the song's question with the new verse: "Behold my Lord, Citta is at the park gate; and like you, he is doing great." The king asked the boy where he got this verse, and then he raced off to his park in the royal chariot.

The king saw the Bodhisatta and sat down at his side, expressing his joy and respect to his dear friend. He offered to build him a palace and give him half his kingdom. But the Bodhisatta refused the offer, saying wealth does not bring real happiness, and reminded the king that all things are impermanent. Inspired by this advice, the king gave his eldest son the throne and went off to live as an ascetic with the Bodhisatta.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Two of the Buddha's disciples were best friends. They lived together, shared everything, and couldn't bear being apart. When the Buddha heard some other disciples praising the men's relationship, he said a friendship in one life was nothing special and told them this story so they knew that he himself had once kept an unbroken bond across four lifetimes.

The Bodhisatta's companion through the lives was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sivi Jataka (#499)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He was a righteous, wise, and generous ruler. He built six alms halls around the city and gave out goods worth six hundred thousand coins every day. But he felt this charity was not enough and vowed to give a part of himself to anybody who asked for it. “If he asks for my heart, I will cut open my chest with a spear and rip it out and give it to him dripping with blood clots. If he names my flesh, I will slice it off my body. If he wants my blood, I will pour it into his mouth or fill a bowl. If he needs his house cleaned, I will take off my robes and do a slave’s work. If he demands my eyes, I will tear them out like the pith of a palm tree.”

Indra, king of the gods, divined the Bodhisatta’s vow and wondered if he would really go through with it. To test him, Indra went to earth in the form of a blind old brahmin and stood at one of the alms halls. When the Bodhisatta arrived, Indra praised and flattered him, and then asked for one of his eyes. Thrilled that his heart’s desire would be filled that day, the Bodhisatta said he would give both eyes, not just one. Ignoring his advisors’ pleas to reconsider, he called for a doctor. The pain of the extraction was extreme and left the Bodhisatta’s clothes stained with blood, but he never hesitated. Indra put both eyes into his empty sockets and walked out of the city, returning to his heavenly home.

After a few days of blindness, the Bodhisatta put his advisors in charge of the kingdom and moved to the royal park to live as an ascetic. As he sat beside the lake, the Bodhisatta thought about the gift he had given, and Indra’s throne grew

warm. He decided it was time to return to earth and restore the Bodhisatta's sight. Indra told the Bodhisatta to make a wish, and he answered that, because he was blind, all he wanted was death. Indra told the Bodhisatta that because he had made such a great gift, he could speak an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) and his eyes would be restored. The Bodhisatta spoke about his perfect generosity, and new eyes grew in his sockets.

Indra praised the Bodhisatta and returned to heaven, while the Bodhisatta and his entourage marched to the palace in a grand procession. For the rest of his life, the Bodhisatta urged his subjects to be generous and do good deeds; and because they followed his advice, they swelled the heavens when they died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, gave him alms and invited the city's citizens to watch. The next day, the people arranged to give even more alms to the Buddha, and they invited the king to watch. Not wanting to be outdone, the king made another alms offering, and then again the people gave one larger than the last. Six times the people bested the king, but then Queen Mallika, his exceptionally wise chief queen, took charge of creating an almsgiving that the people could not surpass. She arranged for five hundred disciples to sit in a wooden pavilion with golden boats in the center. Five hundred elephants held white parasols over each disciple,

and high-caste girls waved fans and spread fragrance. The king gave the Buddha everything in his alms hall plus four priceless objects: a white parasol on a jeweled stand, a couch, a stool, and a footstool.

The king expected a full sermon of thanks in return for his generosity, but the Buddha left without doing it. The king worried he had done something wrong and angered the Buddha, so he went to the monastery to ask about it. The Buddha told him that he had read the mind of one of the king's advisors, who was greedy, and thought the almsgiving had been a terrible waste. If the Buddha had given appropriate thanks at that time, he said, the advisor's head would have exploded; so his abrupt exit was done out of compassion. The king was pleased to hear this and gave the Buddha a fancy robe.

The day after King Pasenadi and Queen Mallika presented what became known as the incomparable gift, the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the king's extraordinary generosity and he told them this story so they knew that he himself had given even greater gifts in the past.

Indra and the doctor were earlier births of Anuruddha and Ananda, two of the Buddha's top disciples, and the king's subjects were the Buddha's present followers.

Sirimanda Jataka (#500)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Sirimanda Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. King Vedeha asked Senaka, his chief advisor, and the Bodhisatta, "Which is better, a wealthy fool or a poor wise man?" Senaka answered that wealth was the only thing that really mattered. People flock to rich men the way birds flock to a tree full of fruit, he said. The mighty Ganges River is nothing compared to the sea, and the words of rich men, no matter their truth, carry more weight than what a wise man says—just look at how the five advisors bow to the king. The Bodhisatta, on the other hand, chose wisdom, reasoning that fools who get wealth are struck by bad luck and commit sins, suffering in both this life and the next. Fools suffer shame and misery—a king would lose his throne without the help of wise advisors.

The Bodhisatta's answer left Senaka speechless, like one who had used up all the food in his granary, and the king was so pleased he gave him a bull, an elephant, ten chariots pulled by thoroughbred horses, sixteen excellent villages, and a thousand cows.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves,

goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another. Senaka was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha.

Rohanta-Miga Jataka (#501)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden deer, king of a herd of eighty thousand deer living in the Himalayas. He, along with his younger brother and sister, cared for his blind elderly parents. One time a hunter saw the Bodhisatta and later, on his deathbed, told his son about this majestic sight in case the king ever asked about a golden deer.

One night the chief queen dreamed of a golden deer preaching to her from a golden seat, and the next day she told the king she wanted to have this in real life. She begged him to make it happen, feigning illness and saying she would die if her wish was not fulfilled.

When the king's courtiers and brahmins assured him that such creatures existed, he summoned the kingdom's hunters and asked if any knew where to find a golden deer. Only the man informed by his deceased father answered, and the king promised to reward him richly if he captured it: alive was preferred, but dead was acceptable if necessary.

The hunter searched and found the Bodhisatta, then set a snare at a ford in the river where the herd came to drink. The next time the Bodhisatta walked to the river, the noose snagged his leg, but he remained quiet and calm so the rest of the herd could finish drinking. After some time had passed, he tried to jerk out of the noose, but it cut down to his bone. So he yelled the cry of capture, and the terrified deer all fled.

When the Bodhisatta's brother and sister did not see him in the stampede, they knew something bad had happened and returned to the river to help him. He told them both to leave or else there would be nobody to look after their parents. But they refused to go, vowing to risk their lives to save him.

The hunter ran toward the trap with his spear in hand, but stopped when he saw the three deer standing together. When told that they were family, his heart grew soft. And when the brother explained that the hunter had not captured an ordinary deer, but a king of exceptional wisdom and virtue, and that killing him would result in five total deaths (the Bodhisatta, the brother and sister who would sacrifice their lives, and the parents left helpless after their children were gone), the hunter decided he was more afraid of being swallowed up by the earth into hell or struck by lightning than he was desirous of the king's reward. The hunter tenderly removed the snare and washed away the blood. Through the power of the hunter's love and the Bodhisatta's virtue, the wound magically healed as though it were never there.

When the Bodhisatta heard why the hunter had captured him, he offered to go to the palace and preach to the queen. But the hunter warned him that kings are cruel by nature, and it was not worth the risk. Instead, the Bodhisatta taught the hunter about the holy life and the five precepts so he could give a sermon in his place. He had the hunter rub his back to get some golden hairs to prove who the message came from.

At the palace, the hunter placed the golden hairs in the king's hand and told his tale from the forest, praising the three deer. At the king's behest, the hunter took a seat on a golden throne and gave a glorious sermon urging the king to be righteous in all his deeds so he would be reborn in heaven. The queen's craving was fulfilled and the king was delighted, so he offered the hunter gold, jewelry, cows, and two wives of equal rank and worth. The hunter, however, gave his reward to his wife and went off to the Himalayas to live as an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's brother was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. When Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, planned his third attempt to kill the Buddha, by releasing a drunk, fierce elephant into the street while the Buddha walked his morning alms round, people told the Buddha not to go to the city. But he still went as usual.

When they saw the elephant demolishing houses and crushing wagons, all eighty of the chief elders wanted to face the elephant themselves to protect the Buddha; but he ordered them not to. Ananda, however, had such strong affection for the Buddha that he didn't listen and stood in front of the Buddha ready to sacrifice his life. After Ananda ignored two orders from the Buddha to leave, the Buddha used his supernatural powers to send Ananda behind him. As the elephant charged, he saw the Buddha's glorious form and

fell down in worship at his feet, never again harming a person.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Ananda's willingness to sacrifice his life for him, he told them this story so they knew that Ananda had also risked his life for him in the past.

The king, the queen, and the Bodhisatta's sister were earlier births of Sariputta, Khema, and Uppalavanna, three of the Buddha's top disciples, and the hunter was an earlier birth of Channa, Prince Siddhartha's charioteer, who later became a disciple. The Bodhisatta's blind parents were earlier births of the king's mother and father, and the eighty thousand deer were earlier births of the Buddha's Sakya clan.

Hamsa Jataka (#502)

This story is the same as the Mahahamsa Jataka (#534).

Sattigumba Jataka (#503)

The Bodhisatta was once a parrot. He and his brother were born to a parrot king in a high, remote forest. One day a whirlwind arose and blew the young brothers away; the Bodhisatta landed amidst flowers in a monastery and his brother fell into a village full of thieves. They grew up in these new homes.

Later, the king went deer hunting with a large group of people. Their servants beat bushes to rouse up animals, and a deer rushed right past the king before he could shoot it. The other hunters mocked the king for his failure. Unable to tolerate their jokes, the conceited king took after the deer in his chariot, determined to catch it. The king and his charioteer rode until midday before giving up and turning back. They stopped in a little valley near the thieves' village; taking a bath and a nap. All the thieves were away, leaving only their cook and the parrot behind. The parrot saw the king and brought the cook over to help rob and kill him. The king awoke and overheard the two discussing their plans from afar. He woke the charioteer, and they quickly left.

The king then came upon the monastery and was welcomed warmly by the Bodhisatta (all the ascetics were out gathering roots and fruits at that time) with leaves and seeds to eat and cool cave water to drink. The king returned the parrot's kind words and told of the evil parrot he'd just encountered. The Bodhisatta revealed that they were brothers, absorbing the habits of the people around them: one violence and deceit, the other kindness and self-control. It was an insightful lesson

for the king, and when the ascetics returned, he invited them to come live under his care in the royal park. He also declared immunity from capture for all parrots across the kingdom. The king provided for this band of ascetics until his final days, and so did his descendants through seven generations.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked parrot was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and the band of thieves were Devadatta's disciples. The second time (out of three) that Devadatta tried to kill the Buddha was by hurling a mighty rock at him from atop a mountain. The rock got blocked by two outcrops, but a splinter broke off and pierced the Buddha's foot, causing great pain. His disciples carried the Buddha to Jivaka, the Buddha's doctor, who healed the wound.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the incident and how Devadatta surrounded himself with wicked people, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time Devadatta kept sinful company.

The king was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and the band of ascetics were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Bhallatiya Jataka (#504)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He loved to eat charcoal-broiled venison, so he left his kingdom in the care of his advisors and went on a hunting trip in the Himalayas. One day he saw two fairies embracing and kissing each other along a pleasant stream; then suddenly they began to cry pitifully. He wanted to know why they wailed, so he laid down his bow and silently crept up to them; and before they had a chance to flee, he asked, “Why do you weep?”

Six hundred seventy-seven years ago, the fairies told him, a storm had sent the river rising high while the couple were on opposite sides and they had to spend the night apart, separated by the fast-flowing waters. They were reunited the next morning, but they loved each other so much that the tiny time apart left them with lingering sorrow. The king was so moved by their story he immediately returned to his palace. He gave up hunting and spent the rest of his life enjoying his wealth and giving charity.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The fairies were earlier births of King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, and Queen Mallika, his exceptionally wise chief queen. One time, while the king and queen quarreled about their conjugal rights, the king completely ignored her. Resolving to make peace between them, the Buddha went to collect alms at the palace, and after his meal, the Buddha asked why the queen was absent. The king explained that she had become

intoxicated with pride, and the Buddha told them this story of their past love as a way to get them back to normal. From then on, the pair lived in harmony.

Somanassa Jataka (#505)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. Before he was born, a band of five hundred ascetics living in the Himalayas went down to the city to get salt and seasoning, and they slept in the royal park. The king invited them to the palace for a meal and asked them to stay as his guests through the rainy season. The king showed them great honor and provided everything they needed.

On the day the ascetics left to return home, they stopped for a noontime rest, and some of the disciples discussed their pity for the king not having any sons. Hearing this, their leader looked into the future and divined that the chief queen would conceive that night. One of the ascetics heard the prediction and knew he could benefit from it, so he feigned illness and stayed behind when the others left. He ran back to the city as fast as he could and told the king he'd seen in a divine vision that the chief queen would soon give birth to a son. The joyous king asked the ascetic to remain and gave him a home in the park.

The Bodhisatta was born and raised with every comfort. When the Bodhisatta was seven years old, the king needed to go put down a rebellion on the frontier, and he told his son to take care of the ascetic. One day the Bodhisatta walked out to meet the ascetic in the park and saw that he was working in the garden: he'd become quite wealthy growing vegetables, fruits, and herbs and selling them to market vendors. The Bodhisatta called him worldly and left without showing any honor.

To protect his privilege, the ascetic knew he had to ruin the Bodhisatta. After the king returned to the city, the ascetic knocked over his bench, smashed his waterpot, scattered grass in his hut, smeared his body with oil, and lay down feigning pain. The king found the ascetic this way when he dropped by for a visit. He told the king that the Bodhisatta had attacked him unprovoked, and without hesitation the king sent the executioners to behead his son.

When captured, the Bodhisatta asked to be taken to see his father before being killed, and the servants agreed. When the Bodhisatta heard the charge against him, he denied attacking the ascetic and insisted the man was actually a false ascetic. At the Bodhisatta's urging, the king talked to people in the market and learned the truth. And when the ascetic's hut was searched, a stash of money was found. The crowd turned on the ascetic and beat him to death.

Disgusted by his father's foolish, rash behavior, the Bodhisatta publicly rebuked him and declared that he was leaving home to become an ascetic. The king asked for, but did not get, forgiveness, so he told his wife to try and change the Bodhisatta's mind. But she defied her husband and urged her son to go. He walked into the Himalayas and took up abode in a hut built by Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, and was cared for by various gods until he became an adult.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The false ascetic was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. The Buddha told his disciples this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried unsuccessfully to kill him in the past.

The Bodhisatta's mother and the leader of the band of ascetics were earlier births of the Buddha's birth mother and Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Campeyya Jataka (#506)

The Bodhisatta was once a man from a poor family and then a naga king in back-to-back lives. Two human kings were constantly at war, repeatedly gaining and losing control of their rival's territory. One day, after suffering defeat in a battle, one of the kings fled with enemy warriors in pursuit. He came to a flooded river and plunged in, preferring to risk drowning instead of being captured.

A naga king lived in this river, and when he saw the magnificent king crossing it, he felt fondness for him and brought him into his jeweled palace. When the king explained why he jumped into the river, the naga king promised to use his magic powers to make him ruler of both kingdoms. After enjoying the naga king's hospitality for a week, the king went out and slew his rival, becoming the undisputed leader. In gratitude, the king built a new jeweled pavilion on the riverbank every year, and the naga king came with a large entourage to receive tribute from his friend. When the Bodhisatta saw the nagas' magnificence at one of these annual festivals, he yearned for rebirth in the naga world for his next life. And because he lived righteously, his wish came true, and he was reborn as a naga king.

The Bodhisatta ruled in great opulence, with naga maidens pampering him at all times. But he was not satisfied with the naga realm's grandeur, and he wanted his next life to be as a human again. He tried to keep the holy-day vows and live a moral life, but because of the myriad temptations always around him, he frequently failed. So, despite the danger of

being captured and killed, he began to spend the holy days in the human realm atop an anthill, where he would not be distracted. He told his worried queen the water in their lucky pond would turn murky if he got assaulted, disappear if he got carried off by a garuda, and become blood red if he got caught by a snake charmer.

People from the nearby village began to worship the naga, and they built a pavilion over the anthill. When a man who knew a magic spell that could control all the senses was traveling home and passed by the Bodhisatta, he decided to capture him to make some money working as a snake charmer. The man ate an herb and recited the spell, and the Bodhisatta felt as if his head had been split by a sword and blisters rose on his skin. Despite the pain, the Bodhisatta resolved to not get angry or resist because he did not want to stray from the path of righteousness. (Had he sprayed poison out of his nostrils, the snake charmer's body would have shattered and scattered like a fistful of chaff.) Instead, he closed his eyes, drew his head into his hood, and quietly endured the pain. The snake charmer pulled the Bodhisatta's tail to stretch him out full length on the ground, squeezed his body to make him weak, broke his teeth, and stuffed his bloody body into a basket.

The brahmin took the Bodhisatta to the nearby village and made him perform: changing color, size, and shape, and dancing so fast he appeared to have thousands of heads. The crowd was amazed and gave the snake charmer more than a thousand coins plus various other gifts. The snake charmer had originally planned to set the Bodhisatta free after earning

one thousand coins, but this initial performance made him greedy and he set out to get rich performing for kings and courtiers. He bought a carriage and a wagon and did shows in every town he passed for a month until he reached the capital city, where he was invited to perform for the king.

On the day of the Bodhisatta's palace performance, his queen wondered why he had not been home for so long and went to check the lucky pond. Finding the water red, she took human form and rushed to his anthill, and there she saw the blood where the Bodhisatta had been tortured. In the village she learned what had happened and went to the city, arriving in the palace courtyard while the show for the king was underway. While he danced, the Bodhisatta saw his tearful wife floating in the air above the adoring crowd, and he crawled into his basket in shame.

The show interrupted, the king noticed the naga queen and asked why she was angry. She told the king what had been done to the Bodhisatta, and why he had not killed his captor. She begged for his release, and the righteous king offered to pay the snake charmer with gold, jewels, cattle, wives, and other riches. But he refused payment and set the Bodhisatta free unconditionally.

The Bodhisatta took human form and, with his queen, showed respect to the king. And, to erase his doubts over the truth of his tale, the Bodhisatta invited the king to visit the naga realm. The king and his entourage entered on a gloriously adorned road and saw the city wall made of the seven precious jewels and towers made of gold; inside were

many palaces. The Bodhisatta's ornate palace was scented with perfumes, shaded by trees, and filled with the sound of celestial harps. For a week, the visitors enjoyed divine food and drink and all manner of pleasures.

When it was time for the king to return home, the Bodhisatta told him and his courtiers to take as much treasure as they wanted, and they rode home with hundreds of carts laden with gold, silver, pearls, and coral.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha praised some lay followers for observing the holy-day vows and told them this story so they knew that, even when he lived the glorious life of a naga king, he faithfully observed the holy days.

The snake charmer, the naga queen, and the king who befriended the Bodhisatta were earlier births of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis; the Buddha's wife; and Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Maha-Palobhana Jataka (#507)

This story is the same as the Culla-Palobhana Jataka (#263).

Panca-Pandita Jataka (#508)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Panca-Pandita Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. Senaka, King Vedeha's chief advisor, was jealous of the Bodhisatta and wanted him dead. Senaka asked him whether it was ever okay to share a secret, and the Bodhisatta answered no. Knowing King Vedeha would disagree with this, Senaka told him the Bodhisatta was a traitor, and to prove it, he should ask the Bodhisatta who secrets should be shared with. The next time all five of his advisors came together, the king asked each of them this question.

Answering his own question first, King Vedeha said that if they are virtuous, faithful, affectionate, and subservient to their husbands, wives should be let in on secrets. Senaka and the others each gave friends, brothers, sons, and mothers as examples of who to trust. When the Bodhisatta answered that wise men always keep secrets to themselves, he saw the displeasure on the king's face and realized he was being tested. Not trusting the foolish king, the Bodhisatta promptly left the palace. Right after he did, the king gave Senaka his own sword and ordered him to chop off the Bodhisatta's head when he returned the next morning.

The Bodhisatta surmised that his rivals had shared a sinister secret with the people they mentioned as trustworthy. Knowing that after they met with the king, the four always sat

on an overturned water trough next to the palace door and chatted, the Bodhisatta climbed underneath it to spy on them. When they sat down, the men asked Senaka if he'd ever shared a secret with a friend and he admitted he had, but it was too important to tell: If the king ever found out, he'd be executed for it. And what if the Bodhisatta was lying under the trough, listening? The men mocked his worry and promised they could be trusted. So Senaka mentioned a well-known woman who had gone missing, and he admitted to having sex with her in a grove of trees and then killing her to steal her jewelry; and only his friend knew.

Then the others revealed their darkest secrets, which they had only ever shared with one other person. One had a spot of leprosy on his thigh that his brother washed and bandaged each morning; and when the king got sad he would cry and unknowingly lay his head atop it. Another got possessed by a goblin every evening on the holy days and barked like a mad dog, so his son needed to tie him up indoors and host a party to hide the noise. The last had stolen one of the king's lucky jewels, and he always took it to the palace with him, which is why the king spoke to him first and gave him so much money.

That evening, King Vedeha thought about all the good things the Bodhisatta had done for him over the years and regretted ordering him executed. Queen Udumbara noticed his grief, and he told her the Bodhisatta would die the next morning. She was aghast, but hid her feelings from the king. After the king fell asleep, she sent a message warning the Bodhisatta what was planned for him at the palace.

Arriving early the next morning, the four advisors stood at the palace gate, but the Bodhisatta stayed away until after they went inside. Then, in the company of guards and a great crowd of people, he safely approached the palace and saluted the king, who, playing dumb, invited him in. The Bodhisatta told the king he knew his secret, that he'd ordered his beheading. (But to protect the queen, he did not admit she had told him.) Then he revealed the other four advisors' secrets, offering this as proof that he was right that secrets should be kept to one's self. The furious king ordered the four men executed, but after they got one hundred blows at every street corner, the Bodhisatta suggested they be pardoned, and the king consented.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another. Senaka was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha, and the other three advisors were earlier births of Potthapada, Ambattha, and Pilotika, three ascetics who respected the Buddha.

Hatthi-Pala Jataka (#509)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal chaplain's son. Before the Bodhisatta was born, the king and his chaplain, close friends since childhood, were both disappointed about being childless. They agreed that if either of them had a son, they would treat him as both of their sons; a son born to the chaplain would become a prince, and a son born to the king would inherit the chaplain's wealth.

One time the chaplain saw a wretched woman with seven strong, healthy sons, but no husband. He asked her how she got her sons, and she said it was by praying to the deity of a banyan tree at the city gate. The chaplain went to the tree and shook a branch, asking why a beggar woman gets seven sons, while the king, who offered the deity a tribute of one thousand coins every year, gets none. He threatened to cut down the deity's tree if she did not grant the king a son within seven days. Each day he came back to repeat his threat, and on the sixth, she realized he was serious.

The deity asked the gods of the four directions and the twenty-eight lords of the goblins for help, but none would grant a child. Indra, king of the gods, however, agreed to do it. He found four gods in his heaven with great merit—they had previously been weavers and together gave one-fifth of their earnings as alms—and he told them they must be born on earth to the king's chief consort. Not wanting to be burdened with royalty, they requested being born into the chaplain's family instead, and said that once they were old

enough, they would renounce the world and live as ascetics. Indra agreed.

The chaplain returned on the seventh day with some strong men bearing axes and demanded an answer from the deity. She cleft the trunk of her tree and came forth, telling him that he would soon have four sons, who would become ascetics. The chaplain demanded that at least some of them go to the king, but the deity said it was not possible. So the chaplain accepted her gift and assumed he could somehow prevent them from renouncing the world when the time came.

The four sons were born to the chaplain's wife in quick succession, the Bodhisatta coming first. In the hope of hindering the four young brothers from ever becoming ascetics, they were made to work with elephants, horses, cattle, and goats. And the king banished all ascetics from the entire kingdom, so there was nobody to inspire them.

When the Bodhisatta was sixteen years old, the king and his chaplain wanted to make him the king so he would not run off and become an ascetic. To test if he was ready, they dressed as ascetics—hair in a big top knot, dirty, and robes made of tree bark—and went for alms at his home. To their disappointment, the Bodhisatta was thrilled to finally meet real holy men, and he offered them water and food.

The pair revealed themselves and their purpose, but the Bodhisatta ignored their pleas to start a family and serve as king, and he renounced the world right then and there. Life is

impermanent, he told them: “Even as I speak with you, sickness, old age, and death are approaching.” He gave thanks to his father and the king and departed the city, followed by his servants and a throng of people a league long who had heard his words and understood his noble quest. The Bodhisatta divined that his brothers, parents, and many others would follow in his path, so he took up abode along the Ganges River near the city to wait for them.

The next day, the king and his chaplain, in the same disguises, asked the next oldest brother to take the throne. But he felt just as the Bodhisatta had, and with a company of people one league long he went to be with the Bodhisatta, who greeted him and all other comers while seated floating in the air. On the next two days, the two younger brothers similarly chose religion over royalty and led league-long crowds to the Bodhisatta’s camp on the Ganges.

After a night of feeling old and alone, the chaplain decided to follow his sons. He gave his wife his fortune and left with sixty thousand brahmins. The next day, the chaplain’s wife felt the same way and took the brahmins’ wives to the Bodhisatta’s camp. Then the following day, when the king learned his chaplain and wife had joined their sons as ascetics, he sent men to their house to take all the valuables they had left behind.

The king’s chief queen, who had been swayed by the Bodhisatta’s message, was angry at the king for his attachment to wealth and wanted to teach him a lesson. She heaped dog meat in the palace courtyard with snares all

around it, and vultures swooped down to get some. After eating all the meat, the vultures noticed the snares. They knew they could not fly straight up with such full bellies; they needed to run a bit before takeoff. So the clever vultures vomited up their food and flew away safely. The greedy birds stayed and ate the vomit from the others and got caught because of their weight.

The queen took the king to see the snared vultures and explained that taking the chaplain's treasures was like eating vomit. The king repented and praised his wise queen for saving him. They both decided to follow the Bodhisatta in an ascetic life. The king departed that same day with his courtiers, followed by a line of people three leagues long. And the queen, after opening the doors of the palace's gold storehouses, went the next day with another three-league-long line behind her. With the city nearly deserted, the Bodhisatta finally left his camp for the Himalayas, leading a twelve-league-long procession that grew as people from other parts of the kingdom joined.

By the time Indra saw the Bodhisatta on his march, the line of followers had reached thirty leagues. Indra sent Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, to construct a monastery thirty-six leagues long and fifteen wide, stocked with everything necessary for a religious life, including trees that magically bore a variety of fruits. Vissakamma also used his powers to banish all spirits, dangerous beasts, and hideous sounds from the area.

A king from a nearby kingdom heard of the Bodhisatta's renunciation and went to see the abandoned city. The site of the discarded treasures made him and his followers want to become ascetics with the Bodhisatta, so they went to join him. Soon after, in the same manner, six more kings renounced their thrones and their wealth and went to the Bodhisatta's monastery. By following the teaching and the example of the Bodhisatta, not a single person living with him went to hell after death.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while talking to his disciples about the Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment, the Buddha told them this story as an example of a similar renunciation in his past.

The king and queen were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother. The chaplain, his wife, and the Bodhisatta's three brothers were earlier births of Maha Kassapa, Bhadda Kapilani, Anuruddha, Moggallana, and Sariputta, five of the Buddha's top disciples. All the others who renounced the world were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Ayoghara Jataka (#510)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. The queen's first child had been devoured by a goblin shortly after birth. (In a former lifetime, the goblin and the queen had been rival wives in the king's harem. One was jealous due to being childless, so she prayed that in a future life she would be able to eat the other's children. For this reason, she was born as a goblin.) For her second delivery, the queen was surrounded by guards, but the goblin still got in and ate the baby. During the queen's third pregnancy, not knowing the vengeful goblin had died, the king had blacksmiths build an iron house to protect the baby. The Bodhisatta was born and raised safely inside this house, always surrounded by guards.

The Bodhisatta grew up wise and strong, and when he turned sixteen, his father let him out of the iron house and gave him the crown. He was led on a stately procession around the city, and, for the first time ever, he saw beautiful parks, lakes, and homes and wondered why he had been kept imprisoned all his life. The king's advisors told him about the goblin eating his two brothers and assured him that his isolated upbringing was through no fault of his own.

Pondering his life, the Bodhisatta realized that, though he had escaped the wrath of the goblin and his iron prison, he could not escape disease, old age, and death—so he resolved to become an ascetic. When he was brought before his father, he said he wanted nothing to do with royalty and was going to depart, explaining in depth that accumulating wealth is pointless because everything is impermanent and death is

inevitable: only a holy life prepares a person for the future. When the sermon was complete, the Bodhisatta set out for his new life.

The Bodhisatta's words were so powerful that his father also decided to renounce the world, and then so did everyone who lived in the city. Indra, king of the gods, saw the vast crowd following the Bodhisatta into the Himalayas and sent Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, to make a monastery for them all.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while talking to his disciples about the Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment, the Buddha told them this story so they knew that he had also forsaken the throne for a religious quest in the past.

The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother, and the people who followed the Bodhisatta into the ascetic life were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Kimchanda Jataka (#511)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was a righteous, generous king who always faithfully observed the holy days; and he encouraged others to do the same. But his chaplain was wicked. He spoke ill of others, lied, took bribes, and gave unjust verdicts in disputes.

Once, after one of the king's advisors criticized the chaplain for not keeping the holy-day vows, he began to do so in the middle of the morning. Later that day, the chaplain saw a woman observing the holy day, and he gave her a mango. Soon after this, the chaplain died and was reborn in the Himalayas as a spirit with the form of an adult man, and he lived in a golden palace amidst a glorious mango grove. (The mango grove being a result of giving the woman the mango.) He was attended by sixteen thousand nymphs and reveled in song and dance all night long. This was his reward for observing half a holy day. But because he accepted bribes and committed other sins, from dawn to sunset his beautiful body transformed into a hideous creature as tall as a palm tree. He had just one finger per hand, and with fingernails as big as spades, he had to tear the flesh off his back and eat it, all the while screaming in pain.

Shortly after his chaplain died, the Bodhisatta renounced his throne and retired to an ascetic life in a leaf hut along the Ganges River. He lived only on the food he could gather, and one day he found a large ripe mango from the former chaplain's grove floating down the river. It was a perfect fruit, so delicious that the Bodhisatta became obsessed and would

eat nothing else. He sat on the river bank and resolved not to leave until another floated his way. Seven days he stayed, becoming ill from hunger, wind, and heat, but no more mangoes came.

Noticing the Bodhisatta's suffering, a river goddess divined that he was a slave to his appetite due to so many years of eating only the best foods in the palace. She wanted to alleviate his suffering, so she came and urged him to cease his indulgence. He said he could not, and if she didn't help him, people would blame her for his death. So with her powers, the goddess transported the Bodhisatta to the grove where the special mangoes grew, and he ate his fill.

While wandering about, the Bodhisatta saw the spirit in both his dreadful daytime shape and his divine nighttime form. He asked what caused these two types, and the spirit revealed that he had been the Bodhisatta's former chaplain and confessed his sins from that life. When the Bodhisatta explained why he had come to the mango grove, the spirit promised to float plenty of ripe mangoes down the river. For the rest of his days, the Bodhisatta lived in the contentment of perfect mangoes and mystic meditation.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time some lay followers of the Buddha came to hear him preach, and he praised them for observing the holy days. He told them this story to show that doing so can bring great rewards.

The river goddess was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha’s top female disciples.

Kumbha Jataka (#512)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. Alcohol was discovered during his reign. A tree in the Himalayas had a hole in its crook between three branches, and it filled with water after rain. Alongside this tree grew two different species of myrobalan tree and a pepper shrub, and fruits from these would fall into the hole. Nearby was a wild rice paddy, and parrots would pluck the heads off rice plants and eat them while perched on the tree, dropping some husked rice into the hole. This blood-red mixture fermented in the sun's heat and became wine.

Birds, monkeys, wild dogs, and other forest animals would drink this liquid and fall down unconscious around the tree; soon after, they'd get up and fly or walk away as good as new. Seeing this, a forester realized the liquid wasn't poison, so he drank some. Intoxicated, he got the desire to eat meat, so he lit a fire and grabbed some passed-out birds from the base of the tree, eating their grilled flesh while gesticulating wildly with his free hand. The next day, he took some of this wild wine and meat to an ascetic who lived nearby, and they sat together, eating and drinking.

They filled some reed pipes with their wine, hung them on a carrying pole, and went to give the king some. The king got drunk and asked for more, so the men returned to the tree and brought back more wine. After a few more long trips to the mountains, they took note of everything in the tree's hole and started to make wine in the city. It became so popular that all the men drank it and became idle wretches, making

the city seem deserted. So the winemakers moved to another city, and it also perished in the same way, and then a third.

At their fourth city, they began brewing a batch of five hundred jars. To protect them, they tied a cat to each jar. As the wine fermented, some leaked out of the jars, and when the cats lapped it up, they passed out. Rats came and bit off the drunk cats' ears, noses, teeth, and tails. The king's advisors told him the cats had died from drinking the wine, so he assumed the two men were making poison and had them beheaded without delay.

When the king sent men to break the jars, the cats were up and were playing normally, so the king decided to drink the wine instead of destroying it. He set up a pavilion in the palace courtyard, and he and his courtiers began to drink. At that time, the Bodhisatta looked down on the world to see who was being righteous and saw that the king was about to get drunk. The Bodhisatta knew that if he did, all of India would be destroyed. So the Bodhisatta took the form of a brahmin and went to earth to stop him.

The Bodhisatta appeared in mid-air and spoke at length about the evils of alcohol. The jars, he said, contained countless vices, and anyone drinking from them sinks headfirst into a loathsome pool: their minds wander, they speak obscenely, act foolishly, become forgetful, babble stupidly, and sit naked around other people. They may even lose all their money, commit adultery, or kill a priest.

The king, now knowing the misery wrought by alcohol, had the jars smashed. He offered the Bodhisatta five villages, ten horses and chariots, one hundred handmaidens, and seven hundred cows as thanks, but the Bodhisatta revealed himself as Indra and refused any gift. Though alcohol gradually spread across India, the king never drank any, and for his righteousness, he went to heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Five hundred friends of Visakha, the Buddha's top female lay supporter, wanted to attend a drinking festival in their city, and they invited her to join them. Visakha declined because she never drank alcohol, so they asked her to come with them to give an offering to the Buddha. Some of the women started drinking before they even got to the monastery, and they sang, danced, quarreled, and made improper movements with their hands and feet in front of the Buddha. To frighten the misbehaving women, the Buddha shot light out of an eyebrow and then made it completely dark; this caused the effect of the alcohol to vanish. He then stood atop Mount Meru and emitted a ray of light from the hairs between his eyebrows with the power of a thousand moons and rebuked their behavior. They all repented. Then Visakha asked how alcohol came about, and the Buddha answered by telling this story.

The king who did not drink the wine was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Jayaddisa Jataka (#513)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. In past lives, two women in a king's harem had a rivalry so intense that one of them prayed she would have the chance to eat the other's children in a future life. In this present lifetime, the vengeful woman was born as an ogress, allowing her to fulfill her desire. The other woman became a chief queen, the Bodhisatta's grandmother. When this queen bore her first child, the ogress ran into the queen's room and devoured the baby in front of everyone before running off. When the queen gave birth again, the ogress did the same thing.

During the queen's third birth, guards surrounded the palace and kept a strict watch, but the ogress was still able to sneak into the room and seize the baby; though she did not have time to eat it. She fled with the baby boy and escaped through the sewers. The ogress fell in love with the child and raised him as her own. They lived in a cave at the cemetery and ate the corpses brought there. Because the boy was human, he couldn't turn himself invisible like she could, but the ogress gave him a magic root to make it happen.

When the queen gave birth for the fourth time, it was after the ogress had died, so her newborn son was safe. When he grew up, he ascended the throne and was a righteous king. This king's wise eldest son was the Bodhisatta, and he served as viceroy.

No longer having his magic root, the ogress's son was now visible to people, and they were frightened because he

appeared just like a regular ogre. Fearing that the man-eater would eventually kill and eat them, they complained to the king, so he sent soldiers to capture him. The ogress's son frightened the soldiers so much that he was able to escape to the forest. He lived at the foot of a banyan tree and never returned to the city. Now, instead of eating corpses, he seized people traveling by road.

One day the king organized a hunt. Just as the king was departing, a brahmin came to sell him a poem for four hundred coins. The king declared that whoever among his friends let a deer escape would pay for the poem, and he gave the brahmin lodging to await their return.

While they were in the forest, a deer ran straight at the king and got away. The king gave chase, and when he caught up to the deer, he chopped it in two with his sword. As he walked back with the carcass halves hung on a pole, the ogress's son captured him. The king declared who he was and urged him to take the deer instead, but the ogress's son mocked the king and said he was going to eat both him and the deer. Resigned to death, the king asked permission to return to the city and keep his promise to pay the brahmin so he could die with honor; he swore he would come back the next morning. The ogress's son, knowing a virtuous king would never lie, agreed.

The king went straight back to the city and paid the brahmin four thousand coins instead of four hundred. He tried to make the Bodhisatta the new king, but he refused the crown, instead insisting he would save his father by sacrificing

himself to what they assumed was an ogre. The king reluctantly accepted the offer, and in the morning, the Bodhisatta bid his distraught parents, sister, and wife farewell and walked into the forest with the courage of a lion.

The ogress's son, waiting in a tree for the king, saw the Bodhisatta approach with no fear. "Cruel ogre, I know you well," he said. "Eat me and set my father free." The ogress's son had never before met a person who didn't fear death—the Bodhisatta told him he'd never done an evil deed and would surely be born in the glory of heaven—and it frightened him. The ogress's son could not bring himself to eat such a virtuous man's flesh, so he told the Bodhisatta to gather firewood, hoping he would take the opportunity to run away. But the Bodhisatta returned, built a fire, and told the ogress's son about another time (as told in the Sasa Jataka (#316)) he had offered his life to help another.

Amazed by the Bodhisatta, the ogress's son set him free. The Bodhisatta, however, remained there to talk, and his words humbled the ogress's son to righteousness. As he taught the five moral laws, the Bodhisatta realized this was not actually an ogre. Ogres' eyes are red and do not blink; ogres cast no shadow and have no fear. This must be his abducted uncle, the rightful heir to the throne. Not believing the Bodhisatta's theory, the ogress's son said he would only believe the word of an ascetic gifted with supernatural vision who lived nearby. They went to meet him, and the moment the ascetic saw them approaching, he asked, "What brings you two descendants from a common ancestor to visit me?" Now

knowing the truth of his life, the ogress's son said he had no desire to be a king. Instead, he was ordained by the ascetic.

A great multitude greeted the Bodhisatta on his return to the city and listened to his story. The king went to see his long-lost brother and tried, unsuccessfully, to convince him to take the throne. Then he urged his brother to come live in the royal park, but he also refused this. So the king built a town for one thousand families near the ascetics' monastery to ensure they would always receive abundant alms.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The parents of one of the Buddha's disciples had been reluctant to let their son adopt a religious life, but he begged them and they agreed. After five years, he fully mastered dharma, so he went out to live alone and meditate in the forest to reach spiritual insight. But after twelve years of striving, he still had not achieved it. One day another disciple visited him at his hut and told him that his parents had fallen into ruin. With no children around to protect them, their servants and workers had stolen everything, and they were now homeless beggars, clothed in rags. The son began to cry, and realizing he had labored in vain for the past twelve years, he decided to leave the sangha and return home to care for his parents.

The depressed disciple went to listen to the Buddha preach one last time before returning home. The Buddha divined this disciple's situation and made his morning talk about the virtues of parents. Listening to the sermon, the son realized

that, though it would be difficult, he could remain a disciple and still support his parents, and he resolved to do so. He took up abode near their hut, and from then on he made two daily alms rounds: one for them and a second for himself. He usually got little food for himself, and some days he got none, so he grew pale and thin.

When some other disciples learned what he was doing, they told him that sharing alms with people who are not disciples was an offense, and they reported him to the Buddha. The accused disciple was summoned back to the monastery, where he admitted sharing the alms he collected with his parents. But, to the surprise of the other disciples, the Buddha praised the caring son instead of rebuking him. He then told this story to explain that caring for others was always a good thing, and that in the past he himself had refused to become king in order to save his father.

The ogress's son was an earlier birth of Angulimala, a dreaded bandit who cut off a finger of each person he murdered and wore them around his neck, and who later became an enlightened disciple of the Buddha. The ascetic and the Bodhisatta's sister were earlier births of Sariputta and Uppalavanna, two of the Buddha's top disciples. The queen was an earlier birth of the Buddha's wife and the Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother.

Chaddanta Jataka (#514)

The Bodhisatta was once an elephant. He was pure white, stood forty meters tall, and his tusks were seven meters thick and emitted six-colored rays of light. He lived beside a beautiful, bountiful lake deep in the Himalayas and ruled a herd of eight thousand.

One day, while standing between his two queens, the Bodhisatta struck a flowering sal tree with his head. Flowers and green leaves fell on his favorite queen, while dry twigs mixed with dead leaves and red ants fell on the other, and this angered her. Another time, while bathing in the lake, the Bodhisatta sprinkled pollen from a large lotus on his head and gave the flower to his favorite queen, angering the other queen even more. Later, when the Bodhisatta and his wives were giving offerings of wild fruit to five hundred private Buddhas (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others), the queen with the grudge prayed to be reborn as a human queen so she could send a hunter to kill the Bodhisatta. Then she set her scheme in motion by starving herself to death. She was reborn as a beautiful princess, and when she came of age she married a king and became queen consort, chief of his sixteen thousand wives.

The new queen remembered her previous life and her hatred of the Bodhisatta, and when the time was right, she put on a soiled robe and lay in bed pretending to be sick. The king came and offered her any wish that would make her feel better, and she asked that he summon all the hunters of the

kingdom to the palace. The king made it so with a proclamation by the beat of a drum, and soon after, sixty thousand men assembled. The queen announced that she needed a hunter to kill an elephant she had seen in a dream and bring his light-emitting tusks to her, but none of the men had ever heard of such a thing. She chose a tough, hulking, ugly fellow disfigured with scars and strong as five elephants out of the crowd to be her hunter and told him the difficult, dangerous task she proposed, promising a reward of five profitable villages. At first he was terrified, but he accepted the task after the queen promised him success because she had given a gift and made a prayer to some private Buddhas. She gave him one thousand coins and all the equipment (such as an axe, drill, iron pegs, and leather parachute) he would need for the long, arduous journey to the Bodhisatta's home, and he set out with a promise to succeed.

The hunter traveled seven years, seven months, and seven days across thorny fields, dense forests, muddy swamps, and soaring mountains, all beyond the realm of man, to reach the Bodhisatta's lake. There he dug a pit, where the Bodhisatta went to bathe and, dressed as an ascetic, sat waiting inside with a poison arrow.

When the Bodhisatta came, the hunter shot him, and the rest of the herd fled in panic while their king roared in pain. Seeing the hunter, the Bodhisatta asked why he wanted him dead, and the hunter told of the queen's dream. Hearing this, the Bodhisatta knew it was the work of his former queen, and he told the hunter the truth about her.

Not wanting to suffer karmically from being angry, the Bodhisatta told the hunter to cut off his tusks and take them to the queen so he might make merit toward eventually reaching nirvana. The hunter tried, causing great pain in the Bodhisatta's bloody mouth, but he was so large the hunter couldn't do it. So the Bodhisatta grabbed the saw in his trunk and cut them off himself. He died soon after, the good queen taking leadership of the herd.

By the magical power of the tusks, the hunter returned to the palace in just seven days. He gave the queen the tusks and rebuked her hatred of the Bodhisatta. Knowing he was dead, the queen was filled with remorse and unbearable sorrow and died that day.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The wicked queen was an earlier birth of a young female disciple. While listening to the Buddha preach one time, she wondered whether she had ever been one of his wives in a past life. When the recollection of that former existence first came back to her, she laughed with joy, but moments later, when she realized what she'd done to him, she burst into tears. Her twofold reaction made the Buddha smile, and when some other disciples asked why he was smiling, he told them the young disciple had remembered a sin she once committed against him, and then he told them this story.

The hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times.

Sambhava Jataka (#515)

The Bodhisatta was once a royal chaplain's son. The righteous and generous King of Kuru wanted to make a greater effort at doing what was good and true, and he asked his chaplain, Sucirata, what this was. This was a profound and difficult question, Sucirata said, and he did not feel qualified to answer it. But his friend Vidhura, the King of Varanasi's chaplain, would be able.

Without delay, the king sent Sucirata out to ask him. On his way, Sucirata visited other sages around India, but none could answer the question. In Varanasi, Sucirata went to Vidhura's house early in the morning, and the two talked as friends. When breakfast was over, Sucirata explained why he came and he asked Vidhura to explain truth and goodness.

To Sucirata's surprise, Vidhura said this question was too much for him and he could not answer it. But he said his eldest son was far wiser than he and sent Sucirata to get an answer from him. The son welcomed his father's friend, but he was presently having an affair with a married woman and was thus not in the right frame of mind to answer such a monumental question. He sent Sucirata to his younger brother, the middle son, but he too was distracted by an affair with a married woman. Their youngest brother, the Bodhisatta, was only seven years old, but the middle son told Sucirata not to hesitate asking him because he was one hundred thousand times smarter than he himself was, and could answer with the mastery of a Buddha.

Sucirata found the Bodhisatta and other boys playing in the street and asked his question. With a voice as sweet as honey that magically spread across the whole city, the Bodhisatta said that to reach heaven, a king must never do anything wicked and must be a shining example of righteousness to others.

For such a wise answer, the people roared applause, waved cloth in the air, snapped their fingers, and threw ten million coins' worth of jewelry at the Bodhisatta's feet. Sucirata wrote the entire answer on a golden tablet and gave the Bodhisatta a thousand-weight of gold.

Back in Kuru, the king followed the Bodhisatta's advice for the rest of his life, and went to heaven when he died.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing his supreme wisdom, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also been very good at answering questions in the past.

The King of Kuru, Sucirata, Vidhura, the eldest son, and the middle son were earlier births of Ananda, Anuruddha, Maha Kassapa, Moggallana, and Sariputta, five of the Buddha's top disciples.

Mahakapi Jataka (#516)

The Bodhisatta was once a monkey. A farmer's oxen had wandered off into the forest while he worked in his field with a spade. Overcome with grief, he searched for seven days without stopping even to eat, but he couldn't find them and got hopelessly lost deep in the Himalayas. Eventually he climbed a Malabar ebony tree to eat the fruit, but a branch broke, and he fell into a pond at the bottom of a deep, hell-like gorge. After ten days, the Bodhisatta saw the man and carried him out of the gorge on his back.

After the rescue, the Bodhisatta was exhausted and took a nap. The farmer, ravished by hunger, smashed the Bodhisatta's head with a rock to kill and eat him. But the farmer was so weak he only injured him. Covered in blood and in great pain, the Bodhisatta sprang up into the safety of a high branch. Instead of getting angry, he told the farmer he would walk in the treetops to lead him out of the forest.

Because of his sin against the Bodhisatta, the man became a wretched leper, mere skin and bone and always in pain. For seven years he wandered to and fro. One day, as the man rested in a park, the king came there and asked what sinful deed he had done to bring such suffering upon himself. The man told the king his whole story, and as it ended, the earth opened up and swallowed him into hell. So the king went home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The leper was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the time Devadatta had tried to kill him by rolling a boulder down a hill, he told them this story so they knew that Devadatta had also tried to kill him with a rock in the past.

Dakarakkhasa Jataka (#517)

The full account of this lifetime is told in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546), while the Dakarakkhasa Jataka only relates this single incident from that story.

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. He worried that his king, King Culani, wanted to kill him, so he gave a gift of flowers and perfumes to Bheri, a wise, virtuous ascetic who took her meals in the palace, to find out what the king thought of him. To get her answer, Bheri took the king aside and asked him the Water Demon Question: "If there were seven of you voyaging on the ocean and a demon demanded a human sacrifice, in which order would you give people up?" The king answered, "First I would give my mother, next my wife, then my brother, fourth my friend, fifth my chaplain, sixth myself, but I would not give up the Bodhisatta under any circumstance."

Pleased that the king genuinely cherished the Bodhisatta, Bheri gathered a large company of people from the inner palace to ask him the question again so others would understand the Bodhisatta's exceptional merit as clearly as they saw the moon shining in the sky. This time, after King Culani answered for all to hear, Bheri asked for an explanation. First to die in this hypothetical situation was the queen mother, who Bheri said was smart and helpful, unlike most mothers; and also, when the king was a child, she saved his life by faking his death, letting him escape from an evil stepfather. She had her virtues, the king replied, but she had even more faults, including wearing inappropriate jewelry

and being rude to the people who worked for her. Next on the list was Queen Nanda, who Bheri said was prudent, polite, wise, devoted, and calm. King Culani said her faults were greed and leading him into temptation by her sensuality. His younger brother, Bheri said, brought Culani back to be king after killing their stepfather instead of seizing the throne for himself. The king said his brother was arrogant. Bheri said the king's friend was his closest companion since childhood and they'd shared everything throughout their lives. The king said his friend didn't respect personal boundaries. The chaplain, according to Bheri, possessed great merit and frequently used his mastery of omens and dreams to help the king. The king said the chaplain stared at him with open eyes and puckered brows. Then Bheri asked King Culani to explain why he would give his own life to protect the Bodhisatta. The king said in all the years he knew him, the Bodhisatta had never done even the most trifling thing wrong, and he knew everything from the past and the future: he would not give a man without sin to the water demon.

Wanting even more people to hear of the Bodhisatta's greatness, Bheri arranged to have the king answer the Water Demon Question in the palace courtyard, where everybody could come listen. And by hearing the king's praise of the Bodhisatta, they were drawn toward good in this world and happiness in the next.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and

converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Culani and Bheri were earlier births of Sariputta and Uppalavanna, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Pandara Jataka (#518)

The Bodhisatta was once a garuda king. A ship full of merchants wrecked in the ocean, and only one man survived. He floated to land without anything, even clothes, and went about begging. People assumed he was a naked ascetic and treated him well, giving him plenty of food and building him a small home, so the man decided to go ahead and live as an ascetic, despite having no knowledge or virtue. Because people didn't know his true nature, he was widely respected and his followers included the Bodhisatta and a naga king.

One day the Bodhisatta met with the ascetic to discuss a problem. Garudas, he explained, often died when attacking nagas because they had a secret defense. He asked the ascetic to extract the best method to seize them from the naga king and tell him. The ascetic agreed to try. The next time the naga king came to see him, the ascetic asked how garudas could safely seize nagas. The naga king said it was a secret he would never tell because, if garudas knew, they would kill all nagas. The ascetic said he only asked out of curiosity and promised to never tell anyone else. The naga was hesitant, but after being asked three times, he revealed that nagas swallow large rocks to make themselves too heavy to lift. If the garudas grabbed nagas by the tail rather than the head, the rocks would fall out of their mouths and they would be carried away every time. The ascetic promptly shared the secret with the Bodhisatta, who immediately flew off to attack his rival.

As he was carried helplessly head-down through the sky, the naga king lamented trusting the wicked ascetic and begged for his life. The Bodhisatta mocked him for sharing a secret with someone, and said he got what he deserved for being so foolish. But after lecturing the naga king on the importance of wisdom and caution, the Bodhisatta was filled with regret and flew down to the ground to set him free, promising never to attack nagas again.

Later, wanting to test the naga king, the Bodhisatta went to his home and signaled as though he was about to attack. The naga king swallowed some rocks, coiled up atop his tail, and sat up ready to strike. The Bodhisatta asked why he was afraid, and the naga king answered that he had learned his lesson to not trust anyone. The Bodhisatta appreciated his answer, and the two became friends. Now knowing the ascetic's true wicked nature, the naga king spoke an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) praying for his destruction. Immediately after this, the ascetic's head split into seven pieces, and the earth opened up, taking him down to the bottommost hell.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The ascetic was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times. When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how Devadatta had been a liar and was swallowed by the earth into the flames of hell, he told them this story so

they knew that Devadatta had also gone to hell for lying in the past.

The naga king was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sambula Jataka (#519)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. His son, who served as viceroy, caught leprosy. Because of his suffering, he decided to go live alone as an ascetic in the Himalayas. His beautiful and gifted wife, the chief princess, was so loyal she insisted on going with him. They lived in a leaf hut in the forest, and she was fully dedicated to her husband's care; cleaning his sores, gathering food, bathing him, and everything else.

One day, while out collecting wild fruit, the princess bathed herself in a mountain cave, and the whole forest lit up from her radiance. A goblin saw her and fell in love. He came and seized her, giving her the choice to be his wife or his meal. Her mind turned not to her own demise, but to her husband, who would die quickly if left alone. Her exceptional virtue caused the throne of Indra, king of the gods, to become warm. And when he divined the cause, he rushed down from heaven and stood above the goblin, telling him that she was a perfect woman, and if he did not set her free, his skull would be smashed into seven pieces. The goblin complied. Indra knew that the goblin would try to seize her again another time, so he bound him in chains and banished him to a faraway mountain range. Her safety assured, the princess returned home by the light of the moon.

The prince was angry about his wife's late arrival. She apologized and explained what had happened, but he doubted her story: "Women rarely tell the truth and there are many foresters, ascetics, and magicians living around here, so who knows what you were doing." To prove her virtue, the

princess spoke an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) that would heal his leprosy. She declared her love and fidelity and poured water over her husband; and it washed his sores away like acid rinsing the tarnish off copper.

Now healed, the prince was able to return home. The Bodhisatta was so happy to have his son back that he gave him the throne and ordered that the princess should be the chief queen. The Bodhisatta then took up an ascetic's life in the royal park. The new king was completely ungrateful for everything the queen had done for him over the years and he ignored her, spending all his time with other women. The queen grew thin and pale out of jealousy and eventually went to see the Bodhisatta, hoping he could help with her grief. The Bodhisatta summoned his son and rebuked his terrible behavior, telling him to treat his wife the way she deserved. Shamed, he apologized and promised to do whatever she wanted. From then on, they lived a happy life together, giving charity and doing good works.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king and queen of the past were earlier births of King Pasenadi, a righteous ruler and devoted supporter of the Buddha, and Queen Mallika, his exceptionally wise chief queen. Before she married him, Mallika was just the daughter of a garland-maker. One day she and some friends were walking to a flower garden when she saw the Buddha coming into the city. She gave him three portions of sour gruel that she had packed to eat later, and after he received it, the

Buddha smiled. Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, asked the Buddha why he smiled, and he answered that, thanks to her modest offering, she would become chief queen by the end of the day.

Mallika continued on to the flower garden, and soon after, the king heard her singing. Struck by her beauty, he asked if she was married. Finding that she wasn't, he took her back to his palace and made her his queen. They were a happy, loving couple, and everyone in the city knew she was a devoted wife.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing her devotion, he told them this story so they knew that she had also been a devoted wife in the past.

Gandatindu Jataka (#520)

The Bodhisatta was once a tree fairy. The king and everyone in his court were terribly wicked, and as a result, society collapsed. People were robbed by the king's men in the daytime and by bandits at night. People feared the king so much they hid in forests like wild animals during the day, leaving the villages abandoned.

The Bodhisatta got an annual tribute of one thousand coins from the king, so he thought he might be able to convince him to change his ways. One night the Bodhisatta floated into the royal bedchamber, emitting a bright light and announcing himself as the god of the Malabar ebony tree. He told the king that careless rulers like him will meet destruction in this life and be reborn in hell in the next. He should go out and see the suffering he'd caused; this would motivate him to reform. The king was moved by the Bodhisatta's words, and the next day he put his advisors in charge and set out in disguise with his chaplain to visit people in the countryside.

That evening they met an old man returning home from the forest with his wife and children. As he removed the barrier of thorns he'd placed in front of the door, he stepped on one and cursed the king, saying he hoped he'd be struck by an arrow. The chaplain asked the man why he cursed the king, since it wasn't he who put the thorns on the ground. The man answered that it was the king's fault he needed to build a barrier and flee from the tax collectors every day.

The king was filled with guilt and told his chaplain they should return home and begin to set things right, but the Bodhisatta possessed the chaplain momentarily, making him say they should investigate further. They went to another village, where they saw a poor old woman who was gathering leaves fall out of a tree. She cursed the king, saying she hoped he would die soon so her daughters could get married. The chaplain asked her why she hated the king when he was not responsible for arranging marriages. The old woman answered that she was picking leaves for her grown daughters who still lived at home; with all the chaos in the kingdom, few men wanted to get married.

Next, they overheard a farmer in his field, cursing the king because his ox had been injured by the plow, saying he hoped the king would be killed by a spear. The chaplain asked the man why he detested the king when he himself was the one who injured the ox. He answered that the accident happened while he was weakened by hunger because tax collectors had stolen his food.

The next day, a vicious cow kicked a man as he milked it, injuring him and knocking over the pail. The man cursed the king, saying he hoped he'd be slain by a sword. The chaplain asked the man why he blamed the king, not the cow. He answered that food was so hard to find he had to milk a wild, savage cow that had never been milked before.

While the king and chaplain walked down the road back toward the city, they came upon a cow that had stopped eating due to sorrow: a tax collector had killed and skinned

her young calf to make a sword-sheath. The boys caring for the cow cursed the king, saying they hoped he died a sad, childless death. The chaplain asked the boys why they despised the king when he had not killed the calf. They answered that when an evil king reigns, wicked people abound.

Further on, they saw crows eating frogs. The Bodhisatta spoke through a frog's mouth to curse the king, saying he hoped he would die in a fight and get eaten. The chaplain asked the frog why he loathed the king, since it's not possible for any king to protect every creature, and frogs also eat living things, so they have no right to be upset. The frog answered that the king's oppression of the people destroyed their prosperity, so few people gave alms anymore, and the crows would normally eat some of that food and have less need to eat living things.

When the king finally returned to the city, he ruled righteously and devoted himself to charity and doing good deeds.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time a king came to hear the Buddha preach. He told the king to rule righteously, and that sensual pleasures lead to misery: when people die, their virtuous actions are their only refuge. Then the Buddha told this story as an example of a king in the past being saved by following this advice.

The Buddha did not identify any earlier births other than his own.

Tesakuna Jataka (#521)

The Bodhisatta was once a parrot. After a king woke up from a nap under a tree in his royal park, he saw a bird's nest and wanted to have whatever was in it. One of his servants climbed up the tree and found that it contained three eggs: an owl's, a mynah bird's, and a parrot's. He brought them down and had them put safely in a cotton-lined box. Since he had no children, the king adopted the birds and had three courtiers take care of one egg each at their homes.

After the eggs hatched, the birds (two sons and one daughter) lived in the courtiers' homes and got all the splendor worthy of royalty. People mocked the king for adopting birds as his family, and when the king heard about this, he showed people the birds' true wisdom. He sent for the birds, one by one, to come to the palace to publicly discuss how kings should rule. His son, the owl, spoke honestly and directly to the king, telling him he should rule righteously and stop yielding to sin. The people applauded with wonder, and the king was so pleased with his advice that he made the owl a general in the army. His daughter, the mynah, also criticized the king, saying he should always be honest and only hire advisors who are wise. Appreciating her answer, he made her the treasurer. Finally, the Bodhisatta spoke, explaining that wisdom was the most important power of a king, and if he didn't stop doing bad things, he would meet with ruin. Great applause followed, and the king was so delighted by this guidance that he made the Bodhisatta his commander-in-chief.

Following their noble speeches, the three birds received great honor from everyone, and the king followed their advice. When the king died, his court chose the Bodhisatta as the next king, but he was not interested. He wrote down his righteous advice on a golden tablet and flew off into the forest.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time a king came to hear the Buddha preach. He told the king to rule righteously, and that sensual pleasures lead to misery: when people die, their virtuous actions are their only refuge. Then the Buddha told this story as an example of a king in the past earning rebirth in heaven by following this advice.

The king from the past, the owl, and the mynah were earlier births of Ananda, Sariputta, and Uppalavanna, three of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sarabhanga Jataka (#522)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. His father was the royal chaplain, and on the day the Bodhisatta was born, the sky foretold he would grow up to become the best archer in all of India. The prophecy came true, and when he came of age, he was hired to serve the king, earning a salary of one thousand coins per day. The king's advisors were offended and suggested the king should not pay him so much without having ever seen him shoot. So, by the beat of a drum, the king summoned everyone in the city to come watch the Bodhisatta demonstrate his skill.

The Bodhisatta put on a splendid coat of armor and a jeweled crown and had four renowned archers (they were able to shoot as quick as lightning, split a hair, hit a target by sound rather than sight, and hit a falling arrow) stationed at the corners of a pavilion. The Bodhisatta stood in the center and told them to try their best to shoot and wound him, but he dodged all their arrows and shot the four men, making them drop to the ground. He called this trick the arrow-defense, and the crowd shouted and danced in applause and threw money and jewelry to him.

The delighted king wanted to see more, so the Bodhisatta put a plantain at each corner of the pavilion and shot all four with a single arrow; he called this the pierced-circle trick. Then he performed ten more tricks that nobody else in the world could do: the arrow-stick, arrow-rope, arrow-plait, arrow-terrace, arrow-pavilion, arrow-wall, arrow-stairs, arrow-tank, arrow-lotus, and arrow-shower. After these twelve displays of

skill, the Bodhisatta gave nine demonstrations of strength: he shot arrows that pierced through a plank of fig wood twenty centimeters thick; a plank of asana wood ten centimeters thick; a copper plate five centimeters thick; an iron plate two and a half centimeters thick; a hundred boards joined together; a wagon full of straw, sand, and planks from the front; then again the same wagon from the back; two hundred meters of water; and four hundred meters of earth. At sunset, he finished his exhibition by piercing a hair from two hundred meters. The king rewarded the Bodhisatta with one hundred thousand coins and promised to appoint him commander-in-chief. But because it was late, they would do the ceremony the next day.

That night the Bodhisatta pondered his life and knew that power, a family, and wealth would cause him too much temptation and lead him on a path to hell, so he snuck off to a forest and became an ascetic. When Indra, king of the gods, saw this, he sent Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, to construct a monastery for the Bodhisatta and the multitude he knew would soon follow him. There the Bodhisatta lived on roots, berries, and other foods he gathered in the forest and soon developed the eight attainments and five supernatural faculties.

Eventually the king learned of the Bodhisatta's whereabouts and went to visit him. The Bodhisatta floated in the air and preached to him and his entourage about dharma and the misery caused by sensual desires. After listening, they all renounced the world on the spot and stayed in the forest with him.

As time went on, word about the Bodhisatta spread and thousands more came to live the ascetic life alongside him. The monastery became overcrowded, so he sent six of his best students (a seventh stayed behind with him), each with a company of ascetics, out to settle in other places. One of these, Kisavaccha, made his home in a king's royal park outside the palace.

A formerly respected courtesan of the king in whose park Kisavaccha settled had just been fired, and she was very disappointed. Seeing Kisavaccha in the park, she assumed he was cursed with bad luck and thought she could use him to get rid of hers. She spat a toothpick and a blob of phlegm into his matted hair, and then went to bathe. Soon after, the king reconsidered and gave her back her job. She was convinced this was due to her little ritual with the ascetic, and when the king later sacked his chaplain, she told him what to do to get his job back. He followed her advice exactly, and was reinstated soon after.

When there was a rebellion in a border region, the chaplain recommended the king get rid of any bad luck before heading off to fight by spitting in Kisavaccha's hair, and he took the entire army to do so with him. The commander-in-chief came to the park last, but he did not spit; instead, he removed the toothpicks from Kisavaccha's hair and helped him wash. He asked Kisavaccha what would happen to the king because of his bad behavior. Kisavaccha said that while he himself harbored no anger, the gods were furious about people disrespecting a holy man, and the entire kingdom would be

destroyed in seven days. The commander-in-chief warned the king and then fled with his family. Kisavaccha also left, but due to the king's abuse, he died soon after returning to the Bodhisatta's monastery. People came from far and wide for his funeral, and flowers fell from heaven during the cremation.

The king didn't believe the prediction of impending doom and went off to battle as planned, successfully defeating the rebels. He returned to the capital with his prisoners. On the seventh day, the gods made it rain, and a flood washed away all the dead bodies. The rain changed to flowers, and then to coins and gold jewelry, and everyone was happy. Then the rain became all manner of blazing weapons, and people were cut up piecemeal. The weapons were followed by burning embers, blazing mountain peaks, and fine sand, leaving the whole kingdom in utter destruction.

When three neighboring kings heard about this, they wanted to know where the annihilated king and others who had suffered a similar fate for mistreating holy men (including the king who killed the Bodhisatta in the Khantivadi Jataka (#313)) were reborn. So they traveled to the Bodhisatta's monastery to ask. At the same time, Indra, pondering seven questions, descended from heaven on the back of his thirty-three-headed elephant, Airavata, and joined the kings to get answers from the Bodhisatta.

The Bodhisatta confirmed the kings' assumption that those who had sinned against holy men went to hell. Then he answered many questions about patience, wisdom, and

righteousness, and the three kings overcame their cravings for pleasure and were filled with bliss. Now endowed with supernatural powers, the kings flew back to their homes, as did a satisfied Indra.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Kisavaccha was an earlier birth of Moggallana, one of the Buddha's top disciples. Moggallana had the power to visit heaven and hell, and when he did, he told people on earth that he had seen disciples of the Buddha living in bliss in heaven and followers of other religious leaders suffering in hell. Because of this, the heretics lost much support, and they paid a bandit one thousand coins to kill Moggallana. When Moggallana saw him coming, he flew away to safety. The bandit came back day after day, and Moggallana escaped each time. But on the seventh day, Moggallana's powers vanished and the bandit crushed all his bones. (Moggallana lost his powers due to a time in a past life when he severely beat his elderly parents. He intended to kill them, but was overcome with guilt and stopped before they died.) With his last bit of strength, Moggallana flew to see the Buddha, and he died at the monastery. There was grief over his death on earth and in heaven, and flowers rained down during his cremation. The Buddha hosted a sacred festival in Moggallana's honor, attended by men and gods, that lasted seven days.

When the Buddha later heard some of his disciples discussing how Moggallana had received great honor after his death because he died in the presence of the Buddha, but Sariputta,

a disciple of the Buddha as accomplished and revered as Moggallana, who had died two weeks earlier in the village where he had been born, did not, he told them this story so they knew that he had also given Moggallana great honor after a death in the past; and that it had also rained flowers during that cremation.

Five of the Bodhisatta's other best students were earlier births of five of the Buddha's top disciples: Sariputta, Maha Kassapa, Anuruddha, Maha Kaccana, and Ananda.

Alambusa Jataka (#523)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. After a deer drank water mixed with his semen, she gave birth to his son. Though he was an old man, the Bodhisatta raised the boy, who he named Isisinga, with affection. Before he died, the Bodhisatta warned his son that there were women as beautiful as flowers, and they would cause him ruin if he couldn't resist them.

Once Isisinga was alone, he continued to live by ascetic vows, practice mystic meditation, and subdue his senses. Isisinga was so virtuous that the home of Indra, king of the gods, shook. When he divined the reason, Indra grew worried that when Isisinga died, he would dethrone him and take over his job. So Indra ordered the most beautiful nymph in heaven, Alambusa, to seduce Isisinga and destroy his virtue. She did not want this duty, but she couldn't defy Indra.

When she appeared before Isisinga's hut, he lost his composure and rambled on about her unsurpassed beauty, from her feet to her hair: ". . . eyes black like gunja berries, breasts swollen like halved pumpkins, thighs tapered like an elephant's trunk . . ." Alambusa thanked him for the compliments and pointed out that they were alone, suggesting they retire to his hut without delay. To spur Isisinga into action she playfully ran away, and he chased after her, seizing her by her hair. They embraced, and Isisinga lay enamored and in dreamlike bliss in her arms for three years.

Finally, Isisinga awoke and remembered his father's warning about women and was dismayed that he had not followed it. Isisinga shut down his sensual desires and meditated to restore his lost virtue. Impressed by his manner and ashamed at having caused him to violate his vow, Alambusa confessed everything about Indra's scheme to tempt him and threw herself at Isisinga's feet, asking for forgiveness, which he granted. She soared back up to heaven. Indra rewarded her with a wish, and she used it to make Indra promise never to have her do such a deed again.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Isisinga and Alambusa were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and the disciple's former wife. Because he was new, his food was poor (lumpy gruel with stale or rotting ingredients and dried or burnt sprouts) and he did not get enough to stay healthy. He started to return each morning to the wife he left behind, and she gave him delicious rice with sauce and curry. This made him miss his former life, and with her encouragement he decided to leave the sangha.

The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past his wife had almost derailed him from the quest for salvation, but he overcame his mistake and kept his religious life. After talking to the Buddha, this disciple gained new understanding and chose to stay.

Samkhapala Jataka (#524)

The Bodhisatta was once a human king and then a naga king in back-to-back lives. His father had abdicated the throne and lived as an ascetic in the royal park, and the newly crowned Bodhisatta visited him three times a day. Unable to develop his mystic meditation because of the constant distraction, the father moved far away without telling anyone. And living alone in a leaf hut and eating foods from the forest, he finally mastered it.

Some time later, the Bodhisatta sought out his father, and eventually found him. When he arrived, his father was teaching dharma to a naga king and some of his subjects. The Bodhisatta was so taken by the nagas' magnificence that he desired nothing more than rebirth in the naga world for his next life. After spending a few days with his father, he returned to the kingdom where he never strayed from moral law, faithfully observed the holy days, and built alms halls at each of the four city gates, becoming known throughout India for his generosity. And because he lived such a righteous life, his wish came true, and he was reborn as a naga king.

Over time, the Bodhisatta grew bored with the naga realm's grandeur, and he wanted his next life to be as a human again. He tried to keep the holy-day vows and live a moral life, but he was not very successful due to the myriad temptations always around him. So, despite the danger of being captured and killed, he began to spend the holy days in the human realm atop an anthill, where he would not be distracted.

One day, while the Bodhisatta was lying on his anthill, sixteen hunters from a nearby village saw him. The Bodhisatta heard them approaching and opened his eyes, but wanting to remain firm in his righteousness, he did nothing to resist and refused to get angry. The hunters pulled his tail to stretch his massive body out along the ground, pierced him with stakes, shoved bamboo poles through his body, and dragged him off with ropes.

A wealthy landowner riding by in his carriage saw the hunters and their prey and paid them each a handful of gold coins, an ox, and fancy clothes to release the Bodhisatta. As a reward, the Bodhisatta invited his rescuer to come live in his heavenly palace with three hundred naga maidens to serve him. The landowner stayed in the naga realm for a year, but then left to live as an ascetic in the Himalayas.

Once when the ascetic went on a pilgrimage down to the city, he stayed in the royal park. The king saw the ascetic during his morning alms round and, impressed by his demeanor, served him a variety of fancy food in the palace. After eating, he told the king how saving the Bodhisatta's life had led him to renounce the world and become an ascetic. Then he preached about the impermanence of all things to the king, who accepted his message and lived a righteous, generous life. At the end of the rainy season, the ascetic returned to his Himalayan home.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha praised some lay followers for observing the holy days and told them this story to show that doing so can bring great rewards.

The Bodhisatta's father, the king at the end of the story, and the landowner were earlier births of Maha Kassapa, Ananda, and Sariputta, three of the Buddha's top disciples.

Culla-Sutasoma Jataka (#525)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He was a righteous leader, but grew discontented with governing. He had told his barber to inform him if he ever found a grey hair on his head; this would be the sign it was time to renounce the throne and become an ascetic. And when his barber found the first grey hair, the Bodhisatta immediately gathered his eighty thousand advisors and sixty thousand brahmins to announce that he was abdicating to live out a religious life in the Himalayas. They were all upset and asked him to stay, but he said he was determined to pursue his place in heaven.

After this, his mournful family and other people came to talk him out of leaving, but it was all in vain. His parents came first, asking why he was abandoning them and his many children who relied on him, but the Bodhisatta answered that he must go now. His seven hundred wives came and asked him not to leave them alone, but he said that though he pitied their pain, he wanted to pursue heavenly bliss. His chief queen was pregnant and asked him to wait until after their child was born, and to this he agreed. Their seven-year-old son promised his mother that he would not allow his father to leave, but the Bodhisatta told his nanny to take the boy away so he wouldn't be able to sway him. His commander-in-chief wondered if the Bodhisatta was under the mistaken impression he was running out of money and went to tell him the royal coffers were full of treasure, but the Bodhisatta said he was not interested in material wealth. A wealthy merchant offered to give the Bodhisatta his fortune, but he said he didn't want it.

Nothing changed the Bodhisatta's resolve, and when it came time to leave, he passed the crown to his reluctant younger brother and gave a final lecture on the impermanence of all things. Life slips away like water through a sieve, he said, and those driven by desire enlarge the bounds of hell.

He threw off his royal robes, shaved his head, and took a bowl and staff; and as he walked away, the whole city begged him to stay. When he did not change his mind, people left all their belongings behind and followed him out to the forest in a line twelve leagues long, leaving the city nearly deserted. Indra, king of the gods, saw the exodus and sent Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, to make a monastery thirty leagues long and five leagues wide, stocked with everything necessary for the ascetic life, including trees that magically bore a variety of fruits. Vissakamma also used his powers to banish all spirits, dangerous beasts, and hideous sounds from the area. From then on, the Bodhisatta educated and assisted his followers in the ascetic life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time while talking to his disciples about the Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment, the Buddha told them this story as an example of a similar renunciation in his past.

The Bodhisatta's father, mother, chief queen, and young son were earlier births of the Buddha's father, birth mother, wife, and son. The elder son, commander-in-chief, wealthy

merchant, and younger brother were earlier births of Sariputta, Moggallana, Maha Kassapa, and Ananda, four of the Buddha's top disciples. And the nanny was an earlier birth of Khujjuttara, one of the Buddha's top female lay supporters.

Nalinika Jataka (#526)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic who lived in the Himalayas. After a deer drank water mixed with his semen, she gave birth to his son. The Bodhisatta raised the boy, named Isisinga, to follow the ascetic vows and taught him mystic meditation. He also warned him that he should be wary of women because they could cause him ruin. Isisinga subdued his senses, developed the five supernatural faculties, and was so virtuous that the home of Indra, king of the gods, shook. When he divined the reason, Indra grew worried that when Isisinga died, he would dethrone him and take over his job. So he decided to destroy Isisinga's virtue, and he started his scheme by causing rain to cease falling. No crops grew and famine spread.

Devastated by the drought, people gathered at the palace and demanded their king bring them rain. The king made moral vows and fasted, but no rain came. One night Indra materialized in the king's bedroom and said he could make it rain. He lied and explained that the drought was caused by an ascetic in the Himalayas who had such power that when it was going to rain he looked up at the sky in rage and stopped it. Indra told the king that if his daughter Nalinika could seduce this ascetic, she would break his virtue, and thus his power, and the rain would return. The next morning, the king summoned his advisors and his daughter and told them his plan. It was an awkward conversation, but his daughter understood the importance of the task and agreed to go.

She traveled to the Bodhisatta's home with a group of the king's advisors, who gave her the clothes of an ascetic; and when the Bodhisatta went out to collect wild fruit, she went alone to seduce Isisinga. Once he got over the shock of seeing her, they discussed where she was from, and he naively believed her lies about living a holy life in an idyllic mountain home. Having never left his home in the Himalayas, Isisinga was so clueless about the world he didn't really know what a woman was, and he didn't know that she was one. Her wiles broke his mystic meditation, and he lost his virtue with her. Knowing the Bodhisatta would give her a good beating when he returned, Nalinika made a quick exit. Indra saw that her work was done and caused rain to fall across the kingdom.

As soon as Nalinika left, Isisinga was seized by fever and retired to his hut, unable to cut wood, fetch water, or light a fire. That evening when the Bodhisatta returned, he saw that something was wrong. Isisinga told his father that a "boy" had visited and had aroused his emotions. He rambled on about how different their two bodies were—she had smooth cheeks, fragrant hair, a swollen chest, and no stalk beneath her waist—and that after her soft touch, a burning had arose, and they lay together on a bed of leaves. He begged his father to take him to the "boy's" home immediately because if they didn't meet again, he would surely die.

After listening to his son's tale, the Bodhisatta explained his folly and warned him to be careful in the future. Ashamed, Isisinga apologized and set his mind back on the right path and restored his mystic insight.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Isisinga and Nalinika were earlier births of one of the Buddha's disciples and the disciple's former wife. This disciple began to miss his former life, and with his wife's encouragement was considering leaving the sangha. The Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past his wife had almost derailed him from the quest for salvation, but he overcame his mistake and kept his religious life. After talking to the Buddha, this disciple gained new understanding and chose to stay.

Ummadanti Jataka (#527)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. A wealthy merchant's daughter was as beautiful as a heavenly nymph, and any man who saw her could not contain himself. Her divine beauty was not a random stroke of luck. In a previous life she was a poor girl who wanted a scarlet robe like beautiful noblewomen wore, so she went to work for a wealthy family to earn one. She served them well, and one day the family gave her the gorgeous robe she desired. She went down to the river to bathe before trying it on. While there, a holy man walked by, covering himself with just a tree branch because his clothes had been stolen. Wanting to help him, she tore her new robe and gave him half. And he looked so splendid in it that she gave him the other half too. She then prayed that in some future birth she would be the loveliest woman in all the land, and everyone who saw her would be unable to control themselves.

When the merchant informed the Bodhisatta about his lovely daughter, he sent fortune-tellers to read her lines. But the moment they saw her face they lost their self-control and did things like putting food on their heads instead of in their mouths. The daughter, disgusted by their behavior, had them thrown out of the house by the scruff of their necks. Outraged over this, the fortune-tellers told the Bodhisatta she was a witch and not a suitable wife for him. Upon hearing that the king had rejected her, she bore a grudge and vowed to get back at him someday. Later, the merchant gave his daughter to the commander-in-chief, a childhood friend of the Bodhisatta, for marriage.

One day during a large festival, the Bodhisatta made a circuit of the city in full pageantry. The commander-in-chief told his wife that the king would pass their house, and she must not show herself so he would not lose control of his thoughts. But this was her chance at revenge, and when the Bodhisatta arrived, she went to an open window and threw flowers over him from above. He looked up and saw her and became maddened with passion. The Bodhisatta asked his charioteer whether she was married or not, and when he told the Bodhisatta who she was, he canceled the rest of the procession. He returned to the palace, obsessed and depressed, muttering to himself about this woman. The commander-in-chief scolded his wife for disobeying him and set out to save the Bodhisatta, knowing such passion could kill him.

The commander-in-chief made a clever plan with one of his servants and sent him to hide in a hollow tree that was a sacred shrine. The next day, the commander-in-chief, publicly for all to hear, asked the tree's "spirit" what was ailing the Bodhisatta and how to save him. His servant answered, as the commander-in-chief had ordered him to, that "Your king is not sick, rather he is infatuated with your wife. If you want him to live, you must let him have her."

The commander-in-chief set off for the palace and met with the Bodhisatta, reporting what the spirit had just told him to do. He insisted the Bodhisatta take his wife for as long as needed to satisfy his urges, promising not to tell anyone else about their arrangement. The Bodhisatta felt great shame

that the gods knew about his behavior. He thanked his friend for his kindness, but said no matter what he might gain, he was a righteous man and would never do something that would cause another person to suffer. The two discussed the matter further, and after hearing his commander-in-chief preach that heaven was the reward for a righteous path, his infatuation vanished.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One of the Buddha's disciples, while out on a morning alms round, saw a woman so beautiful he fell in love at first sight. The lovesick disciple became lean as a wild deer and could no longer concentrate on his studies or meditation. The Buddha told him this story so he knew that lust had risen in his own heart in the past, but the condition vanished before he did anything improper, so the disciple should persevere.

The commander-in-chief, charioteer, and wife were earlier births of Sariputta, Ananda, and Uppalavanna, three of the Buddha's top disciples, and the king's courtiers were earlier births of the rest of the Buddha's disciples.

Mahabodhi Jataka (#528)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He lived in the Himalayas, and one rainy season he went down to the city and slept in the royal park. The next morning, the king saw the Bodhisatta out collecting alms and, impressed by his calm demeanor, invited him into the palace for a meal. After listening to him preach, the king invited the Bodhisatta to remain in the city and live permanently in his park. He accepted the offer and stayed there, being fed and cared for by the king, for twelve years.

The king had five advisors, and among their duties was serving as judges. All were wicked, greedy men whose religious beliefs rejected the concept of karma. The first followed the doctrine that beings were purified at birth, so their past actions had no effect on their subsequent lives; the second held that everything was created and controlled by a supreme being; the third thought everything we do in our lives has already happened before; the fourth claimed death brings complete annihilation, so there is no rebirth; and the fifth believed one should only look after their own interests, even killing one's family if the need arises. The advisors also routinely took bribes to rule in favor of cheaters and thieves, so good, honest people often lost their property.

One day a man who lost a court case because of the advisors' corruption pleaded with the Bodhisatta to help him. The Bodhisatta went into the court and, after looking into the matter, gave the man his property back. People cheered the decision so loudly that the king heard them, and wanting his

subjects to have justice, he asked the Bodhisatta to become a judge. He reluctantly agreed.

No longer able to earn bribes, the advisors plotted to have the king execute the Bodhisatta. They told the king that the Bodhisatta was planning to overthrow him. At first the king didn't believe them, but they convinced him by pointing out just how large and devoted the Bodhisatta's following was. The king would not order the Bodhisatta killed, but did want him gone. He told his men to gradually diminish the respect given to him during palace visits, which the king assumed would prompt him to leave.

The next day, when the Bodhisatta came to the palace, he was seated on a simple couch rather than the royal couch he normally used. From this, he assumed someone had slandered him, but he decided not to leave until he found out for sure. On the second day, he was seated on the same bare couch and served some regular food mixed in with the royal food he normally got. The third day he was given his food at the top of the stairs. The fourth day he was given only broth made of rice dust. But despite all this, the Bodhisatta did not leave.

The scheming advisors convinced the king that the Bodhisatta not leaving was proof he was seeking the throne; because if he only wanted alms, he would have gone elsewhere already. So the king gave his advisors swords and told them to cut off the Bodhisatta's head and throw his chopped-up body on a dunghill.

That night, the king was wracked by guilt and couldn't sleep. He remembered all the good things the Bodhisatta had done and was distressed because he'd never witnessed him commit even a minor offense; he was just relying on the word of others. His chief queen reassured him that his safety was important, and even his own son must be slayed if there was any risk. One of the king's pet dogs, who the Bodhisatta often gave food, heard this discussion and vowed to save the Bodhisatta's life.

Early the next morning, the advisors hid inside the palace door, and the dog waited on the threshold. When the Bodhisatta approached, the dog barked and bared his fangs. The Bodhisatta had never seen this dog in a foul mood and understood it was a message to flee from the city or the king would have him killed. The Bodhisatta quickly turned around.

The king had been watching from his window and saw the Bodhisatta head to the park, so he followed him. He knew that if the Bodhisatta was his enemy, he'd marshal troops and prepare to attack; if he was his friend, he'd gather his belongings to leave. At the park, the king saw the Bodhisatta coming out of his hut with his bag packed and, pretending ignorance, asked why he was leaving in such haste. When the Bodhisatta answered that he'd read the dog's thoughts and knew everything, the king admitted his wickedness and apologized. But the Bodhisatta would not reconsider leaving. He preached one final time to the king, and then settled far away in a forest near a frontier village.

With the Bodhisatta gone, the advisors went back to cheating people in court. But they worried that the Bodhisatta would return and again cut off their ill-gotten profit, so they needed to make sure he wouldn't come back. The Bodhisatta was a friend of the chief queen, and his attachment to her could be a reason to return, so they plotted to have her killed. They told the king that his queen and the Bodhisatta had been sending messages making plans for her to kill the king and put the Bodhisatta on the throne. They repeated the lie until the king believed it, and without investigating, he ordered his advisors to cut up her body and throw the pieces onto a dunghill. After her assassination, four princes vowed revenge for their mother. Word of this reached the Bodhisatta, and he knew that only he could convince the princes to forgive their father and thus save them from doing evil.

The next day, the residents of the village gave the Bodhisatta some monkey meat for alms. After eating, he cleaned the skin and took it with him to the city, where he urged the princes not to murder their father and promised he would reconcile the situation. They agreed. The Bodhisatta returned to the royal park and sat on his monkey skin. The park-keeper sent word of his arrival to the king; and the king, filled with joy at the chance to see his friend, went to meet the Bodhisatta, bringing his five advisors with him.

The king greeted him and began to converse pleasantly, but the Bodhisatta sat stroking his monkey skin and said nothing in reply. The disappointed king asked if the monkey skin was more helpful than he was, and the Bodhisatta, in order to teach him a lesson about karma, stated that it was.

Deceptively implying these things happened when the monkey was alive rather than it just being the skin, he said, “This monkey had transported me on his back, carried my waterpot, swept out my hut, and did various chores. And because it was just a simple creature, I ate its flesh, and now I rest on its fur.”

Misinterpreting this in the way the Bodhisatta knew they would, the five advisors condemned the Bodhisatta for killing a living being, which no ascetic should ever do, and betraying someone who was good to him. The Bodhisatta then used the advisors’ assumptions to refute their specific heresies against the existence of karma. Criticizing him for killing a monkey, he said, was hypocritical according to their personal creeds—if there was no karma, then he did nothing wrong. The advisors were stunned speechless by his wisdom. The Bodhisatta then called the king a fool for associating with the five wicked advisors. Following their sinful behavior not only caused the king grief in this life, but put him on the path to hell for the next. He should stop listening to people’s advice without analyzing it.

The remorseful king forgave the four princes for their intended assassination and ordered his advisors executed for their crimes, but the Bodhisatta told him not to kill anyone else. And when the king commanded their hands and feet be cut off, the Bodhisatta also stopped this. In the end, the king took away all their property, cut their hair into five locks (the style worn by slaves), put them in shackles and chains, covered them with cow dung, and banished them from the kingdom.

After the Bodhisatta urged the king to be vigilant in good behavior, he went to live out his days in the Himalayas, where he developed supernatural power arising out of mystic meditation.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he said he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past, and he told them this story as an example of how he'd been able to outsmart all his adversaries.

The five advisors were earlier births of Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Pakudha Kaccayana, Ajita Kesakambala, and Nigantha Nathaputta, religious leaders during the Buddha's time who preached very different philosophies than the Buddha and denied the existence of karma. The king's dog was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples.

Sonaka Jataka (#529)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He, a prince born to the chief queen, and the son of the royal chaplain were born on the same day. The two boys grew up in the palace together as very close friends and were sent to Taxila for their education. When they finished their studies, the pair wandered through the land to get new experiences and arrived in a city a week after its king had died without an heir. They set up camp in the royal park and, the next morning, walked the streets seeking alms. At one house, the Bodhisatta was given a seat covered with a white cloth, while a red woolen rug was spread over his friend's seat. The friend recognized this as an omen that the Bodhisatta would soon be made king of this city and he himself would be chosen as the commander-in-chief.

The pair returned to the park and relaxed, the Bodhisatta taking a nap. At that time, the royal chariot was sent out of the palace without a driver—a foolproof method to find someone with sufficient merit to be a great king. When the chariot and the throng of people walking behind it approached the park, the Bodhisatta's friend, who wanted to be an ascetic rather than a ruler, hid out of sight. The royal chaplain had the musicians play loudly to wake the Bodhisatta, then he lowered himself and offered the Bodhisatta the throne. The Bodhisatta accepted the crown, and after the coronation, done right there in the park, he completely forgot about his friend.

After the Bodhisatta left, his friend sat down and watched a leaf fall from a tree. He realized that his body would someday decay just like the leaf; this opened his insight into the impermanence of all things, and he became a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others). His clothes and belongings magically transformed into those of an ascetic, and feeling joy that he would have no more rebirth, he set off to live in the Himalayas.

Forty years later, the Bodhisatta remembered his friend and wondered where he was. He offered a reward, told in the form of a song—"A thousand coins for one who sees my friend so dear. A hundred if they give me any news that they hear."—for any help finding him. One of the king's dancing girls sang the song, and soon the rest of the harem did too. Then the king's song spread across the kingdom and both city dwellers and countryfolk constantly sang it. But nobody knew where the Bodhisatta's friend was.

A decade later, the friend divined that the Bodhisatta wanted to see him. He decided to go convince his old friend to become an ascetic by preaching to him about the evil of desire and the blessing of renunciation. He flew to the city and sat down in the royal park where he heard a young boy singing the king's song. He taught the boy a response refrain and told him to sing it for the king and get his reward.

The boy took a bath, put on his best clothes, and went to the palace, but he wouldn't just sing the song for the king. He told the king to announce his song by the beat of a drum

throughout the city and let everyone come hear it. The king agreed. When the crowd had gathered, the king sang his song, “A thousand coins for one who sees my friend so dear. A hundred if they give me any news that they hear,” and the boy replied with, “Give me the thousand coins because at last, I have seen with my own eyes your dear friend from the past.”

The king was thrilled and rushed to the royal park, sitting down to talk with his old friend. He told the king eight blessings of the ascetic life, from freedom to safety. He was going to explain more, but the king cut him off, saying he was too attached to worldly pleasures to give them up. His friend replied that the king was on a path to hell and explained with a parable. A foolish crow saw an elephant carcass floating down the Ganges River and thought it was a perfect home, so he rode on it, eating and drinking as much as he wanted. But eventually the carcass floated into the sea and there was no land in sight, so the crow was trapped and eaten by a sea creature. His story finished, the ascetic friend rose into the sky and returned to his mountain home.

The parable had convinced the king. He quickly handed over the throne to his eldest son and lived out his days as an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the magnificence of his Great Renunciation, which was the

beginning of his path to enlightenment. He told them this story as an example of a similar renunciation in his past.

The Bodhisatta's son was an earlier birth of the Buddha's son.

Samkicca Jataka (#530)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. Before this, he was the son of the king's chaplain and was close friends with the crown prince. When the prince told the Bodhisatta of his plan to assassinate his father and make himself king, the Bodhisatta warned him this was a terrible thing, certain to lead to rebirth in hell. But the prince's servants supported the idea, and when the Bodhisatta knew he could not stop it, he ran off to the Himalayas and became an ascetic, living on roots and berries. After the prince murdered his father and took the throne, many other good-hearted people left the kingdom to live as ascetics with the Bodhisatta. In the beginning, the new king enjoyed being the sovereign, but was soon overcome with regret and lived life with no peace of mind, as if he was already in hell.

Fifty years passed, and the Bodhisatta decided it was time to pay the king a visit. Along with five hundred fellow ascetics, he flew through the air and landed in a park near the palace. The king was summoned, and after greeting the Bodhisatta with praise, he asked what was awaiting him after death. The Bodhisatta told him graphic stories of some tortures found in the various hells for those who take the wrong path in life. Evildoers are set on fire, forced to eat filth, have birds devour their tongues, breathe the stench of carrion, and are eaten by enormous worms with iron mouths. And when the Bodhisatta finished discussing the horrors of hell, he opened the heavens to show the king where righteous people go between earthly rebirths, adding that it is never too late to start down the right path: every good deed earns merit.

Hearing this, the king finally felt some peace of mind, and for the rest of his life he only did good.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king of the past was an earlier birth of King Ajatasattu. He was a devoted supporter of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and at Devadatta's insistence, had murdered his own father because he supported the Buddha. When the earth opened up and swallowed Devadatta into the flames of hell, King Ajatasattu feared the same fate for himself, so he lived in constant terror. He thought that only the Buddha could resolve his problem, so he went to see him. He was greeted warmly, with no mention made of his evil acts. After listening to the Buddha preach about the value of living simply, King Ajatasattu repented and dedicated himself to following dharma. From then on, he was generous, righteous, associated only with good people, and his state of fear vanished.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how King Ajatasattu had found happiness again, he told them this story so they knew that he had also helped King Ajatasattu recover peace of mind after murdering his father in a past life.

The five hundred ascetics who followed the Bodhisatta were earlier births of the Buddha's followers.

Kusa Jataka (#531)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. For many years before the Bodhisatta was born, his father and his sixteen thousand wives could not conceive a child. Eventually the loyal citizens, fearing that without an heir an outsider would conquer and destroy the kingdom, assembled at the palace door and demanded the king escalate his efforts to have a son. The king agreed. First he sent out his royal dancers, low-rank, then middle, and then high, into the town, hoping one of them would get pregnant, but none did. Then the king declared by royal drum that he would send his chief queen out, and many men gathered at the palace gate hoping to be the one to take her home.

As the queen came down from the palace, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm. When he learned the reason, he decided to give her the son she desired. He disguised himself as an elderly brahmin, and with his magic powers got in front of all the other men and took the queen the moment she emerged. Both the queen and the king, who was watching from a window, were angry and disgusted that a decrepit old man had grabbed her. Indra took her to heaven and gave her one wish. Surprised and pleased at the turn of events, the queen asked for a son, and Indra said he would give her two: one ugly and wise, then another handsome and dumb. He transported her to the king's bed, touched her with his thumb, and in ten months the Bodhisatta was born. His handsome brother came along two years later.

The Bodhisatta was so smart he educated himself rather than learn from teachers, and when he turned sixteen, his father decided to give him the throne. His parents asked him what sort of woman he wanted to marry, but he knew no princess would accept someone as ugly as him—he was ugly as a karmic result of an earlier life in which he got angry at his sister-in-law for giving a delicious cake that had been made for him to a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) without asking—so he intended to renounce the world and become an ascetic after his parents died. The king was distressed by this news and insisted the Bodhisatta take a wife. Not wanting to upset his parents further, the Bodhisatta schemed to avoid marriage in a way they would accept. He made a gold statue of a woman beautiful beyond the power of tongue to tell and said when a princess who looked like this was found, he would marry her.

His parents put the statue in a covered wagon and sent it out across India, telling their emissaries that if they found this woman they should give her parents the statue in exchange for her. Stopping at every royal city they passed, these men parked the wagon near a river and listened to all the people who saw it, waiting for someone to say it reminded them of so-and-so. One day a princess's hunchbacked servant walked by the statue and thought it was actually her princess. Furious that she had snuck out of her room, the servant slapped the statue on the cheek, and then burst out laughing at her mistake. The emissaries got the princess's information and arranged a meeting with the king, who was thrilled at the

chance for an alliance and gladly agreed to marry off his daughter.

To ensure that her new daughter-in-law would not run away the moment she saw how ugly the Bodhisatta was, his mother lied that they had a family tradition of wives not being allowed to see their husbands in the daytime until after their first child was conceived. The daughter agreed to this odd condition, so the Bodhisatta was wed and crowned king during a huge celebration.

With his mother's help, the Bodhisatta was secretly able to see his queen in the light. The first time, he posed as an elephant keeper while his mother showed her around the stables. As a prank, the Bodhisatta playfully threw a lump of elephant dung onto his queen's back. She was enraged and said she would have the king cut off his hand, but the queen mother calmed her down. Another time he dressed as a stable boy in the horse barn, and there he also threw dung on her. Again the queen mother calmed her down.

Later, the queen asked the queen mother to let her see her husband during the day just one time. So she arranged a solemn procession through the city with the Bodhisatta riding on his elephant behind his handsome brother, and she lied to the queen that the brother was the king and the ugly man was the mahout. At first the queen was pleased to know she had a husband worthy of her beauty. But then the Bodhisatta started waving wildly at her, and she wondered if he might actually be the king because it would be improper to allow such a repulsive and ill-mannered creature to sit with the

king. She realized that this would explain why she wasn't allowed to see him. To check, she sent her hunchbacked servant to see who got down off the elephant first, knowing this person was the real king. After the Bodhisatta dismounted, he saw his queen's servant and ordered her to keep his secret, so she lied and said the brother stepped down first. The relieved queen believed her.

Wanting to see his wife in the daylight again, the Bodhisatta stood in a lotus pond with a leaf over his head and a flower hiding his face. The queen and her maidens went into the pond to bathe, and when she reached out to pick a flower, the Bodhisatta grabbed her arm and told her who he was. The queen screamed out that a goblin was attacking her and fainted. When she came to, she recognized him as the dung thrower and declared that she would not have such a hideous husband. That very same day, she returned to her father's home. The Bodhisatta let her go because he knew her heart would break if she stayed. But he vowed to win her back and he put his mother in charge of the kingdom while he followed after her. His mother gave him food in a golden bowl and warned him to be careful because women are impure-minded creatures.

The Bodhisatta packed money, weapons, and his lute and set off; and because of his great strength, he made the one-hundred-league journey in a single day. That night he played his lute and sang for all the city to hear. Hearing such beautiful songs, his wife suspected the Bodhisatta had come after her. Her father, the king, thought the music was so wonderful he wanted to find the musician and hire him as his

minstrel. But the Bodhisatta knew he would not get to meet his wife with music. So the next morning, before the king's men could find him, he left his lute behind and started as an apprentice with the royal potter, thinking that with this job he would be able to make deliveries to the palace.

The Bodhisatta made many beautiful objects, including a special one for his wife. The potter took some of them to the palace to show the king. He asked who made them and called the potter a liar when he claimed it was him. So the potter admitted he had a new apprentice. The king said the apprentice was the true master and paid one thousand coins to have the apprentice make more pots for his eight daughters. When he was done talking to the king, the potter delivered the Bodhisatta's special pots. When the Bodhisatta's wife saw her and her hunchbacked servant's faces on the piece made for her, she knew who made it and refused to take it.

Since he wouldn't be able to see his wife if he could not do the deliveries, the Bodhisatta turned down the money and left. He then went to apprentice with a royal basket weaver and wove a special palm-leaf fan with a white umbrella (a symbol of royalty) on it for his wife, and then to the royal gardener where he made a garland with a picture of her. But neither got him close to his wife.

The Bodhisatta's next attempt to reach his wife came in the king's kitchen. One day, while the cook was delivering food to the king, he gave the Bodhisatta a bone of meat to cook for himself. The delicious aroma of his modest meal wafted

across the whole city, and the king ordered it brought to him. It was so delicious the king demanded that from then on the Bodhisatta cook his family's food; the head cook would deliver the king's meals and the Bodhisatta would deliver to the daughters. The Bodhisatta was thrilled by the news.

The next day, the Bodhisatta went to the palace with the food on a carrying pole, and when his wife saw him approaching, she was aghast that he was doing a slave's work. Wanting to drive him away, she shouted insults about his ugly face. The Bodhisatta answered that he craved being with her more than being a king and would do whatever it took to be near her. She locked herself in her room and refused to eat his food, eating her servant's meals instead. Wanting to test her for any trace of feelings, the Bodhisatta made himself stumble and fall in a heap amidst broken dishes. Worried he had died, his wife came out and checked his mouth for breathing—and as she did, he spit on her. She ran back to her room in disgust, telling him he could easier dig through rock with a wooden spade or catch the wind in a net than win her back.

The Bodhisatta did not see his wife again, and he grew weary and ashamed of his kitchen work—rising early to cut firewood, wash dishes, cook rice gruel, and such things were all tasks beneath a king. But because of his fervent love, he continued. One day he saw his wife's servant walking by the kitchen and he promised to fix her hunchback and give her a gold necklace if she arranged a meeting. She promised to try. Back at the palace, the servant sang the Bodhisatta's praises

hoping to sway his wife, but this only enraged her, and she would not do it.

After seven months had passed since the Bodhisatta last saw his wife, he finally gave up. It was just at this time that Indra checked in to see how things were going for him. Seeing the Bodhisatta's failure, Indra decided to make a meeting happen. He sent forged messages in the king's name (the Bodhisatta's father-in-law) to seven other kings, saying his daughter had returned home and was available again, so they should take her as a wife.

All seven kings rushed to the city with many followers and were shocked to find the other kings there for the same reason. Furious, they surrounded the city and threatened to attack if they did not get the king's daughter. He couldn't just give her to any one king because then the other six would attack, so, to save the kingdom, he chose to kill her and cut her into seven pieces, one for each angry king. He called for the executioner, and the palace was filled with sorrow. The king comforted his queen by telling her that their daughter earned her fate by deserting the greatest king in all of India before her footprints had been wiped off the road she went there by, and the queen knew this was true.

"If only your husband were here now," the queen lamented to her daughter, "he could defeat all seven kings." Only then did she reveal that the Bodhisatta was actually in their city. The king and queen assumed their daughter was speaking nonsense from her fear of death, but she pointed to him working in the kitchen and explained the suffering the

Bodhisatta had been putting himself through in order to win her back. The king rebuked his daughter for keeping this secret from him and sent her out to beg forgiveness from the Bodhisatta for her terrible behavior, and ask him to help save the kingdom.

The Bodhisatta saw his wife approaching and poured water onto the ground all around him so she had to grovel in mud. She dropped down to kiss his feet and apologized, promising never to do him wrong again if he saved her life. He told her he had no anger in his heart toward her and vowed to capture her enemies. He got a shave and a haircut, donned his royal splendor, and mounted a trained war elephant. With his wife riding behind him, the Bodhisatta led the army out the east gate and rounded up all seven kings as their soldiers fled in fear at the sight of him. Indra was pleased and gave the Bodhisatta a precious, magic jewel.

Wanting to make something good out of the situation, the Bodhisatta ordered his father-in-law's seven other daughters to marry the seven captured kings, which pleased everyone. The Bodhisatta returned home with his now loving wife and reclaimed his throne, and the pair lived a happy life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

A man of noble birth gave up his easy life to become a disciple of the Buddha and was completely dedicated to dharma. One day during an alms round he met a beautiful woman and fell in love at first sight. Overcome by passion, he became so depressed that he stopped cutting his hair and

nails and cleaning his robes, became thin and weak with yellow skin and veins sticking out of his body, and no longer took joy in his life of solitude.

When the Buddha found out about his problem, he told this disciple that the woman was wicked and he should get her out of his mind. Then the Buddha told the disciple this story so he knew that in the past he himself had once lost his power and become miserable after falling in love with a woman. Hearing this, the disciple overcame his lust and regained his health.

The Bodhisatta's father, mother, and wife were earlier births of the Buddha's father, birth mother, and wife. His younger brother was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples; the hunchbacked servant was an earlier birth of Khujjuttara, one of the Buddha's top female lay supporters; and his servants were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Sona-Nanda Jataka (#532)

The Bodhisatta was once an ascetic. He was born into a wealthy family, and when it came time to get married, he told his parents he was not interested. He would stay with them until they died, and then become an ascetic. His younger brother, Nanda, said he would do the same. This inspired his parents to give away all their wealth, and the four of them went off to the Himalayas and lived as ascetics.

They built leaf huts along a lotus-filled lake, and the sons cared for their parents, bringing them food and water, cleaning their rooms, washing their feet, and much more. They often had to walk far to gather fruit, so Nanda would keep extra from a day or two before to give his parents in the morning. But the Bodhisatta always brought them fruit picked fresh the same day. When the Bodhisatta found out his brother was being lazy, he worried this fruit would sicken his parents. He told his brother to wait for him to return from the forest, then they would deliver their food together; this way their parents would not be tempted to eat Nanda's unripe or overripe fruit.

But Nanda paid no heed to his brother's words, and his parents continued to eat the old fruit. So the Bodhisatta ordered his brother to leave. Nanda went to his hut and sat down in shame. Fixing his gaze on the mystic circle, he developed the eight attainments and five supernatural faculties. Then he left.

Nanda knew earning his brother's forgiveness would be no small task, so he went to see King Manoja, the most powerful ruler in India, and said that by his magic powers, he could make the king ruler over all of India without shedding any blood, not even enough for a tiny fly to drink. The king accepted the offer, and he marched his army out that very day. When the road was sunny, Nanda brought shade; when it rained, he kept them dry. He stopped the winds, removed stumps and thorns, and smoothed the road as they walked.

At the first kingdom, they ordered the king to fight or surrender. The king chose to fight. Nanda sat cross-legged on an antelope skin floating in the air between the two armies, and when the battle began, he caught every arrow fired by both sides. Then Nanda told the rival king if he submitted himself to King Manoja's authority, he could remain on his throne. The king agreed. Over the next seven years, seven months, and seven days, they forced submission of all one hundred one of India's other kings in this way.

King Manoja's victory celebration lasted a week. Then he wanted to reward Nanda and told him to take a palace or anything else he wanted and choose any kingdom to rule. But Nanda said the only thing he wanted was for King Manoja to go to the Himalayas along with the subservient kings and a host of wealthy nobles and help convince his brother to forgive him.

On that very day, the Bodhisatta finally wondered what had happened to his brother. Divining the answer, he knew that his brother was leading an entourage to come beg

forgiveness. Because they had seen his brother's great powers in person, the Bodhisatta knew they would all assume Nanda was his superior, and thus they would be destined for hell for failing to respect the Bodhisatta enough. To demonstrate his powers, he put a carrying pole with water buckets in the air four inches above his shoulder and flew fast down the mountain past the men walking up. King Manoja was impressed and stopped to talk to him. The Bodhisatta created a footpath to their home and flew back to await his guests.

In bedazzling splendor, as though he were Indra, king of the gods, King Manoja arrived with Nanda and the other kings to talk to the Bodhisatta. They chatted pleasantly for a while, then the king asked the Bodhisatta to listen to his brother's plea. Nanda asked to be able to care for his parents once again and make merit so he could enter heaven. The Bodhisatta replied that he sent his brother away because, as the eldest son, he had the obligation to do what was best for his parents, just like a captain guarding his ship. King Manoja and all the others were so delighted by this wisdom they forsook Nanda and became obedient followers of the Bodhisatta.

Nanda apologized for his behavior. The Bodhisatta forgave him and welcomed him back home, and granted his mother's request to smell and kiss Nanda's forehead. The Bodhisatta praised their parents at length and implored Nanda to never again give them sour berries or take other shortcuts in their care. He also preached about virtue and generosity to the

kings, and they all followed his advice, ruling righteously for the rest of their days.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The parents of one of the Buddha's disciples had been reluctant to let their son adopt a religious life, but he begged them and they agreed. After five years, he fully mastered dharma, so he went out to live alone and meditate in the forest to reach spiritual insight. But after twelve years of striving, he still had not achieved it. One day another disciple visited him at his hut and told him that his parents had fallen into ruin. With no children around to protect them, their servants and workers had stolen everything, and they were now homeless beggars, clothed in rags. The son began to cry, and realizing he had labored in vain for the past twelve years, he decided to leave the sangha and return home to care for his parents.

The depressed disciple went to listen to the Buddha preach one last time before returning home. The Buddha divined this disciple's situation and made his morning talk about the virtues of parents. Listening to the sermon, the son realized that, though it would be difficult, he could remain a disciple and still support his parents, and he resolved to do so. He took up abode near their hut, and from then on he made two daily alms rounds: one for them and a second for himself. He usually got little food for himself, and some days he got none, so he grew pale and thin.

When some other disciples learned what he was doing, they told him that sharing alms with people who are not disciples was an offense, and they reported him to the Buddha. The accused disciple was summoned back to the monastery, where he admitted sharing the alms he collected with his parents. But, to the surprise of the other disciples, the Buddha praised the caring son instead of rebuking him. He then told this story to explain that caring for others was always a good thing, and that in the past he himself had once turned down sovereignty over all of India so he could support his parents.

The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother. Nanda and King Manoja were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples. The one hundred one kings were earlier births of the Buddha's eighty chief elders plus twenty-one others, and King Manoja's soldiers were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Cullahamsa Jataka (#533)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden goose, king of a flock of ninety-six thousand others living in the Himalayas. One day some of his geese fed in a vast lotus lake near a faraway city, and they told the Bodhisatta it was a fantastic feeding ground and they should all go there. The Bodhisatta replied that it was too dangerous, but they begged him so tenaciously he relented and led the flock there.

When he landed on the lakeshore, the Bodhisatta stepped into a snare and the noose seized his leg. He tried to escape, and the line cut down to his bone, leaving him in severe pain. But he did not cry out because the other geese would fly away without feeding, and then they wouldn't have the energy to make it back home. Only after the geese had eaten their fill did he yell out the alarm sound of capture, and the flock flew back toward the Himalayas.

When his commander-in-chief didn't see the Bodhisatta in flight, he flew back to the lake and found him stained with blood lying on the muddy ground. He promised to release the Bodhisatta, even at the cost of his own life, and refused the Bodhisatta's order to flee to safety.

When the hunter arrived, he was perplexed at why the unbound goose stayed put. The commander-in-chief told the hunter that he loved his king so much he would not leave and begged to be killed in the Bodhisatta's place. This devotion softened the hunter's heart, and he released the Bodhisatta, tenderly removing the snare and washing away the blood.

Through the power of his kindness, the Bodhisatta's wound magically healed as if it had never happened.

The two geese knew that the hunter lost money by setting them free, and they wanted to thank him by going to the city and convincing the king to shower him with riches. The hunter warned them not to go because kings are erratic, and they might end up as pets or dinner. But they insisted, the commander-in-chief saying that if he could sway a hunter with blood on his hands, then surely he could convince a king.

The hunter told the king his tale, proclaiming the great virtue of the commander-in-chief. The king, a righteous leader, sat the geese in golden chairs and fed them parched grain, honey, molasses, and other choice foods. During a friendly chat after the meal, the Bodhisatta said the hunter deserved great riches. The king agreed and gave him a large house, a splendid chariot, loads of gold, and control of a village worth a hundred thousand coins annually in profit.

Then the Bodhisatta preached morality to the king, who was so impressed that he tried to hand over his kingdom, but the Bodhisatta refused to rule. He did, however, ask the king to reduce hunting so the creatures of the forest could live without fear.

Back at their Himalayan home, the geese rejoiced at the return of their king. And when they heard exactly how he had escaped death, they all sang praises of the commander-in-chief, the hunter, and the king; wishing them eternal happiness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's commander-in-chief was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. When Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, planned his third attempt to kill the Buddha, by releasing a drunk, fierce elephant into the street while the Buddha walked his morning alms round, people told the Buddha not to go to the city. But he still went as usual.

When they saw the elephant demolishing houses and crushing wagons, all eighty of the chief elders wanted to face the elephant themselves to protect the Buddha; but he ordered them not to. Ananda, however, had such strong affection for the Buddha that he didn't listen and stood in front of the Buddha ready to sacrifice his life. After Ananda ignored two orders from the Buddha to leave, the Buddha used his supernatural powers to send Ananda behind him. As the elephant charged, he saw the Buddha's glorious form and fell down in worship at his feet, never again harming a person.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Ananda's willingness to sacrifice his life for him, he told them this story so they knew that Ananda tried to do the same, even when born in animal form.

The hunter and the king were earlier births of Channa, Prince Siddhartha's charioteer, who later became a disciple, and Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples. The ninety-six

thousand geese were earlier births of supporters of the Buddha.

Sudhabhojana Jataka (#535)

The Bodhisatta was once Indra, king of the gods. In his earthly life before this, he worked as the king's treasurer and was exceptionally wealthy. One day he pondered his life and realized he had earned his prosperity through living a virtuous life, and he felt now was the time to take it to the next level by giving away his fortune. He offered everything to the king, but he said he was already rich enough. So the Bodhisatta built six alms halls around the city and gave money to the poor every day for the rest of his life. Before he died and became Indra, he instructed his son to continue giving away money, and he did. And so did the next three generations of his sons. And for their virtue, when born in heaven these four men became Chandra, the moon god; Surya, the sun god; Matali, Indra's charioteer; and Pancasikha, one of heaven's top musicians. But the next in the line, Kosiya (known as Maccharikosiya, the "Millionaire Miser"), felt that his forefathers were fools and he hoarded the remainder of the family fortune, neither helping the poor nor spending any more than absolutely necessary. He wore coarse clothes, shaded his head with leaves, and rode in a crazy old chariot yoked to worn-out oxen.

One morning, Kosiya saw his assistant eating sweetened rice porridge. He invited Kosiya to join him, but he refused so he wouldn't ever need to return the hospitality. But he got a deep craving for it that lasted days because he would not "waste" the money to eat some, and his unmet desire made him grow weak and pale. Finally, unable to bear it any longer, Kosiya had his wife prepare the ingredients, and he took

them to the forest where he could cook and eat in secret: if he cooked in his house, others would know about it and want some. He snuck out of his house in disguise and had one of his slaves keep watch near his forest hideout as he cooked so nobody would ask for some.

Meanwhile, just at that moment, the Bodhisatta sat in his heavenly abode and wondered what had become of his descendants. He divined that those who had already died had been reborn in heaven, but his great-great-great-grandson was a wicked man destined for hell. He assembled his other four relatives and they went down to earth to put the miser on the right path. They took the forms of brahmins and one by one approached Kosiya asking for porridge. Kosiya insulted the Bodhisatta, who went first, and told him to go away. But when the Bodhisatta spoke wise words about how generosity leads to salvation, Kosiya agreed to share a little. The next four brahmins approached, and in the same manner were begrudgingly invited to eat.

When the porridge was ready, Kosiya told the brahmins to use small leaf bowls for eating because there was not enough porridge for six people. But their small leaves magically grew to the size of warrior shields, and yet there was still porridge left over after they had all been served.

Before they ate, the brahmin who had been Kosiya's father transformed into a dog and urinated into the pot. Kosiya grabbed a stick to hit the dog, but then the dog switched into a thoroughbred horse that changed colors and size. The other brahmins rose into the air and watched it chase after Kosiya.

As he ran in fear, Kosiya shouted out, “Who are you people?” The Bodhisatta revealed their true identities and said they came with pity and compassion to save him from hell. The Bodhisatta then sat with Kosiya and explained how heavenly glory was earned only by the generous and the righteous. Kosiya accepted his lesson and promised to change his ways. Having established Kosiya in righteousness, the Bodhisatta and the other gods returned to heaven. Kosiya immediately met with the king and arranged to have his family’s riches given to the poor once again. Then he walked into the forest to live as an ascetic in a leaf hut along the Ganges River.

In heaven, the Bodhisatta had four divine daughters. One day a brahmin ascetic visited Indra’s heaven, and these four nymphs saw him using a magical paricchattaka flower as a parasol. They all wanted it. This ascetic said he had no attachment to it and would give it to whichever of the daughters was the best. Indra did not want to choose, thus making three of his daughters angry, so he said Kosiya would do it. He sent Matali to take some ambrosia to Kosiya and give him his task; then the daughters appeared at the four compass points. After a brief conversation with each, Kosiya chose one as the most virtuous and shared his special food with her alone. Moments later, while explaining the reason for his choice to Matali, Kosiya died and was reborn in Indra’s heaven. The Bodhisatta was so glad to see Kosiya that he gave him his chosen daughter to be his chief wife.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Kosiya was an earlier birth of one of the Buddha's disciples who was exemplary in conduct and devoted to charity. All the alms he received he shared with other disciples. When the Buddha heard some of his other disciples discussing this disciple's immense generosity, he told them this story so they knew that in the past this disciple had once been so stingy he would not even give anyone so much as a drop of oil from the top of a blade of grass, and the Buddha had also converted him back then.

The descendants of the Bodhisatta who came before Kosiya were earlier births of Moggallana, Maha Kassapa, Ananda, and Anuruddha, four of the Buddha's top disciples. The ascetic with the paricchattaka flower and the chosen daughter were earlier births of Sariputta and Uppalavanna, two more top disciples.

Mahahamsa Jataka (#534)

The Bodhisatta was once a golden goose, king of a flock of ninety thousand living in the Himalayas. One night the chief queen dreamed that some golden geese sat on the royal throne and preached religion to her. When she awoke, she wanted this for real. Knowing that if she just told the king about her dream he would not help her, she pretended to be pregnant and claimed that a craving was making her ill—she would die if she did not get to hear a sermon from a golden goose. The king promised to try and make it happen.

Following the advice of some wise brahmins, the king ordered a lake dug north of the city and filled it with a variety of grains and lotuses to attract birds. He declared it a sanctuary and warned that anybody going there would have their hands and feet mutilated and their possessions seized. The king hired a hunter to guard it and tell him when he saw golden geese.

Word of this superb, safe feeding ground spread among birds far and wide, and all manner came there to eat; and when some of the Bodhisatta's flock heard about the lake, they asked permission to go there. Knowing that humans are cruel, clever, and deceptive, the Bodhisatta assumed the lake was built for catching birds and did not allow it. But later, when his flock begged him, he relented and led them there.

The hunter reported the golden geese's arrival to the delighted king, who ordered the hunter to catch one or two of them, promising great honor if he succeeded. The hunter observed the golden geese from a blind for six days. He saw the Bodhisatta's incredible beauty and lack of greed and knew he was their king. And he saw that the Bodhisatta landed at the same spot every day, so the hunter set a snare, and the next morning the Bodhisatta stepped into it.

The Bodhisatta tried to break free, but stopped when the line cut down to his bone. He was in terrible pain, but did not yell the cry of capture until after the other geese had finished eating so they would have enough energy to return to their Himalayan home. As the flock flew back, the Bodhisatta's commander-in-chief didn't see him. He went back to the lake and found the Bodhisatta stained with blood and lying in mud. He promised to release the Bodhisatta, even at the cost of his own life, and refused the Bodhisatta's plea to fly away and save himself.

When the hunter approached the birds, the commander-in-chief stood up and explained that this was no ordinary goose

he'd caught. He was a king of extraordinary wisdom and virtue, and killing him would guarantee suffering in hell. The commander-in-chief implored the hunter to take him in the Bodhisatta's place. The hunter, impressed by this devotion and fearing hell more than his angry king, proclaimed the commander-in-chief's greatness and set the Bodhisatta free, his affection magically healing the Bodhisatta's wound.

The commander-in-chief knew that the hunter lost money by setting them free and asked what his plan had been. Hearing what the king and queen had done, the Bodhisatta and commander-in-chief agreed to thank the hunter by going with him to the palace. The hunter warned them not to go because kings are erratic, and they might end up as pets or dinner. But they insisted, the commander-in-chief saying that if he could sway a hunter with blood on his hands, then surely he could make a king understand. So the hunter prepared cages made of willow and shaded with lotuses and carried the geese on a pole into the city.

The king was overjoyed to see the two geese, and he gave the hunter twelve hamlets worth a hundred thousand coins annual profit, a vast store of gold, a chariot yoked with thoroughbred horses, and a large house. The hunter told the king about the capture and release, explaining how special these geese were and that they came to the palace of their own free will.

The king sat the geese in golden thrones, washed their feet, anointed them with oil, and fed them parched grain, honey, and sugar water. After eating, the Bodhisatta preached to the

king and queen, and a large crowd of others. The king was so pleased with his words that he tried to hand over his kingdom, along with gold, pearls, copper, ivory, deer skins, or any other treasure the Bodhisatta desired. But the Bodhisatta didn't take them, asking only that the king follow the ten royal virtues.

Back at their Himalayan home, the geese rejoiced at the return of their king. And when they heard exactly how he had escaped death, they all sang praises of the commander-in-chief, the hunter, and the king; wishing them eternal happiness.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Bodhisatta's commander-in-chief was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. When Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, planned his third attempt to kill the Buddha, by releasing a drunk, fierce elephant into the street while the Buddha walked his morning alms round, people told the Buddha not to go to the city. But he still went as usual.

When they saw the elephant demolishing houses and crushing wagons, all eighty of the chief elders wanted to face the elephant themselves to protect the Buddha; but he ordered them not to. Ananda, however, had such strong affection for the Buddha that he didn't listen and stood in front of the Buddha ready to sacrifice his life. After Ananda ignored two orders from the Buddha to leave, the Buddha used his supernatural powers to send Ananda behind him. As

the elephant charged, he saw the Buddha's glorious form and fell down in worship at his feet, never again harming a person.

Later, when the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing Ananda's willingness to sacrifice his life for him, he told them this story so they knew that Ananda was even willing to do it when born in animal form.

The king and queen were earlier births of Sariputta and Khema, two of the Buddha's top disciples, and the hunter was an earlier birth of Channa, Prince Siddhartha's charioteer, who later became a disciple. The members of the king's entourage were earlier births of supporters of the Buddha.

Kunala Jataka (#536)

The Bodhisatta was once a cuckoo. He lived in a delightful, bountiful Himalayan forest and was king of a large flock. A team of hens served him as he went about between gardens, orchards, and mountain peaks: he rode on a stick held in the beaks of two cuckoos, with five hundred hens flying below to catch him if he fell; five hundred flying above to block out the heat of the sun; five hundred flying on each side to block heat or cold, grass or dust, wind or mist; five hundred flying in front to prevent collisions and attacks; five hundred flying behind to speak gentle, sweet words of motivation; and five hundred flying hither and thither to bring him fruit. Though these servant hens were of highborn rank and worked without fault, because they were women, the Bodhisatta insulted them daily as wicked, absentminded, and ungrateful.

Nearby lived another cuckoo king, Punnamukha, a friend of the Bodhisatta with a sweet voice and joyful eyes. He flew with a similar crew of female servants, but he always gave them thanks and praise. Once when Punnamukha suggested the Bodhisatta should be kind to his servants, the Bodhisatta rudely asked, “What kind of fool are you to be won over by women?”

One day Punnamukha fell ill and was near death. His servants went and asked the Bodhisatta to heal him. After cursing them and saying he hoped they would die, the Bodhisatta took a variety of medicines to his friend and, because the servants went away, stayed to care for him for a few days until the sickness passed. Punnamukha said he was disgusted

with his servants for leaving him. The Bodhisatta saw this as an opportunity to preach about the deceitfulness, ingratitude, and immorality of women. And as word spread that he would be giving a sermon, a great crowd of gods, humans, and animals gathered in a valley to hear him.

The Bodhisatta declared to the vast assembly sitting before him that women enjoy destroying men as much as lions enjoy killing their prey. They are, he said, as cruel as snakes, as greedy as goblins, as crooked as deer horns, as arrogant as merchants, as dangerous as poisoned drinks, as destructive as flooded rivers, as deadly as covered pits, and as insatiable as hell. After discussing women's myriad faults, the Bodhisatta told eight stories of women he had known in past lives as examples of why men should never trust them.

- Once when the Bodhisatta was a prince, he married a princess who he later learned was a tramp. She was as highborn as a woman could be: conceived by one king and lovingly raised by a second after he killed her biological father in battle and took her mother as war plunder. When she came of age, an assembly of men was held in the palace courtyard for her to choose a husband. The Bodhisatta and his four younger brothers, all as beautiful as golden statues and educated by a world-renowned teacher in Taxila, had just arrived in the city. They all fell in love at first sight, and, to the annoyance of her father, she married all five of them.

The princess had a hunchbacked servant and was so driven by lust that when her husbands were away, she slept with

him too. Secretly, she told each of her six lovers that he was her favorite and he would become the king after her father died. They all believed her.

One day she was sick, and all her husbands were in the room massaging her head, hands, and feet while the hunchback sat nearby. As she lay there, she sent subtle signs, different for each man, that only they understood, expressing her favoritism for them. The Bodhisatta noticed her signaling everyone and grew suspicious, so he had the men step out of the room and they each told what the signs meant to them. Disgusted that she was sleeping with a loathsome hunchback, they lost their infatuation not just for her, but for all women, and renounced the world, going off to the Himalayas to live as ascetics.

- Once when the Bodhisatta was a goldsmith, he and his friends set up a tent at a festival to eat, drink, and have fun. After one of them got drunk and vomited, he said, “Praise be to Saccatapavi,” a good luck blessing that local people often spoke. Saccatapavi was a revered white-robed ascetic nun who lived in the cemetery and was steadfast in her austerities. The Bodhisatta mocked his friend for paying honor to a woman because they are unstable, and he bet him a thousand coins that in one week he could bring Saccatapavi to the festival drunk and in fancy clothes.

The Bodhisatta went to the cemetery dressed as an ascetic and pretended to worship the sun. Because he stood boldly in the middle of the cemetery, Saccatapavi assumed he had

developed miraculous powers, so she went to pay respect. For the first two days, the Bodhisatta completely ignored her, and on the third he told her to go away. He made pleasant small talk on the fourth and fifth days, and on the sixth, he struck up a conversation. They discussed their time living as ascetics, the Bodhisatta lying about everything. She had renounced the world twelve years ago and skipped four out of every five meals, but confessed that she had not yet attained a holy calm. He said he hadn't achieved it either and lamented that he got neither the joy of worldly pleasures nor the bliss of renunciation. And just then and there, he told her, he decided to become a householder again, living comfortably on his family's vast wealth.

Saccatapavi, lacking strength due to her womanhood, fell in love with the Bodhisatta and asked if he would take her with him and get married. He agreed, and they went back to his house, where they slept together. Then he took her to the festival where she got drunk, and he won the bet.

- Once when the Bodhisatta was a garuda king,1 he would often take the form of an extremely handsome young man and join games of dice with a human king. Word of his beauty spread around the palace, and one day the gorgeous queen consort came to see him. They caught each other's gaze and fell in love. By his supernatural powers, the garuda stirred up a raging storm over the city and fled with the queen in the darkness to his remote island home, where they lived happily together. Nobody knew what had happened to the queen, so the

Bodhisatta continued to play dice with the unsuspecting king.

The king sent one of his minstrels out in search of his missing queen, ordering him to explore every land and sea until he found her. Eventually he took passage on a merchant ship, and while out on the ocean the men asked him to play his lute for them. He warned them that his songs were so good they would excite the fish and the ship would be wrecked, but they did not believe him and they insisted. As he sang and played, fish splashed about and a giant sea creature leaped out of the water, falling on the ship and splitting it in two.

Blown by the wind, the minstrel floated on a plank and came to the Bodhisatta's island home, where the runaway queen recognized and welcomed him. He told her his story of how he got to the island, and she brought him back to her home to take care of him. They became lovers, he hiding away whenever the Bodhisatta was at home.

After a month and a half, some merchants landed on the island to gather water and firewood, and the minstrel sailed back home with them. The king and the garuda were playing dice when he arrived back at the palace, and he told them of his adventure and confessed his love for the queen by playing a song. The Bodhisatta was full of regret for not guarding his love from other men sufficiently and, now knowing what a wicked woman the queen was, gave her back to the king. He never returned to the palace.

- The Bodhisatta was once a king's commander-in-chief. Before the king was born, his father was slain and his pregnant mother was seized by a rival king who conquered the kingdom. The victorious king made her his queen consort. When her son was born, she worried that her new husband would consider her child as the son of his enemy and kill him. So she had her nanny lay the infant prince in the charnel ground, covered by a coarse cloth.

The infant prince's deceased father had been reborn as his guardian deity, and he used his powers to make a she-goat who was feeding in the charnel ground feel affection for the abandoned boy and give him milk to keep him alive. Eventually the goatherder, who was childless, found the boy and brought him home to raise him. Because his wife had no milk, the she-goat continued to suckle him. But from the time they took the boy in, two or three goats started dying daily. Unable to stop the curse, he put the boy in a clay pot and cast it down the river. A poor man who made a living repairing old rubbish found him on the riverbank near the palace. He and his wife were also childless, so they fostered the boy. Nobody knew anything about his royal background.

Shortly after abandoning her son, the captured queen had a daughter with the king. The abandoned prince learned his foster father's trade, and when he grew up he often went to the palace to mend old things. When the princess saw him, it was love at first sight, and they began a secret relationship in the palace. Eventually the servants discovered the affair and told the king, who ordered the repairman executed because

of his low caste. But the guardian deity took over his mother's body and made her tell the king that the repairman was actually her princely child. The king summoned the manny, the goatherder, and the repairman and confirmed the story.

Because of the man's royal blood, the king married his daughter to him and sent the pair back to rule his father's land with his daughter as queen. This new king had not gotten an education, so he hired the Bodhisatta as his teacher and also appointed him commander-in-chief. Although she loved her husband, eventually the queen and the Bodhisatta started an affair. Soon after, she also started sleeping with the Bodhisatta's assistant.

- The Bodhisatta was once a brahmin youth who lived in a town between two kingdoms. When the king of one kingdom conquered the other, he brought back the pregnant chief queen and made her his own. The king had no children, and when she gave birth to a son, the king cherished the boy. When the boy grew up, the king sent him back to rule over the land that had belonged to his father.

Later, the queen longed to see her son and she traveled to the other city. On the way, she stopped at the mid-point town, and when she saw the handsome Bodhisatta, she took him as a lover. After enjoying herself there for a few days, she continued on and visited her son. On the way back, the queen stopped again for several more days of passion with the Bodhisatta. Not long after she returned home, she told

her husband she wanted to visit her son again, and this time spent two more weeks with the Bodhisatta.

- Once when the Bodhisatta was a king's wise chaplain, a loathsome, misshapen man lived alongside the palace wall in the shade of a rose apple tree. One day the beautiful queen consort saw the loathsome man from her window and fell madly in love with him. Soon after, she instigated an affair. Each night, after the king fell asleep, she climbed out her window on a cloth rope and crossed over the palace wall via the rose apple tree. After taking her pleasure, she returned to her room, covered herself with perfume, and lay down by the king's side.

One day, after he made a solemn procession around the city and was returning home, the king saw the pitiful man and asked the Bodhisatta if any woman would ever be with him. This man heard the king and, full of pride, told the tree it was the only one who knew his secret. The Bodhisatta noticed the man's reaction and deduced what the queen was doing. He told the king his suspicion. Though he was doubtful, that night the king only pretended to fall asleep and he followed the queen out the window. Her lover slapped the queen for coming late, and one of her special lion-head earrings fell out and landed at the king's feet. He picked it up and returned to bed.

The next morning, the king summoned the queen to come before him wearing all the jewelry he had ever given her. She came with only one earring, saying the other was with the

goldsmith. To humiliate her further, the king summoned the goldsmith to expose her lie. Then he threw the missing earring at her feet and ordered the Bodhisatta to chop off her head. The Bodhisatta asked the king to spare her life because she was only acting the way all women do, and he offered to prove it.

The king left the kingdom in the care of his mother, and the two men set out into the countryside in disguise. Not far outside the city they encountered a wedding celebration, and the Bodhisatta told the disbelieving king he could have sex with the bride right then. To make it happen, the Bodhisatta rushed in front of the procession and set up a screen around the king. When the bride's carriage passed them, the Bodhisatta began to cry and said his pregnant wife was inside the screen and there was no woman to help with the delivery. The father-in-law, thinking that helping a woman give birth would be auspicious and help the newlyweds have a large family in the future, sent the bride in. When she stepped inside the screen, she fell in love at first sight with the king and gave herself to him. Back outside, she announced that it was a beautiful baby boy.

The men continued their journey around India, and the Bodhisatta convinced the king that all women were the same. When they returned home, the king spared the queen's life, but evicted her from the palace and chose a new chief queen. He sent the loathsome man away too, and cut off the rose apple branch that reached over the wall.

- Once when the Bodhisatta was a wise, righteous king, he fell in love with a poor woman who had deformed hands, feet, eyes, mouth, and nose: punishment for scowling at a private Buddha (those who reach enlightenment on their own and do not teach the path to others) in a past life. But she also gave that same private Buddha a lump of clay for him to use to tidy up his cave, and for this she was rewarded with a miraculously soft touch. The Bodhisatta met her by accident one night while out wandering around the city in disguise. Not paying attention and thinking he was someone else, the deformed woman casually grabbed the Bodhisatta's hand as he walked by. Her soft touch caused him to lose control, and despite her being hideous to look upon and desperately poor, he immediately asked her to marry him. She said yes, of course.

Every night the Bodhisatta went to her home and returned to the palace before sunrise so nobody would know about their relationship. Even she didn't know who he really was because he always wore his disguise. Yet despite his shame, he was perfectly faithful to her, never so much as even looking at another woman with lust.

One day the deformed woman's father suffered a bloody discharge, and the only remedy was a constant supply of rice gruel prepared with milk, ghee, honey, and sugar; which they could not afford. The mother asked her daughter if her new husband could help. She answered that he must be poorer

than them to have married an ugly wretch like her, but she would ask.

That evening the Bodhisatta found his wife in a sad state, and when she told him why, he realized he could use this opportunity to bring her into his palace without becoming a despised laughingstock. He promised to get her the food she needed, and the next night he came with two baskets made of leaves: one filled with food and the other having his jeweled crown inside. He told her to serve her father the rice from one basket this day and save the second basket for the next, and she did as told.

In the morning, the royal servants couldn't find the crown and the Bodhisatta ordered the whole city searched, with no success. Then he told them to go through the houses of the poor people living outside the city gates. When they found the crown in the deformed woman's house, she and her parents were brought before the Bodhisatta (who pretended ignorance of the whole matter) and they denied stealing it. She said her husband gave the package with the crown to her, and she didn't know who her husband was because he only came at night and she had never seen his face clearly. But she could identify him by the touch of his hand.

As he had secretly planned all along, the Bodhisatta ordered a screen erected in the palace courtyard, and all male citizens were brought to be tested by reaching through and letting her touch them. Everyone was filled with disgust at the start, but once they felt her touch, they behaved like madmen and had to be beaten away by the king's servants.

Now that people understood her charm, the Bodhisatta could admit his love publicly, and he reached through the screen to reveal himself. He invited his deformed wife into the palace and made her his chief queen.

After living in the palace for a while, one night the chief queen dreamed of being the chief queen for two kings. She told the Bodhisatta about it, and he summoned his dream interpreters. The king's jealous other queens bribed the interpreters, so they lied, telling the Bodhisatta the dream foretold she would bring a hostile king to fight him, and he would die. The interpreters told him he could save his life by putting her on a boat and setting it adrift down the river, and he did so.

As she floated downstream between two kingdoms, the banished queen passed another king who seized her boat to take its cargo. Seeing the deformed woman, he wondered if she was a goblin. But when she told her story, he helped her disembark, and the moment he took her hand, he was inflamed with passion and made her his chief queen.

Eventually the Bodhisatta wanted his chief queen back and led his army to go get her, telling the other king to surrender her or go to war. Advisors for both kings got the point across that nobody should die for the sake of a woman and convinced the kings to share her, seven days in one kingdom and then seven in the other. They each built cities on opposite shores of the river to facilitate the arrangement, and

when she crossed between them each week, she had sex mid-stream with the boat pilot, a lame, bald old man.

- Once when the Bodhisatta was a king, his beloved queen consort took a palace servant as a lover. After the Bodhisatta fell asleep, she would climb out the window to meet him; then when she returned, she'd wash up and go back to bed. One night the Bodhisatta noticed her body was cold under the covers, and he got suspicious. The next night he pretended to fall asleep, followed her when she left, and saw her getting intimate with the servant.

The next day, the Bodhisatta summoned the queen and exposed her affair in front of his advisors. Though her offense deserved death, mutilation, or imprisonment, because all women are sinners the Bodhisatta just stripped her of her high rank and chose another chief queen.
His past-life stories complete, the Bodhisatta spoke more about womenkind's wickedness. They are as vicious as black snakes, he said, and as ravenous as fire. They are fickle, ungrateful, and treacherous creatures who care not for duty's call and are numb to affection. They ignore what is right, obeying only their heart's desires. They are unreliable, with minds like shifty monkeys, and they always leave you behind in times of trouble. You have as much chance of catching the wind in a net as getting a woman to obey you. His tirade complete, there was applause and shouts of "Bravo, well said!"

The vulture king called out from the audience that he too had firsthand experience with women's faults. Women are vile wretches, he said, and cannot be trusted. Their shame knows no bounds and they make no distinction between true and false. Unrestrained in lust, they court men without regard for love and hate. Like parasites infesting a tree and cows eating only the choicest plants, women seek riches.

When the vulture king had finished his speech, a renowned ascetic added that women's ways are as perplexing as fish in the sea, annoying as thorns, and dangerous as blazing fires. Even the holiest men fail when tempted by their seduction.

Finally, the Bodhisatta spoke again with a few further words about the dangers of women. It's safer to talk to a goblin or a snake than a woman, he said, because men can be defeated by women's charm. With just a smile, women can secure men's wealth, but even after they are bedecked with gold and jewels, they still sin against their husbands. Men who are famous and revered lose their respect when they fall under the sway of women and can end up on a dreadful path. To get to heaven, men must overcome their libido and not fall under the spell of women.

After giving another round of applause, the various gods and creatures returned to their abodes. Punnamukha and all the others took the Bodhisatta's advice about women to heart and received great merit for doing so.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The Buddha told this story to help five hundred new disciples who were dissatisfied. It all began with a quarrel between the Buddha's Sakya clan and a neighboring clan over who should get water for their crops after their shared dam ran low at the end of the dry season. As tempers flared, people came to blows and the two clans declared war.

The Buddha went to quell the feud, and when they saw him, every man threw down his weapon to listen to him speak. The Buddha said life was more valuable than water, then told five stories from his past lives to convince them to settle their dispute peacefully.

- To explain the futility of fighting, the Buddha told the Phandana Jataka (#475), in which he was a tree fairy. A branch fell off his tree and struck a lion. Angry from the pain, the lion told a carpenter to cut down the Bodhisatta's tree to make wheels. To get revenge, the Bodhisatta told the carpenter to use the lion's skin to strengthen the wheels, so the lion died.
- To condemn blindly following others, the Buddha told the Daddabha Jataka (#322), in which he was a lion. A hare heard a loud thud and feared the earth was coming to an end, so he took off running as fast as he could. Tens of thousands of other animals heard his warning and joined in the exodus, all without ever looking back. The Bodhisatta knew the earth was not breaking apart and stopped the stampede with his roar. He asked if anyone had actually seen the ground breaking, and no

one had. So he went back to where the hare heard the sound to investigate and saw a bael fruit that had fallen out of a tree lying on the intact ground.

- To prove that sometimes the weak can defeat the strong, the Buddha told the Latukika Jataka (#357), in which he was an elephant. When his herd passed by a nest full of hatchlings, a mother quail begged the Bodhisatta to protect her children from being stepped on, so he stood over the nest until all his elephants had passed. Later, an evil rogue elephant came by, and when he heard the quail's pleas he intentionally trampled the chicks and urinated on their mangled corpses. The quail cursed the elephant and vowed revenge, stating that a strong mind was more powerful than a strong body. The mother quail helped a crow, a fly, and a frog, and then she enlisted them to return the favors by helping her murder the rogue elephant. The crow pecked out the elephant's eyes to blind him; the fly laid eggs in his eye sockets to cause him maddening pain; and the frog croaked, leading the elephant to follow him in the assumption that the frog was in water, but instead the frog had jumped down a cliff, so the elephant fell to his death.
- To promote unity, the Buddha told the Rukkhadhamma Jataka (#74), in which he was a tree fairy. A new king told all the fairies of the forest they could go live anywhere they pleased. Despite the Bodhisatta telling his relatives to stay in the forest with him, some went to live in big stand-alone trees near towns, where they knew they would get the most honor and offerings. One day a storm blew down all the lone trees, and these

fairies lost their homes, while trees packed together in the forest suffered no damage. This showed that families should stick together.

- To show that unity brings victory and division brings destruction, the Buddha told the Sammodamana Jataka (#33), in which he was a quail. He told other quails that anytime they were caught in a hunter's net, they should stick their heads through the mesh and fly away. When the quails worked together like this, the hunter could not catch any. But, one day while feeding, a quail accidentally stepped on another's head. He apologized, but the other quail remained angry and the two bickered for a long time. Knowing that conflict compromised their safety, the Bodhisatta took his flock elsewhere in the forest. When the hunter returned and cast his net, the entrapped quails argued about who should begin lifting, and this gave the hunter time to pick up the net and kill them.

The Buddha finished his anti-war discussion with a lesson on self-control and nonattachment, and everyone renounced conflict, feeling grateful to the Buddha for saving their lives. As an act of atonement, each of the clans sent two hundred fifty princes to become disciples. They collected morning alms together in both of the clans' cities and received great honor. But these men had ordained out of respect for the Buddha, not a desire for spiritual growth, and over time they became discontented. The feelings worsened when they received messages from their former wives.

To help these five hundred disciples overcome their dissatisfaction, the Buddha flew them to the beautiful valley in the Himalayas where he had been the cuckoo, and there he preached about the wickedness of women by telling this story. The trip and the story erased their longings for their wives. Fully understanding that women create problems and should be avoided, they all attained arahantship and were able to fly home under their own supernatural powers.

Punnamukha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was quite stupid and often said one thing when he meant another. The vulture king and the renowned ascetic were earlier births of Ananda and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Maha-Sutasoma Jataka (#537)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. The King of Varanasi, the Bodhisatta's close friend from his years studying in Taxila (the Bodhisatta was the top student in their class and tutored him), never ate a meal without meat. One day, some dogs got into the kitchen before dinner time and ate all the meat. Unable to replace it because it was a holy day (when killing is not allowed), the cook was afraid he would be executed for his carelessness, so he snuck into the cemetery and cut off flesh from a fresh corpse's thigh. He roasted it and served it with rice, and the moment it touched the king's tongue it sent a thrill through his whole body—because in his previous birth, the king had been a goblin and frequently ate human flesh.

The king sent all his servants away and asked the cook what meat it was. He claimed it was just regular meat, the same as he always cooked, and the only difference was that he roasted it better than normal. The king knew this was a lie and told the cook to tell the truth or die. The cook prayed for safety and admitted what he had done. The king ordered him to never mention it to anyone else, and from then on, always serve him human flesh, killing prisoners to source it.

This went on until the prison was empty. Then the cannibal king told his cook to drop a bag with one thousand coins in the street and arrest anyone who picked it up. But soon, people learned it was a trap and stopped looking in bags they saw, so he told his cook to hide along a road and murder people at random, carrying off a big portion of flesh for each

meal. The cook did as he was told, and the city fell into a panic.

A crowd went to the palace courtyard and begged their king to find the man-eating murderer. When he refused to do anything, they went to the commander-in-chief. He ordered soldiers to hide throughout the city, and they quickly captured the cook. He was given a thrashing and confessed. The next morning, the cook was taken before the king, who admitted that everything the cook had done was at his command. And he said he would not give up eating human flesh no matter what.

The commander-in-chief hoped that hearing the tale of a giant cannibal fish who also became a slave to his appetite might sway the cannibal king to change.

A fish was five hundred leagues long, and all the other fish loved him so much they made him their leader. One day, while feeding on aquatic plants, he accidentally ingested a fish and found it so delicious he did not want to eat anything else ever again. From then on, every morning and evening when other fish came to pay their respects, he ate the last couple of fish to leave.

As the population shrank, one wise fish suspected their king was the killer, so he sat in hiding and saw him devour the stragglers. He warned all the other fish, and they were panic-stricken, so they no longer went near their king. Getting hungry, the king guessed the others were hiding at a mountainous island, so he encircled it. As he looped around,

he caught sight of his tail and thought it was another giant fish, so in a rage, he chomped it. The other fish smelled blood and attacked, eating up his body bit by bit from the tail to his head and leaving behind a heap of bones so large that mystical ascetics flying over the lake could see it.
The cannibal king, however, was not moved by the story and countered with one of his own, claiming that he would die if he stopped eating people.

Five hundred ascetics came down to the city from the Himalayas to get salt and vinegar, and a wealthy man set out food for them every morning. One day the ascetics went on an alms round in the countryside and did not return to the man's home for several days, so he went to the royal park to see them. They were eating rose apples they had brought back, and the head of the group gave a piece to the man's young son. It was so delicious the boy asked for another, and then did so again several more times. Not wanting his son to bother the holy men anymore, the father said that was enough and lied that he could have more when they got back home.

At home, the boy kept asking for another piece of the special rose apple, and finally his father was so frustrated he went back to the park to get some more. The ascetics had since departed, though they'd left the boy an assortment of fruits mixed with powdered sugar. But the boy would eat nothing other than those rose apples, and after a week of starvation, he died.

The commander-in-chief told the cannibal king he would be renounced by his family and banished from the kingdom if he didn't stop eating people, just like what happened to one young man who would not give up alcohol.

The only son of a wealthy brahmin family was thoroughly virtuous. But one day, his friends tricked him into drinking alcohol for the first time by hiding some fiery liquor in cups made of lotus leaves and telling the man it was lotus nectar. He drank it down and got drunk—and liked it very much. So he and his friends drank throughout the day, and when they ran out of liquor, the man traded away his signet ring to buy more. He went home trembling and babbling, and then passed out. His father told him to never drink again; they were a respected family and if their reputation got destroyed, then so would their business. However, the son said he would not stop drinking, so the father kicked him out of the house and the family. The young man became a pitiful wretch and died a beggar in the streets.

Still gripped by desire, the cannibal king again predicted his own demise if he could not have what he craved so dearly. He continued his previous story to reveal the fate of the rose apple-loving boy's father.

After listening to the band of ascetics preach one time, the father slept in the park. That night the camp lit up with a blazing light because Indra, king of the gods, came to pay his respects to the ascetics. Indra came with heavenly nymphs so beautiful the man wanted to marry one. To please him, his wife dressed up like one of the nymphs. But he demanded a

real nymph; and when he couldn't have one, he sank into a depression, stopped eating, and died.
Still hoping to convince the cannibal king, the commander-in-chief told a cautionary tale about a flock of golden geese.

A flock of golden geese lived high in the Himalayas and had to fly down the mountain to find food. But they could not fly that far during the rainy season, so every year they gathered a supply of rice and stayed inside their cave for four months. Each month, a giant spider as big as a chariot wheel would spin a thick, strong web over the cave entrance. And each year when the sky cleared and it was time for them to leave, they gave a young goose a double serving of food and he would crawl through and cut all four webs to free the flock.

But one year the rainy season lasted five months, and the geese ran out of rice. They started to eat eggs. When these were gone, they ate goslings and then their elderly. The geese had grown feeble during this time, and when the rains stopped, the young goose could only cut through four webs before he lost his strength. When the spider returned, it cut off all their heads and drank their blood.

Making a final attempt to change the cannibal king's mind, the commander-in-chief brought out the royal family and harem and said he had to choose to stay with them or leave; and the king said he loved human flesh more than all of them. So he was sent out to a forest with only his sword and his cook. He made a home at the base of a banyan tree and went to the road to kill men, bringing their bodies back to his

tree. He was so obsessed that, one day when he couldn't get a victim, he killed and ate his cook.

A wealthy brahmin, knowing the danger of the cannibal king, hired guards from the village at the forest's edge to get his five-hundred-wagon trade caravan through it safely. But the cannibal king still attacked and seized the brahmin, running off with him into the forest. The hired guards gave chase, and during the pursuit a piece of wood pierced through the cannibal king's foot, leaving him in agony. He dropped the brahmin and got away. Severely injured, he prayed to the fairy of his banyan tree to heal him; if she did, he would kill one hundred one kings from across India, bathing the tree in their blood and hanging their bodies in its branches. After a week, the wound was healed and, assuming the tree fairy had done it (she hadn't), the cannibal king set out to keep his promise.

Using a magic spell for super speed and strength, the cannibal king captured one hundred kings and hung them in the banyan tree with rope strung through the palms of their hands. Because the Bodhisatta was his friend, the cannibal king chose not to capture him and to make the sacrifice with one hundred kings instead. Sparing no time, he lit a fire and sat down to sharpen a stake.

Disgusted by the cannibal king's evil, the tree fairy asked Indra how to stop the impending slaughter. Indra said the Bodhisatta was the only one who could humble the cannibal king and cure him of his addiction, so she should tell him that

he must bring the Bodhisatta to the tree before making his sacrifice.

Taking Indra's advice, the tree fairy took the form of an ascetic and appeared before the cannibal king. Figuring holy men were on par with kings, the cannibal king decided to make the ascetic victim one hundred one and ran in pursuit. But even with his supernatural speed, fast enough to catch a horse at full gallop, he couldn't reach the ascetic, who walked at a normal pace. Her powers proven, the tree fairy revealed her glorious true self and told the cannibal king he would reach heaven if he brought the Bodhisatta here for the sacrifice. The cannibal king resolved to capture him. Early the next morning, he hid under a lotus leaf in a pond in the Bodhisatta's royal park, knowing he would go there to take a ceremonial bath because there was a special alignment of the stars the next day.

At sunrise, as the Bodhisatta traveled to his park, a wise brahmin stopped him and wanted to recite four ancient verses given by Kassapa Buddha (the Buddha from before the era of Gautama, the present Buddha). The Bodhisatta was very eager to hear them, but he could not be late to bathe, so he promised to return later.

As the Bodhisatta finished his bath, the cannibal king jumped out of the water with a fearsome yell and ran off with him on his shoulder, leaping over the eight-meter-tall wall to escape. After three leagues, when they were beyond the chance of rescue, the cannibal king slowed to a walk. He felt tears falling on him and asked the Bodhisatta if he wept for fear of

death or for the fate of his family. Neither, he answered: he cried because he didn't want to die with a promise (returning to meet the brahmin with the verses) unfulfilled.

The Bodhisatta asked for his release and vowed to come to the forest on his own the next morning. The cannibal king was skeptical, but the Bodhisatta explained that death was preferable to living with the sin of a broken promise; and because they had been friends in the past, he should know that the Bodhisatta was impeccably honest. So the Bodhisatta was set free, and he rushed back to the city where people rejoiced when they saw he was safe. He went straight to the palace and summoned the brahmin with the verses, seating him on a valuable throne and giving him scented garlands. After eating, the brahmin took out a beautiful book and read four verses about virtue and impermanence. The Bodhisatta was delighted to hear these words of wisdom, and while the brahmin requested just one hundred coins per verse, the Bodhisatta declared them worth a thousand each. Then the Bodhisatta gave the throne back to his father, and with the whole city stirred by sadness, he walked to the forest.

A fire was roaring when the Bodhisatta arrived at the cannibal king's home. The Bodhisatta rebuked his wickedness and spoke fearlessly to him about the blessings of righteousness. Impressed by his manner and his words, the cannibal king worried that his head would explode into seven pieces if he ate his old friend, so he decided not to do it. Then by request, the Bodhisatta recited the four special verses he had just heard, and gods shouted applause from heaven and the

cannibal king was filled with joy, granting the Bodhisatta four wishes as a reward.

Knowing this was his opportunity to cleverly convert the cannibal king back to righteousness, for his first wish, the Bodhisatta prayed for the cannibal king to live safe and sound for another hundred years; and this act of generosity made the cannibal king glad at heart. For his second wish, he asked for the one hundred captive kings to be set free and never eaten, and the cannibal king agreed. Worried that the cannibal king might still kill or enslave them, for his third wish, the Bodhisatta wanted the kings safely returned to their kingdoms, and again the cannibal king agreed.

For his final wish, the Bodhisatta asked the cannibal king to stop eating people. He laughed and refused, saying this was impossible, and told the Bodhisatta to choose something else. But the Bodhisatta wouldn't relent, and he managed to fill the cannibal king with a fear of hell and a desire for heaven. Finally, the king broke into tears and promised to stop. The gods of heaven roared applause and the one hundred kings hanging in the tree gave thanks. At the urging of the Bodhisatta, all one hundred kings promised not to seek vengeance against their tormentor, and were then untied and laid on the ground, too weak to stand. For the next three days, the two nursed the near-death kings back to health; feeding them rice, washing off the blood, and magically healing their wounded hands.

When it was time to go, the cannibal king said he would stay behind in the forest and starve to death, believing he could

never return home where he had killed so many people. But the Bodhisatta promised he would urge the people of Varanasi to forgive him and return the crown—if he could tame a cruel wretched cannibal, he could convince the good people of the city to do this. And if he failed, he would hand over half of his own kingdom.

When the cannibal king's son, who had ascended the throne after his father was banished, and the commander-in-chief heard they were coming, they closed the city gates and mustered their troops. Only the Bodhisatta was let in, and he assured all the city's leaders that their former king was rehabilitated and fully established in righteousness; the people were in no danger. People trusted the Bodhisatta, and they forgave the cannibal king. He was given a bath, a barber, and new clothes, and then led into the city to a great welcome and reestablished on the throne.

The Bodhisatta stayed in Varanasi for a month, preaching about virtue and urging generosity before returning to a magnificent welcome in his own realm. Soon after, he founded a city in the forest to ensure that the tree fairy would get abundant offerings. And by following the Bodhisatta's advice, the cannibal king and the hundred others all did good deeds for the rest of their days and reached heaven upon their death.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The cannibal king was an earlier birth of Angulimala, a dreaded bandit who cut off a finger of each person he

murdered and wore them around his neck, and who later became an enlightened disciple of the Buddha.

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing how great he was for being able to convert such an evil person. But the Buddha said it was no great task for one who is enlightened; it was much more impressive that he converted Angulimala in a past life when he had less refined knowledge. He told them this story to explain.

The commander-in-chief, the brahmin who recited the verses, the tree fairy, and Indra were earlier births of Sariputta, Ananda, Maha Kassapa, and Anuruddha, four of the Buddha's top disciples. The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother, and the kings for the sacrifice were earlier births of followers of the Buddha.

Muga-Pakkha Jataka (#538)

The Bodhisatta was once a crown prince. Before he was born, his father, a just and powerful king beloved by his subjects, was unhappy because none of his sixteen thousand wives had borne him a child. Even after the king commanded them to pray to the moon and other gods, none got pregnant. Later, on a holy day, his chief queen spoke an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) to Indra, king of the gods, asking to let her have a son because she had only done good in her life. Indra's throne became warm, and when he knew the cause, he decided to grant her wish.

The Bodhisatta had been a king in his previous life on earth, and then had suffered eighty thousand years in hell before rising to reside in Indra's heaven. Knowing the Bodhisatta's time in heaven was up, Indra asked him to be conceived in the queen's womb, and he agreed. At the same time, Indra also sent five hundred other boys to be born to the wives of the king's advisors in order to serve the Bodhisatta.

When the queen found she was pregnant, the king took every precaution for her safety, and he was overjoyed when she gave birth to a son who possessed all the auspicious marks of good fortune. He granted his queen a wish for anything she desired, which she held on to for use in the future. The king sent sixty-four nurses, full of sweet milk and free of faults, to care for his son. (Sitting on the hip of a nurse who is too tall will make a child's neck become too long; and if the nurse is too short, one of the child's shoulder bones will be

compressed. If the nurse is too thin, the child's thighs will ache; too stout and the child will become bow-legged. If the nurse's skin is very dark, her body is too cold; if she is very white, her body is too hot. If a nurse's breasts hang low, the child's nose will be flattened.) The advisors' five hundred noble children were all born on the same day as the Bodhisatta. Knowing they were divine intervention, the king also sent princely clothes and a nurse for each of them.

When the Bodhisatta, named Temiya, was one month old, he made his first public appearance. Sitting with his father on the throne, the Bodhisatta watched him sentence four thieves to torture and death. He was terrified by his father's cruelty and, remembering he had previously suffered in hell after being a king, knew he must do something to escape the fate of replacing his father. While he pondered what to do, a goddess who lived in the umbrella that shaded him, and who had been his mother in a former life, told him if he acted disabled, deaf, and mute with no sign of intelligence, he would not be crowned king. The Bodhisatta followed her advice, and from then on stayed unresponsive at all times.

His parents and nannies knew that the Bodhisatta had no physical defects and were determined to break what they thought was his depression. They brought the five hundred young nobles to be around him, and they got fed when they cried for their milk. But the Bodhisatta, knowing that to die of thirst would be better than being king and going to hell, remained stoic and silent. The king consulted his chaplains and they told him to be patient; the Bodhisatta would eventually cry and seize a breast to drink. For the rest of the

year, they delayed his feeding, sometimes going all day before relenting and giving him his milk without him ever crying for it.

And then each year for the rest of his childhood, they tried to shock the Bodhisatta back to normalcy through these tricks and tortures:

- Surrounding him with cakes and other delicious snacks so he could take any he wanted.
- Surrounding him with an assortment of fruit.
- Surrounding him with various toys.
- Surrounding him with special foods for children.
- Setting him in the middle of a house, covering it with palm leaves, and setting it on fire.
- Training an elephant to run wild around him and lift him up as if to smash him.
- Letting snakes crawl all over his body.
- Bringing in a troupe of mimes to entertain him.
- Sending a man with a sword charging toward him, threatening to cut off his head.
- Having conch-shell blowers make a constant loud noise.
- Having drummers make a constant loud noise.
- Lighting many lamps at night and lifting them simultaneously to create a sudden bright light.
- Covering him with molasses and laying him in a place infested with biting flies.
- Stopping his bathing until he was disgusting and covered with flies.
- Placing pans of fire under his bed until his skin blistered.

- Bringing women as beautiful as goddesses to entertain and seduce him; whoever broke him would be his chief queen.

But throughout all this, the Bodhisatta remembered the torments of hell, which were far worse than the suffering inflicted by his parents, and he never broke from his plan.

When the Bodhisatta reached age sixteen, the royal fortune-tellers warned that to avoid grave misfortune to the king and queen, the Bodhisatta must die. Fearing their predictions, the king agreed to kill his son. When the queen learned of this, she asked for her wish that had been promised when the Bodhisatta was born: she begged her husband to make their son king. He refused but did agree to give their son the crown for seven days in the hope he would finally speak. But still the Bodhisatta ignored his mother's daily pleading to stop his act.

The week passed, and in the early morning, at the king's command, a charioteer took the resolute Bodhisatta from his wailing mother's arms and drove him out of the city for the execution. As the charioteer dug a grave in the cemetery, the Bodhisatta, his fate finally changed, stood up and found himself so strong he was able to lift the chariot he had just ridden in as if it were a child's toy. At that moment, Indra's throne became warm, and he perceived that the Bodhisatta wanted to be beautifully adorned. So Indra wrapped him in ten thousand pieces of cloth and gave him heavenly ornaments just like his own.

Then the Bodhisatta revealed himself to the astonished charioteer and told his story. He said he was going to live as an ascetic and sent the charioteer back to the palace to get his parents so he could say goodbye. While the Bodhisatta waited, Indra built him a leaf hut and gave him bark-cloth robes and all the other requisites for life in the forest.

When the charioteer told the king and queen the news, they took three days to assemble a grand cavalcade of horses, elephants, and people, from generals to countryfolk and queens to prostitutes, to go and convince the Bodhisatta to return and take the throne. On the fourth day, the Bodhisatta finally greeted his father and mother. The king asked him to take the throne just until he had a son, and only then go off to be an ascetic. But the Bodhisatta refused, saying that something important like this should not be delayed, adding that he had no interest in worldly pleasures.

The king was so inspired by the Bodhisatta's words that he gave away all his riches and joined his son in the forest. His sixteen thousand wives also became ascetics, and then eventually so did most of his court and the ordinary citizens of not only this but also two other kingdoms. They all lived in a massive monastery built by Indra and learned from the Bodhisatta's sermons. When they died, they all rose to heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the magnificence of his Great Renunciation, which was the

beginning of his path to enlightenment. But the Buddha said it wasn't so wonderful because he had already fully attained the ten perfections of character in his past lives. Leaving his kingdom to renounce the world and become an ascetic in an earlier life, while his wisdom was less mature, was more impressive and he told them this story about how he did it.

The goddess in the umbrella and the charioteer were earlier births of Uppalavanna and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples. The Bodhisatta's father and mother were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother, and the king's court were the Buddha's present followers.

Mahajanaka Jataka (#539)

The Bodhisatta was once a widowed queen's son. Various people told King Aritthajanaka that his younger brother, Polajanaka, planned to kill him, so he had him imprisoned. But Polajanaka was pure of heart and had no ill intent toward his brother, so he pleaded to the heavens: "If I'm innocent, let my chains break and the door open." His wish came true and he fled to a remote border town where he became the local leader and earned everyone's respect. Though he didn't before his arrest, Polajanaka now considered his brother an enemy, and he soon returned to the city with an army and told his brother to surrender or face destruction. Aritthajanaka chose to fight, but most of his subjects joined the battle on Polajanaka's side, so Aritthajanaka was defeated and died.

After the battle, Aritthajanaka's pregnant queen snuck out of the city disguised as a peasant, with her gold and jewels hidden in a basket of rice. Indra, king of the gods, saw her sitting along the road hoping for someone to take her to the distant city of Kalacampa. He knew that her unborn son was the Bodhisatta, so he came to earth as an old man driving a carriage and offered her a ride, magically making the sixty-league trip in a single night.

In Kalacampa, the queen met a renowned teacher who, entranced by the power of the Bodhisatta in her womb, took her in and cared for her. To protect her secret, he told everyone she was his long-lost sister. Her son, who she

named Mahajanaka, was born soon after. Other children teased him by calling him “the widow’s son,” and one day while he was breastfeeding, he bit his mother and demanded to know who his father was. “If you do not tell me,” he said, “I will cut off your breast.” Once he learned the truth of his royal blood, he no longer had any shame about growing up fatherless and the other children’s teasing no longer upset him.

By the time the Bodhisatta turned sixteen years old he was wise and handsome, and he felt ready to go to his father’s home and seize the kingdom. His mother offered her treasure to fund his quest, but he only took half because he wanted to make money in trade as he traveled there. On the same day that he boarded a ship sailing to Suvarnabhumi, the golden land of the east, where he could sell his cargo and raise money, his uncle, the king, fell ill.

After seven days at sea, the ship sank. As it broke apart, the Bodhisatta kept calm. While the other passengers prayed to their various gods, he ate a big meal, covered his body with sugar and ghee, put on two sets of clothes smeared with oil, and climbed to the top of the mast. The water around the ship turned red as fish and turtles devoured the submerged passengers, but using his superior strength, the Bodhisatta jumped sixty-five meters from the ship and avoided a similar fate. On this day, the king died.

The Bodhisatta floated in the ocean far from land for a week, never giving up hope. The goddess of the ocean responsible for rescuing virtuous people in distress had been distracted

and forgot to do her job. When she finally scanned the seas, she saw the Bodhisatta and went to talk with him. Once she was certain he was not an ordinary mortal, she lifted him out of the water and held him tenderly like a child. The Bodhisatta slept in her arms for seven days to recover. Then she flew him to his family's kingdom and laid him on a ceremonial stone in a mango grove where the goddesses of the garden could look after him.

The king had no sons or living brothers. On his deathbed, he had instructed that his successor must be a man who could do one of the following: meet the approval of his daughter, the beautiful and wise Princess Sivali; string the king's powerful bow, which required the strength of a thousand men; know which side is the head of a square bed; or decipher a riddle ("The treasures of the rising sun, and at his setting. The treasures outside, within, and neither. At the mounting and dismounting. Sal wood-pillars four, a chariot yoke around. The end of the teeth and the end of the tail. Water and the ends of the trees.") to find sixteen hidden treasures. The advisors started their search for a new king by sending the general to see the princess. He rushed up the stairs after she summoned him. When she told him to run around, he did. Then she told him to rub her feet, and as he did, she kicked him in the chest and knocked him down on the ground, telling her servants to throw him out and give him a beating: he was not wise enough to rule the kingdom. The treasurer, sword-bearer, and other respected men met the princess and were similarly rejected.

The advisors moved on to the other tests, but nobody could pass them. They grew concerned, but the royal chaplain told them to let the royal chariot lead them to a worthy successor—a foolproof method to find someone with sufficient merit to be a great king. They hitched it up to four lotus-colored horses, and a large crowd followed the empty vehicle out of the city where it circled the stone on which the Bodhisatta lay sleeping and then stopped.

The chaplain ordered the musicians to play as loud as possible, and when this woke the Bodhisatta, he remained completely calm, never saying who he was or why he came. The chaplain examined his feet and saw the marks of royalty, proof he was destined not only to be a king but to reign over all four continents. The Bodhisatta accepted the chaplain's offer to rule and was anointed King Mahajanaka right there. He was taken to the palace and he got to work immediately, rearranging the duties of his generals and other officers. The princess summoned the Bodhisatta to come meet her three times, but he ignored her. Finally, she went down to find him, and when she saw what a majestic person he was, she was delighted.

Sitting under the white umbrella, the Bodhisatta asked his advisors if the previous king had left any instructions with them, and they explained the tests for finding a new king. The Bodhisatta, though already wearing the crown, agreed to take them and passed all four, greatly impressing everyone. He put the treasure revealed by the riddle into five alms halls around the city and let the poor have it all.

The Bodhisatta ruled wisely and benevolently, and he was beloved by all. He made Princess Sivali his queen, and they had a wonderful son with all the auspicious marks, and his mother and the teacher who had supported them in the faraway land came to live in luxury at the palace. His life was filled with endless joy.

Seven thousand years later (at that time, humans lived for ten thousand years) the Bodhisatta encountered two mango trees in his park, one full of fruit and the other without. He ate a mango and continued on his way. It was so delicious that on his return he stopped to eat another and saw that the tree was destroyed. When people had seen the Bodhisatta eat a mango they all wanted one; and after they were all picked, people tore off the branches looking for more. But they left the barren tree undamaged. Understanding this incident as a metaphor for life—having possessions leads to misery—the Bodhisatta realized it was best to be like the barren tree, and he decided to leave his glory behind and live as an ascetic. He put his commander-in-chief and some judges in charge of running the kingdom and lived alone at the top of the palace, seeing nobody except the servants who brought his food and water.

After four months of living like an ascetic in the palace, the Bodhisatta fully renounced the world and struck out for the Himalayas. He walked out at sunrise and his seven hundred queens ran after him, pleading with him to stay. Hearing the harem's loud wails, the city's entire population, weeping openly, joined the chase. Queen Sivali ordered the commander-in-chief to set a mass of grass and leaves on fire

and lied that the treasure houses were burning, hoping it would make the Bodhisatta turn back to save them. But he said he no longer had any treasure—he no longer had anything—and he left through the northern gate. He walked a bit further and then drew a line on the road with his walking staff and ordered that nobody cross it. But Queen Sivali was so out of control with grief that she ignored his demand and followed him anyway; and the line having been violated, everybody else followed her. Still hoping he would change his mind, the great crowd walked behind the Bodhisatta for sixty leagues.

Two ascetics from the Himmapan forest, well-practiced in supernatural powers, divined that the Bodhisatta could not leave his followers behind and appeared before him, floating in the air, to give encouragement. The next morning, a dog stole a man's grilled meat and ran out of the city. When the dog saw the Bodhisatta, it got scared and dropped its meal on the ground. The Bodhisatta, having left his royal tradition behind, picked it up, wiped it off, and ate it. The queen was appalled, but did not give up.

At a city gate, a girl sifting sand wore two bracelets on one wrist and only one on the other. The Bodhisatta, hoping to get his queen to understand, explained that while the pair together made an annoying noise, the single bracelet was peaceful, and peacefulness was genuine happiness. Inside the city, the Bodhisatta went on an alms round and came to the house of an arrow maker. He saw that this man closed one of his eyes to stare down the shaft and make the arrow straight. He told the queen that the wide view from two eyes

was distracting, but the narrow focus of a single eye gave fixed aim and true vision. The queen said she understood these two lessons, but would still not leave his side, and the mass of people also remained on his tail.

Back outside the city, the Bodhisatta plucked a single stalk of grass and told the queen that they were like it: they had been split and could never be joined again. Then he begged her to go away. The queen had another fit of grief, this one so strong that she passed out and fell down on the road. The Bodhisatta immediately rushed into the forest and was finally able to slip away, never to return to his kingdom. After a week, he reached mystical insight.

Back home, the queen oversaw the coronation of their son in the mango grove. After the ceremony ended, she remained there for the rest of her life, choosing to follow the example of the Bodhisatta and live as an ascetic.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One time the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the magnificence of his Great Renunciation, which was the beginning of his path to enlightenment. He said he had also renounced the world in the past and told them this story as an example.

The goddess of the ocean, the two mystical ascetics, the girl sifting sand, and the arrow maker were earlier births of Uppalavanna, Sariputta and Moggallana, Khema, and Ananda, five of the Buddha's top disciples. The Bodhisatta's parents,

Queen Sivali, and his son were earlier births of the Buddha's father, birth mother, wife, and son.

Sama Jataka (#540)

The Bodhisatta was once the son of two ascetics. The chiefs of two hunting villages, long-time friends, vowed they would marry two of their children to each other when they reached the right age. In time, one had a son and the other a daughter; and as they grew up, Dukulaka, the boy, and Parika, the girl, were not ordinary children. They refused to harm any living creatures and faithfully devoted themselves to purity. When they came of age, neither had any interest in family life; but their parents ignored their pleas and married them against their will.

Though they lived together, Dukulaka and Parika refused to act as a married couple and eventually got permission from their parents to go out and live a celibate life as ascetics in the Himalayas. As they departed the city, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, grew warm. He knew that these two people were great beings, so he built them leaf huts and provided everything they would need to ensure their life in the wilderness would be easy and comfortable. They lived in bliss on the fruits and roots they gathered in the forest, and their benevolence was so strong even animals living near them did not harm each other.

One day Indra foresaw that the pair would eventually go blind, so he revealed himself to Dukulaka and urged the couple to have a child. Dukulaka rebuked Indra and said they would never end their life of purity. But Indra said he would arrange for them to conceive simply by Dukulaka placing a

finger on Parika's navel at an auspicious time. And thus, with Indra's help, the Bodhisatta, named Sama, was born.

The foretold tragedy struck Dukulaka and Parika when the Bodhisatta was sixteen. While returning home from collecting food, they took shelter from the rain under a tree and stood on an anthill. Sweat-infused water dripping off their bodies irritated a snake living in the anthill and it shot venom into their eyes, completely blinding both of them. (This disaster resulted from past-life karma from when Dukulaka was a doctor and Parika was his wife. He had treated a rich man's eye disease, but the man refused to pay. At the suggestion of Parika, Dukulaka tainted some of this patient's medicine and blinded him in one eye.)

The Bodhisatta took care of his impaired parents without hesitation. He tied up ropes around their home so they could move about on their own, but they could not walk through the forest, so he gathered all their food and water with the help of kinnaras (half-human, half-bird beings) picking fruit and deer carrying large jars on their backs.

A king who loved venison had left his kingdom in the care of his mother and went to the Himalayas to hunt deer. He passed by the riverbank where the Bodhisatta collected water, and seeing deer footprints there, he erected a blind and waited. When the Bodhisatta approached with his helper deer, the king was astonished. The king desperately wanted to know if this incredible being was a god or a naga, and was certain he could not simply walk up and ask. If he was a god he would fly up to heaven, and if he was a naga he would

dive into the earth. In order to be able to talk to him, the king did the only thing he could think of—he shot the Bodhisatta with a poison arrow.

Lying on a sandbank with blood flowing out his mouth, the Bodhisatta did not rage in anger, he only gently asked aloud who his hidden attacker was and why he shot him. The king came out of his hiding place to speak with the Bodhisatta and lied that he'd had a deer in his sights, but it got spooked at seeing the Bodhisatta and fled in fright: this caused the king to misfire. The Bodhisatta replied that he knew this wasn't true because no creature in the forest feared him. Finally succumbing to guilt, the king confessed his crime. Just before he lost consciousness, the Bodhisatta begged the king to care for his helpless parents for the rest of their lives. Regretting the evil he had done to such a righteous being, the king vowed that he would.

A goddess who had been the Bodhisatta's mother seven lives before his present one saw the tragedy unfolding and went to save him, his parents, and the king. Speaking unseen from the sky, she implored the king to keep his promise to care for the Bodhisatta's parents, assuring him that if he did so, he would be able to enter heaven instead of going to hell. The king, believing the Bodhisatta had already died, found his home and gently, gradually told his parents the terrible news. Though they cried in agony, they did not speak any harsh words and only showed the king kindness and reverence. They refused the king's offer to serve as their caretaker, asking only that he take them immediately to their son's body.

When his parents arrived at the river, they held the Bodhisatta's body and wept. Both they and the goddess pleaded an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) that if they had earned enough merit in past lives, then the Bodhisatta should be saved. They had, and their wish was granted. Not only were the Bodhisatta's health and vigor fully restored, but his parents regained their sight.

Amazed by these miracles, the king sat and listened to the Bodhisatta preach to him about the importance of caring for family, fulfilling his duty to all his subjects, and following the five precepts. The king bowed down to the Bodhisatta, then returned home where he respected these lessons, becoming a righteous, generous ruler. Upon death, they were all reborn in heaven.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The parents of one of the Buddha's disciples had been reluctant to let their son adopt a religious life, but he begged them and they agreed. After five years, he fully mastered dharma, so he went out to live alone and meditate in the forest to reach spiritual insight. But after twelve years of striving, he still had not achieved it. One day another disciple visited him at his hut and told him that his parents had fallen into ruin. With no children around to protect them, their servants and workers had stolen everything, and they were now homeless beggars clothed in rags. The son began to cry, and realizing he had labored in vain for the past twelve years,

he decided to leave the sangha and return home to care for his parents.

The depressed disciple went to listen to the Buddha preach one last time before returning home. The Buddha divined this disciple's situation and made his morning talk about the virtues of parents. Listening to the sermon, the son realized that, though it would be difficult, he could remain a disciple and still support his parents, and he resolved to do so. He took up abode near their hut, and from then on he made two daily alms rounds: one for them and a second for himself. He usually got little food for himself, and some days he got none, so he grew pale and thin.

When some other disciples learned what he was doing, they told him that sharing alms with people who are not disciples was an offense, and they reported him to the Buddha. The accused disciple was summoned back to the monastery, where he admitted sharing the alms he collected with his parents. But, to the surprise of the other disciples, the Buddha praised the caring son instead of rebuking him. He then told this story to explain that caring for others was always a good thing, and that in the past he himself had supported his needy parents in a similar way.

Dukulaka, Parika, the king, the goddess, and Indra were earlier births of Maha Kassapa, Bhadda Kapilani, Ananda, Uppalavanna, and Anuruddha, five of the Buddha's top disciples.

Nimi Jataka (#541)

The Bodhisatta was once a king. He had previously reigned with wisdom and virtue for eighty-four thousand years as King Makhadeva, as told in the Makhadeva Jataka (#9). Before taking the throne, he had served as prince and viceroy, each for the same length of time. Throughout the Bodhisatta's life, his barber had standing orders to inform him if he spotted a grey hair. When the first grey strand appeared, the Bodhisatta became fixated on his death and decided to immediately abdicate and live out his final eighty-four thousand years as an ascetic in a mango grove. That same day, he passed the throne to his eldest son, gave a village as a gift to his barber, and walked away from society. During this final phase of his life, the Bodhisatta cultivated the four perfect virtues, and he was reborn in heaven after he died.

The Bodhisatta watched with pride as his son, his grandson, and on and on through eighty-four thousand less two generations followed this exact same path through life and death, always ruling righteously while on the throne. But he now knew that he and his family had not quite done enough to enter the path to nirvana, so he decided to return to the human realm as the present king's son to finish off the line. Upon his rebirth, the present king's fortune-tellers recognized the signs and knew why the Bodhisatta had been born. Thus the king named him Prince Nimi ("Hoop") since the family's cycle would finally be completed.

From childhood through his time on the throne, the Bodhisatta was uncompromisingly righteous and generous.

He built five alms halls around the city to give his subjects great gifts, taught them about morals, and encouraged all to lead devout lives. So many people absorbed his lessons and were reborn in heaven that the gods took notice and sang the Bodhisatta's praise. Always striving for perfection, the Bodhisatta wondered whether leading a holy life or giving alms was the most fruitful action. As the Bodhisatta pondered this question, the throne of Indra, king of the gods, became warm, and in a flash of light he entered the Bodhisatta's bedchamber to provide the answer: virtuous living is more fruitful by far, but great men do both.

When Indra returned home and told the other gods where he had been, they implored him to invite the Bodhisatta to visit heaven, and Indra agreed. On the night of a full moon, he sent his charioteer, Matali, to get the Bodhisatta. Pulled by one thousand thoroughbred horses, the chariot shone magically in the sky, at first appearing to people on earth as if it were a second moon, and made a grand entrance to the palace. The Bodhisatta accepted the invitation, telling his subjects he would return to them soon.

When the Bodhisatta got in the chariot, Matali asked him which road he wanted to travel: the road where the wicked dwell or the road where the righteous dwell. The Bodhisatta answered he would like to see both. So Matali first drove to Vetarani, the river of hell, covered with fire and filled with corrosive brine. The Bodhisatta was filled with dread by the torment of the souls cast into the river, and he asked what sins they had committed. Matali explained they were people who had hurt the weak. Then Matali drove on to the next

hell, where souls were being torn apart by dogs, vultures, crows, and ravens. Again the Bodhisatta, horrified by the sight, asked what had led to their fate, and Matali said they had been stingy or rude to ascetics and holy men.

Wanting the Bodhisatta to see all the different hells, Matali continued, place to place, explaining at each the sin that led people to its particular torture.

- People who torment good people are beaten with red-hot coals.
- People who bribe witnesses to lie or refuse to pay off debts are tossed into a pit of fiery coals.
- People who hurt ascetics and holy men are cast into a huge iron cauldron set in flames.
- People who catch and kill birds have their necks wrung and are thrown in boiling water.
- People who sell good grain mixed with chaff are scorched with heat to make them very thirsty and then given water that turns to chaff when they try to drink it.
- People who steal have their bodies pierced with spikes, spears, and arrows.
- Hunters, fishers, and butchers are cut and torn to little bits.
- People who hurt their friends must eat dirt and dung from a foul-smelling lake.
- People who murder their parents must drink from a foul-smelling lake of blood.
- Market sellers who cheat their customers hang from hooks in their mouths like fish.

- Adulterous women are buried in the ground up to their waists and set afire.
- Men who seduce and steal other men's wives are seized by their legs and thrown headfirst into a pit of burning coals.
- Heretics suffer the most terrible, intolerable pain of anyone destined for hell.

The gods wondered why Matali and the Bodhisatta were so slow to arrive. Indra divined the reason and sent a young god to tell Matali to come quickly because he was using up the Bodhisatta's life. When he received the message, Matali magically showed the Bodhisatta all the other hells simultaneously and then turned his chariot toward heaven.

Along the way, Matali took the Bodhisatta to see eight glorious palaces made of gold, crystal, and jewels, surrounded by beautiful gardens filled with nymphs dancing and playing music. The Bodhisatta was overcome with joy and asked what good deeds these gods had done in their previous lives to earn such a reward. Matali explained that they were regular people who treated guests like family, observed the holy days, and generously supported ascetics with clothes, food, drink, bedding, and other necessities.

Indra sent another message to Matali telling him to stop delaying. So Matali magically displayed many more palaces earned by the righteous and then drove on past the seven hills surrounding Mount Meru and the Heaven of the Four Great Kings, finally arriving at the impressive Cittakuta Gate of Indra's heaven. It was decorated with statues of Indra and

guarded by tigers, and as the Bodhisatta entered, the gods greeted him with flowers and perfumes. In Sudhamma, the gods' jeweled assembly hall, Indra offered to let the Bodhisatta stay and enjoy the celestial pleasures. But the Bodhisatta refused, saying that in good time he would earn these rewards the proper way, through his deeds.

The Bodhisatta stayed for a week, discussing with the gods how to live a moral life, and then Matali took him back to his kingdom. He told his subjects what he had seen and urged them to be good in this life so they would go to heaven in the next. When his barber found a grey hair, the Bodhisatta followed the tradition he had begun and put his son on the throne to be the last of the line, then walked into the mango park.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One evening, the Buddha and some of his disciples were walking in the same mango park where he, as both King Makhadeva and King Nimi, had lived as an ascetic after finding a grey hair. He wanted his companions to know about his behavior in these past lives, so he smiled. Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples, asked why he smiled, and the Buddha told them this story.

The charioteer Matali was an earlier birth of Ananda; Indra was an earlier birth of Anuruddha, another of the Buddha's top disciples; and the other kings were earlier births of the Buddha's present followers.

Khandahala Jataka (#542)

The Bodhisatta was once a crown prince. The king greatly valued his chaplain and made him a judge, even though he took bribes and cheated people. One time a victim of the chaplain's corruption left the court after losing his case, even though he had paid a bribe, and saw the Bodhisatta. This man fell at the Bodhisatta's feet and begged him to tell the king the truth about the chaplain. The Bodhisatta pitied the man, so he took him back to the courthouse and judged the case himself, finding in the man's favor and granting him the disputed property. The king heard loud applause burst from the courtroom, and when told the reason for it, he appointed the Bodhisatta as judge. The chaplain, suddenly unable to collect bribes, decided to kill the Bodhisatta.

The king was not religious, but after dreaming about heaven he asked his chaplain how to get there. Seizing the opportunity to kill the Bodhisatta, the chaplain told the king he must perform the fourfold sacrifice (killing four of each kind of living creature, from humans to bulls to birds) including four of his wives, sons, and daughters, and four leading merchants. The king told him to arrange it promptly.

While the chaplain ordered a sacrificial pit dug, the king detained his condemned family members and merchants, who were filled with fear and sorrow. He also had his men take his best elephants, horses, mules, and bulls to the pit and go around gathering all the other animals. Citizens protested in the streets and the king's mother and father pleaded in tears with the king to stop this monstrous act,

explaining that killing puts people on the road to hell, not heaven. But the king trusted his chaplain more than anyone else and he would do whatever it took to get into heaven, no matter that killing his family was breaking his heart. The Bodhisatta knew that the chaplain was seeking revenge for losing his job as judge and only wanted him dead: calling for a fourfold sacrifice was a ruse to hide this fact from the king. So the Bodhisatta felt a need to save all the other lives.

Throughout the rest of the day, the Bodhisatta and many others pleaded with the king to come to reason. If this was truly the path to heaven, people said, then let the chaplain kill his family first. Three times the king canceled the sacrifice and had everyone released. But each time the king yielded, the chaplain angrily rushed to the palace and the king succumbed to his sway, ordering the victims recaptured.

The Bodhisatta was the first victim taken to the chopping block. As the chaplain, sword in hand, stood beside the Bodhisatta, the chief queen spoke an act of truth (a solemn declaration of one's supreme virtue followed by a request for some miraculous result) hoping for divine intervention. Indra, king of the gods, heard her plea, and seeing what was about to befall the Bodhisatta, appeared on earth and frightened the king with a blazing mass of iron and had all the victims set free. A mob stoned the chaplain to death and tried to kill the king too, but Indra stopped them. Instead, the king was banished to an untouchable settlement. The Bodhisatta inherited the crown, and while he never pardoned his father, he did support him through the rest of his life.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The chaplain was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and wanted to kill him so he could take over as leader of the sangha. With the help of King Ajatasattu, his chief supporter, who had murdered his own father to get the crown, Devadatta hired thirty-one of the best archers in the land and sent one to a spot where the Buddha walked every day. Devadatta told him to use a poison arrow to ensure that the Buddha died and told him which road to return by after the assassination. Then, to cover up his involvement in the murder, Devadatta sent two archers to that road to kill the first archer, four more to kill the next two, eight to kill the four, and sixteen to kill the eight.

The first archer got the Buddha in his sights and drew his bow, but he was filled with the fear of death and could not shoot. The Buddha saw the archer and told him to come near. He fell at the Buddha's feet, confessed his orders, and begged forgiveness, which was granted. The Buddha explained dharma and then told the archer to go home by a different road than that ordered by Devadatta. The Buddha took Devadatta's road and met the other archers, preaching dharma and telling them where to walk so they wouldn't fall into Devadatta's trap. Their lives saved by the Buddha, all the archers became disciples and eventually arahants.

When the Buddha heard some of his disciples discussing the incident, he told them this story so they knew that this was not the first time Devadatta had tried to kill many people as part of a plan to kill him.

The Bodhisatta's son and mother and the king's chief queen were earlier births of the Buddha's son, birth mother, and wife, and some of the Bodhisatta's brothers and sisters were earlier births of Sariputta, Moggallana, Maha Kassapa, and Uppalavanna, four of the Buddha's top disciples.

Bhuridatta Jataka (#543)

The Bodhisatta was once a naga king. The King of Varanasi's son (who was the Bodhisatta's human grandfather) served as viceroy, and as time went on, everyone saw what a great man he was. This made the King of Varanasi paranoid and he worried that his son would seize the throne, so the king banished him, saying he could only return and rule after his natural death. The son was righteous and had no such intent, but he left without complaining and went to live as an ascetic in a leaf hut, eating roots and fruits.

A naga who had lost her husband took a human form and visited the realm of men. She came upon the prince's hut while he was away gathering food and figured she'd test whether he was a genuine ascetic or not; if he wasn't, she would try to marry him. She decorated his bed with flowers and perfumes and went back to the naga realm. The prince returned home, and because he was not a true ascetic at heart, the decorated bed filled him with joy. He lay down on it and fell fast asleep.

The next morning, the prince did not sweep his hut before going off to collect fruits, and when the naga woman returned and saw the wilted flowers, she knew this was a man who loved pleasure and she would be able to seduce him. This time she decorated his whole hut with flowers.

After sleeping amidst the flowers again, the prince wanted to know who was doing this, and instead of going for food that morning, he hid nearby. When he saw the naga woman

coming down the path with more flowers and perfumes, he fell in love instantly. He asked who she was and why she was there, and she explained she was a naga widow seeking a new husband. He told her he was a prince and explained why he had been forced to live an ascetic life and said he would gladly quit the holy life and be her husband. She magically summoned a grand home, and they were able to dine on divine meat and drink. Soon they had a son named Sagara-Brahmadatta and a daughter named Samuddaja.

One day a forester passed by the prince's home and recognized him. He stayed there as his guest for a few days. It was at this time the king died. After the burial rites were performed, the royal advisors, not knowing where the prince dwelled or whether he was even still alive, decided to seek a new king. But while they were meeting, the forester returned to the city and told the advisors he had just met the prince. He led them to the prince's home and they enthroned him king then and there.

When the newly-crowned king told his wife the news and said she would be the chief among his sixteen thousand queens, she told him she could not go because nagas possess deadly poison: if they get upset, it scatters around the room like a handful of chaff. Being a co-wife would undoubtedly cause her displeasure, so, for the safety of others, she must leave him. He begged her to reconsider, but she would not, and she returned to the naga world alone.

Since their father was human, so were the children. But they inherited a delicate, watery nature from their mother, so the

king had his advisors hollow out a tree, put it on a cart, and fill it with water for them to travel back to Varanasi in. People adorned the city for their new king's arrival and welcomed him with a weeklong drinking festival.

The children spent most of their time playing in a lake specially prepared for their enjoyment. One day they saw a turtle floating in the water and were terrified. They ran to their father and told him they saw a goblin, so the king sent some men to capture it. They showed the king that it was only a turtle, but because he loved his children so much, he ordered his advisors to punish it. They discussed what to do. One suggested pounding the turtle to powder with a mortar and pestle. Others wanted to eat it. One person, who was afraid of water, called for throwing it into a giant whirlpool in the river. Upon hearing this suggestion, the turtle cried out that he could bear the other punishments but begged them not to make him suffer the latter, which was the cruelest. Hearing this feigned plea, the king ordered the turtle thrown into the whirlpool.

Once in the water, the turtle found a passage to the naga realm and escaped there. But as soon as he arrived, two sons of the naga king Dhatarattha seized him. Thinking quickly, the turtle claimed to be a messenger from the King of Varanasi, one specially chosen for doing business in water, and demanded they treat him with respect and take him to see their king. They believed him and promptly did as he demanded.

The turtle told the naga king that the King of Varanasi proposed a union between their lands and offered his daughter's hand in marriage. The naga king was thrilled and sent four nagas in the form of young men to Varanasi to make arrangements. On the way there, the turtle stopped at a lotus pond and told the nagas he needed to collect some flowers for the king and queen and he would meet them at the palace. And here he escaped.

The king welcomed the four nagas with honor and listened to them explain their mission. The king answered that, though he respected King Dhatarattha, it would be inappropriate for a human king to give a princess to a naga king. Not realizing they had been conned by the turtle, the young nagas were furious about this disrespect, but resisted their urge to kill the king with a blast of their poisonous breath. They rushed back to their home and told King Dhatarattha, and he promptly sent a naga army to siege the city. Filled with terror, the citizens begged their king to accept King Dhatarattha's demand and hand over his daughter, Samuddaja. Pitying his people and fearing for his own life, he relented. But soon after, out of sorrow for the loss of his daughter, he abdicated and went to live as an ascetic in the forest and gave the throne to his son, Sagara-Brahmadatta.

The nagas built a glorious city nearby to receive their king's new bride, and she assumed she would be living there. But when Samuddaja fell asleep, the nagas transported her to their realm, and everyone there was ordered to appear in human form before her at all times to make her feel comfortable. And so she served as chief queen completely

unaware she lived in the naga realm married to a naga. Even after raising four sons—Sudassana, Bhuridatta (the Bodhisatta), Subhaga, and Kanarittha—Samuddaja still did not know. Likewise, the sons grew up not knowing their mother was human, though eventually someone told them. Kanarittha, the youngest, decided to test her, and while feeding at her breast he took his serpent form. Screaming, she threw him to the ground and struck his eye with her fingernail. The naga king ordered his son put to death for breaking the rule, but Samuddaja told her husband to forgive him.

When the four sons reached adulthood, King Dhatarattha gave them each their own kingdom and they lived in glory with sixteen thousand maidens in attendance. The Bodhisatta and his father regularly discussed matters of importance with the gods, and Indra, king of the gods, was very impressed by the Bodhisatta and gave him great honor. These meetings made the Bodhisatta long for the splendor of Indra's heaven, and he began to faithfully follow all the holy-day vows to ensure rebirth there. Initially he did this in an empty palace in the naga realm, but he kept getting interrupted. Then he started fasting in the human realm because nobody would bother him there, even though this was dangerous for nagas. He folded up his body and sat atop an anthill through the night. In the morning, ten beautiful, music-playing maidens came to bedeck him with perfumes and flowers and accompany him back to the naga realm.

One day a man who made his living hunting wild animals and selling the meat was out in the forest with his son. Evening

was coming soon and they had still found no animals, not even a lizard. Finally, he saw a deer drinking at the river and shot it, but the deer was only wounded and ran off. The hunter gave chase and eventually the deer fell. They cut up its flesh and headed home, but the sun set before they could get there and they had to spend the night in a banyan tree, which happened to be next to the Bodhisatta's anthill.

At dawn, the hunter saw the maidens coming to get the Bodhisatta. When they saw the hunter they fled, but the Bodhisatta stayed. The Bodhisatta talked a while with the hunter, who he feared would betray him to a snake charmer, so he invited the hunter and his son to come live a life of luxury in the naga realm. They accepted the offer and the Bodhisatta was able to continue his holy-day routine with no fear.

The Bodhisatta visited the hunter and his son every two weeks and gave them everything they wanted, but after a year, the hunter missed his family and wanted to go back home. His son was not discontent but agreed to return with his father. Not wanting to upset the Bodhisatta, the hunter could not tell him he wanted to leave because he no longer enjoyed the naga realm. Instead, he said he wanted to become an ascetic. The Bodhisatta offered him a magic jewel that granted wishes, but needing to go all in on his lie, the hunter refused it since an ascetic should have no desires.

Back in the realm of men, the special robes and jewelry disappeared, and the hunter and his son were once again wrapped in their yellow peasant clothes, holding their bows

and spears. The son was upset, but the hunter promised he would catch enough deer to care for the family. The hunter's wife was angry at him for leaving her to care for their children all alone, and even angrier when he told her about the magic jewel. The next day, the hunter and son resumed their former lives in the forest looking for game.

Not long after the hunter returned, a garuda snatched a naga out of the great southern ocean with its talons and carried it back to its home. The naga, trying to escape, coiled its tail around a giant banyan tree under which an ascetic had built his leaf hut, and the tree was ripped from the ground. The garuda got back to its perch and ate the naga. Feeling bad about destroying the tree, the garuda went to talk to the ascetic, who explained that neither the garuda nor the naga had sinned by ruining the tree because neither intended any harm. Relieved at this news, the garuda thanked the ascetic for this lesson by teaching him a special spell to weaken nagas. Soon after this happened, a brahmin snake charmer and snakebite doctor who could not pay off his debts gave up hope and went off to die in the forest. When he came upon the ascetic's hut, he changed his mind and became the ascetic's servant. In appreciation of his diligent service, the ascetic taught him the spell.

No longer needing to worry about money, the snake charmer headed back home, repeating the spell as he walked so he wouldn't forget it. A group of young nagas who served the Bodhisatta and were entrusted to guard his magic jewel were swimming in the river. They heard the snake charmer speaking and, recognizing the words, assumed a garuda was

coming. Seized with terror, they immediately dove into the earth and left the magic jewel behind. The snake charmer saw the jewel and took it, thinking the spell had brought it to him. Just then, the hunter and his son walked past the river and saw the snake charmer with the jewel, which they recognized immediately. Wanting the jewel for himself, the hunter tried unsuccessfully to convince the snake charmer it was dangerous. Then he asked what price he would accept. Not knowing the jewel had magic powers, the snake charmer said he would give it to anyone who could help him capture a naga. The excited hunter knew he could do this, but his son was disgusted that he would betray the Bodhisatta, who had been so kind to them. Unable to change his father's mind, the son rebuked his father, loudly declared him a sinner, and marched off into the forest to become an ascetic.

On the next holy day, the hunter took the snake charmer to the Bodhisatta's anthill. When he saw them approaching, the Bodhisatta knew he was in danger. But not wanting to obstruct his road to heaven, he refused to get angry or flee to safety.

The snake charmer was ecstatic to find a naga and threw the jewel to the hunter, but it slipped through his hands and disappeared into the ground down to the naga world. The hunter went home in sorrow because, through his own greed, he had lost three precious things: his son, the magic jewel, and his friendship with the Bodhisatta. Meanwhile, the snake charmer recited the serpent spell and seized the weakened Bodhisatta by the tail, spat a drug into his mouth, stretched him out full length on the ground, and crushed his

bones into pieces to rob him of his powers. But though he suffered great pain, the Bodhisatta felt no anger.

The snake charmer stuffed the Bodhisatta into a basket and headed to a village to do a show. With a crowd gathered around, he ordered the Bodhisatta to change his size, shape, and color; make himself invisible; spit out smoke and water; and dance. Hoping he would eventually be released if the snake charmer made a lot of money, the Bodhisatta did everything he was asked. The crowd went wild, giving gold, garments, and more totaling one hundred thousand coins. The snake charmer originally planned to set the Bodhisatta free when he earned just one thousand coins, but after this performance he got greedy and knew he could make a fortune in a big city. So he did shows in every town he passed until he reached Varanasi, where he was invited to perform for King Sagara-Brahmadatta.

On the day the Bodhisatta was seized, his mother dreamed that a man cut off her arm and carried it away with blood streaming out. She knew the dream foretold misfortune in her family, and when the Bodhisatta was late to visit, she was sure some evil had befallen him. As weeks went on, she grew increasingly despondent. When her other three sons came to visit, they heard the sound of sorrow from her and the Bodhisatta's wives throughout the palace. The brothers promised they would go out and bring the Bodhisatta back. Kanarittha went to search the heavens, Subhaga went to the Himmapan forest, and Sudassana, the eldest, went to the realm of men.

To make sure people would help him, Sudassana dressed as an ascetic. He was joined by Accimukhi, one of their half-sisters (born to another mother), who took the form of a frog and rode in his matted hair. He began his search at the place where the Bodhisatta went for the holy days. Seeing the blood-stained ground, he felt sure the Bodhisatta had been seized by a snake charmer, and people in the village confirmed it. Following the route of towns where the snake charmer had performed, he arrived at Varanasi right as the show in the palace courtyard began.

When the Bodhisatta poked his head out of the basket and saw his brother in the crowd, he crawled up and rested his head on his foot. The two brothers cried while the fearful crowd retreated. The Bodhisatta went back to his basket, and the snake charmer, thinking he'd just bitten the man, assured Sudassana there was no venom in the bite. Instead of revealing his identity, Sudassana declared that there was no snake charmer greater than he himself and no serpent could harm him. Angry about the insult, the snake charmer challenged him to a contest and Sudassana agreed, choosing to use a frog rather than a snake.

Sudassana went first and he called Accimukhi out of his hair. She sat on his shoulder and spat three drops of poison on his hand as he yelled out, "This poison will destroy the kingdom." If he put it on the ground, Sudassana said, all plants would die. If he threw it into the sky, no rain or snow would fall for seven years; and if he dropped it in water, all the fish, turtles, and other aquatic creatures would die. The king asked what he could do to save the land. Sudassana told the king to have

someone dig three holes, and he did. Sudassana filled one hole with drugs, another with cow dung, and the last with divine medicines, then he dropped the poison into the hole with the drugs. A fire erupted and all three holes were set ablaze. The flames turned the snake charmer into a pale white leper, and in terror he cried, “I will set the naga king free.”

The Bodhisatta heard the cry and came out of his basket, taking a radiant form with grandeur equal to Indra, and stood with his siblings. Sudassana then revealed to the king that he was their uncle and told the whole story of what had occurred. Wanting to hurry home to end his mother’s worry, Sudassana briefly instructed the king in the ways of royal righteousness and then left with a promise to bring his mother for a family reunion.

When the hunter who had betrayed the Bodhisatta saw the snake charmer become a leper, he knew something terrible was in the wind for him too, so he went to a sacred bathing spot to wash away his sin of treachery. Subhaga, returning from the Himmapan forest, saw the hunter in the river and dragged him underwater repeatedly as torture before he was going to kill him. The hunter tried to talk his way out of the execution by reminding Subhaga that all brahmins are sacred and must not be harmed, so Subhaga took the hunter to the naga realm to ask his brothers if this was true. Kanarittha, who was guarding the Bodhisatta while he rested and recovered in his palace, saw Subhaga roughly dragging the hunter and told him to stop, confirming what the hunter had claimed about brahmins’ sacred status.

Having been a brahmin who performed sacrifices in his previous life, Kanarittha explained to those around him about brahmins and the great rewards reaped from making sacrifices and from worshipping fire. Many nagas were impressed by his words, but when the Bodhisatta heard what his brother had preached, he rebuked him for spreading false doctrine and told all the nagas gathered there that these things do not lead to heaven and should be avoided. He also set the hunter free with no further punishment.

Later, the now-healthy Bodhisatta and his brothers took their mother to the forest hut of her father, the former king, who still lived as an ascetic. Her brother, King Sagara-Brahmadatta, was also there to see his sister and nephews. They gave him great honor before returning to the naga world. And having faithfully kept the precepts his whole life, when the Bodhisatta died he earned the place in heaven he had worked so hard for.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One holy day, the Buddha saw some lay followers in the audience for his religious discourse and asked if they had kept the holy-day vows. They answered that they had. This was a good thing, he told them, but it was no surprise because they had a Buddha as a teacher. In the past, he added, he had observed the holy days without a teacher encouraging him and made great sacrifices to do so. Then he told them this story.

The wicked hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis and tried to kill him three times, while the hunter's son was an earlier birth of Ananda, one of the Buddha's top disciples. The Bodhisatta's brothers, Sudassana and Subhaga, and half-sister Accimukhi were earlier births of Sariputta, Moggallana, and Uppalavanna, three of the Buddha's other top disciples. His other brother, Kanarittha, was an earlier birth of Sunakkhatta, a former top disciple who later left the sangha. The Bodhisatta's great-grandparents (the parents of the prince who married the naga woman) were earlier births of the Buddha's father and birth mother.

Mahanaradakassapa Jataka (#544)

The Bodhisatta was once a god in heaven. One holy day, a wealthy, powerful king who ruled with absolute righteousness asked his three advisors what they should do to entertain themselves. One wanted to gather the army and conquer new lands, another proposed letting loose with music and dance, and the third suggested discussing religion with a holy man. The king chose the latter and they rode the royal chariot, made of ivory and decorated with silver and pulled by four white thoroughbred horses, out to meet a famous naked ascetic who was staying in the royal park at that time.

The naked ascetic welcomed them warmly, and after some small talk the king asked what people should do to attain heaven. The naked ascetic, having never studied with a wise teacher or read the Vedas, was as blind as a child and had created his own false doctrine embracing greed. There is no heaven or hell, he claimed; everyone becomes pure after passing through eighty-four eons. Because everything is predestined, there is no sin—even cutting off a person's head has no karmic consequences—so those who help others are feeble fools. And since everyone is equal, nobody deserves honor.

One of the king's advisors expressed his agreement with the naked ascetic. He was a hunter in his previous life, he said, and yet was born to a wealthy general in this life without going to hell in between. A slave clothed in rags who had been listening to the naked ascetic's discourse broke into

tears at these words. He said he'd lived happy and generous in his previous life, free from all sin, but in this life he was born to a prostitute and had nothing but misery, despite being just as righteous now as he was then, even still giving away half his food as alms.

After listening to all this, the king was completely convinced there was indeed no heaven to strive for and people could not affect their destiny. He thought about how he had been devoted to supporting brahmins and administering the law, but had taken no time to enjoy his life. The king declared that, from then on, he would follow these teachings and, appropriately, he departed without leaving an offering of thanks.

The next morning, the king assembled his advisors and put them in charge of the kingdom; they were to never discuss matters of state with him ever again. From this point on, he told them, he would let nothing distract him from the pursuit of pleasure.

Two weeks later, when the next holy day was forthcoming, the princess, his only child (all but one of his sixteen thousand wives being barren), put on her best clothes and jewelry and went to see her father. She was thoroughly righteous and gracious, blessed with beauty and wisdom, and full of great merit; and the king loved her dearly. Every holy day he presented her one thousand coins to give away as alms, and she had come to collect. But to her horror, this time he refused. He would deny her no luxury, he said, even if what she desired was as hard to acquire as the moon, but he

would no longer support her wasting money and time by fasting and following the holy-day vows because there was no merit to gain and no heaven or hell to consider: all her worry about virtue was pointless.

The princess rebuked her father, wondering why he had abandoned his wisdom and begun following fools. She logically pointed out that if the naked ascetic was correct about there being no merit, he was an idiot for living his austere, arduous life because it would bring him no reward. Furthermore, she explained why the advisor and the slave were born as they were in this lifetime: like a ship carrying too much cargo does not sink immediately into the sea but goes down slowly, a man accumulating sin little by little eventually becomes overladen and sinks into hell. The advisor had once been righteous and his recent sins had not yet wiped out all his earlier merit, while the slave's past offenses still outweighed the virtue of his two most recent lives, but for both men, their tipping points would come soon and they would reap the consequences of their actions.

To further explain the price of sin, the princess related that six earthly lives ago, she was born a blacksmith and routinely pursued and corrupted other men's wives. Those actions remained dormant, like a fire covered with ashes, and she was later born the only son of a wealthy merchant and lived a life devoted to good deeds and sacred studies, always observing the holy days. But after dying again, the previous life's adultery sent her to a long wretched stretch in hell, followed by further misery back on earth as a castrated goat ridden by the sons of the wealthy. After this, she was born as

a monkey whose father, the king of the troop, bit down and ripped both testicles off with his teeth. Then came life as an ox (a castrated bull) that pulled a wagon, and next as a hermaphrodite among people known for being happy and prosperous. Finally, the good deeds done five lives earlier as the merchant came around and she spent time as a nymph, dancing and singing in heaven before her present birth as the princess. She also knew about her next seven births, all among humans and gods. She would still be punished for her adultery by remaining a woman for the first six. Only in the seventh would the bad karma be used up, allowing her to return to manhood. At that time, she would become a deity in heaven.

All night the princess spoke to her father, but the vast wisdom she shared was not enough to bring him back to the path of righteousness. So she bowed to all ten directions (the eight cardinal points plus up and down) and called out for some deity to come save him. The Bodhisatta heard her prayers and knew he was the only one who could sway the king away from his false doctrine. He took the form of an ascetic and went to the palace, magically making everyone across the whole kingdom able to hear his conversation with the king. The arrogant king asked the Bodhisatta whether he believed there was reward for good actions and if there were other worlds. The Bodhisatta assured him there were, but the king laughed and mocked him by asking for a loan of five hundred coins, promising to repay him a thousand after he died. The Bodhisatta drew shouts of delight when he replied that he could not collect a debt in hell, where the king was going. And to drive home his point, the Bodhisatta frightened the

king with his vivid description of the torments he'd be facing in hell if he did not accept the truth: having his body torn apart by flocks of ravens, being eaten by dogs with iron teeth, having to pull a chariot across burning ground, climbing a mountain studded with razors, climbing trees with swords for leaves, and standing in a rain of spears, arrows, rocks, and burning coal.

Fearing his future, the king was finally willing to listen and asked the Bodhisatta to teach him the path of purity. Be kind and generous, the Bodhisatta said, and think of the body as a chariot. The mind is the charioteer, the feet are the wheels, humble speech is the whip, lack of desire is the cushion, generosity is the roof, and it's held together by the absence of slander and greed. Using wisdom when you drive keeps you free of dust and maintaining self-control keeps the horses working together.

Having converted the king, the Bodhisatta told him to avoid bad friends and focus on living a good life. Then, before returning home to heaven, he praised the princess's virtue and encouraged the king's wives and the royal court to follow her example.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

The king was an earlier birth of the renowned fire-worshipping ascetic, Uruvela-Kassapa, who was converted by the Buddha not long after his enlightenment. As the Buddha's fame had not yet spread, some people weren't sure whether Uruvela-Kassapa had submitted to the spiritual guidance of

the Buddha or whether it was the other way around. To answer the question beyond any doubt, Uruvela-Kassapa proclaimed the Buddha was his teacher, and he had abandoned his fire sacrifices because they were just a form of pleasure. He laid his head on the Buddha's feet, and then rose into the air seven times.

The people in attendance were impressed by the Buddha's power of persuasion, but he told them that since he was now enlightened, this was not as great a feat as the time in the past when he humbled a king, and he told this story.

The princess and the slave were earlier births of Ananda and Moggallana, two of the Buddha's top disciples. The naked ascetic was an earlier birth of Sunakkhatta, a former top disciple who later left the sangha, and the advisor who had been a hunter was an earlier birth of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis. The other two advisors were earlier births of Sariputta and Bhaddiya, two more top disciples.

Vidhurapandita Jataka (#545)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. Four great kings—a naga king; a garuda king; Indra, king of the gods; and King Dhananjaya, the Bodhisatta's king—were friends in their previous lives, and one day, after keeping the holy-day fast and meditating, they sat down to chat. Indra wondered what their greatest virtues were. The naga king said he had great patience: garudas are the mortal enemies of nagas, but anger never arose in him when he saw one. The garuda king said he possessed great self-restraint: nagas are the garudas' favorite food, but he remained hungry rather than kill and eat one. Indra said he kept great abstinence from desire: he left behind the glory of heaven, where every sort of happiness can be found, and came to earth to focus on the holy day. King Dhananjaya said he maintained great devotion to religious perfection: he went to his park to observe the holy day instead of letting loose in his harem, which had sixteen thousand dancing girls.

Each king felt his virtue was superior to the others, so they went to the palace to ask the Bodhisatta which of them was truly the greatest. After all four kings shared their stories of virtue, the Bodhisatta declared them equal, like the spokes of a wheel. All greatly pleased with this answer, they praised the Bodhisatta's incomparable wisdom and gave him gifts: a jewel (the naga king), a golden garland (the garuda king), a robe made of heavenly silk (Indra), and one thousand cows (King Dhananjaya)

The naga king told his queen about the Bodhisatta's wisdom and eloquence, and she resolved to meet him. She assumed that if she simply asked her king to bring him to the naga realm, he wouldn't make the effort, so she faked illness and told him she would die if she did not obtain the Bodhisatta's heart. The distressed naga king wanted to satisfy his queen, but he didn't know anyone who would do such a wicked deed. Then he found a solution. He asked his beautiful daughter to seek a husband who would kill the Bodhisatta and take his heart; and because she thought her mother's life depended on it, she agreed.

The naga princess gathered all the flowers in the Himalayas to make a couch and lay down singing a song about giving herself up to anyone who could satisfy her desire. Punnaka, a nephew of the goblin king Vessavana, was riding by on his magical horse (which had golden ears and ruby hooves) and heard her appeal. Falling in love instantly, he promised to kill the Bodhisatta and bring his heart to the naga realm. Punnaka offered the naga king a hundred elephants, a hundred horses, a hundred mules and chariots, and a hundred wagons filled with all sorts of jewels as a bride-price for his daughter's hand in marriage. But the king said he didn't want treasure; he only wanted the Bodhisatta's heart.

Punnaka couldn't go on such a treacherous quest without his uncle's permission, but he was not willing to risk rejection—he had to be clever. He told his uncle his plans while he was settling a dispute over ownership of a palace, knowing he would be too busy to pay attention. Then, when the verdict was announced, Punnaka stood alongside the victor; and

when Vessavana said, “Go thou and dwell in your palace,” he left immediately after hearing the words “Go thou.”

The Bodhisatta had a large entourage and there was no way Punnaka could seize him. But King Dhananjaya was a notorious gambler and Punnaka figured he could get the Bodhisatta through a game of dice. Punnaka climbed a sacred mountain and found a flawless, priceless lapis lazuli jewel that shone like lightning in the sky and granted all desires. Then he disguised himself as a man from a faraway country and challenged King Dhananjaya to a game, staking the peerless jewel and his wondrous horse. Punnaka spoke at length about the jewel’s beauty and then demonstrated his horse’s powers. He rode atop the city wall so fast the horse and Punnaka couldn’t be seen; then the horse walked on water and stood on Punnaka’s palm. The captivated king accepted the bet and countered with everything he owned except his body and his sovereignty. A room was prepared and witnesses assembled, and both men promised to accept the result without violence.

Each man called out his play and King Dhananjaya threw his golden dice up in the air. By Punnaka’s power, the dice were about to fall in his favor. But the king was very skilled and saw the roll was going against him, so he caught the dice in the air and threw once more. Again the dice were headed in Punnaka’s favor, and again the king caught them. It was then that Punnaka saw the king’s guardian deity, his mother from his previous life, there to help him. Punnaka stared at her with an angry face and she fled in fear. The king saw the same result coming in his third roll, but now by Punnaka’s power he

could not reach out to grab the dice, so the roll came up Punnaka's way. Then it was Punnaka's turn, and the dice fell his way again. He had won.

Though King Dhananjaya was distraught, he kept his word and told Punnaka to take everything he wanted; but he balked when Punnaka said he was going to take the Bodhisatta. They went to ask the Bodhisatta himself whether he should be included in the bet or not. They sat in the court of justice and Punnaka, knowing the Bodhisatta always spoke the truth, asked the question at hand: Was the Bodhisatta part of the king's family, or was he a slave? The Bodhisatta answered he was a slave who owed his prosperity to the king and was his to do with as he wished. Punnaka had won a second time. The Bodhisatta gave his family and the king final words of wisdom about how to live a good life, and after three days they, along with everyone in the city, bid him a tearful goodbye.

Punnaka flew off to the Himalayas with the Bodhisatta holding onto his horse's tail and tried to dash him to death against the trees and mountains, but the Bodhisatta avoided striking any of them. They landed on the summit of Black Mountain, and Punnaka, not wanting to kill by his own hand, took the form of a demon and seized the Bodhisatta in his mouth. He hoped this would frighten him to death, but not a single hair on the Bodhisatta stood on end. Punnaka took the shape of a lion and threatened to attack; then an elephant, and then a giant snake, but still got no reaction. Next, Punnaka raised a mighty wind, hoping the Bodhisatta would fall off the mountain. When that didn't work, he again took

the form of an elephant and jumped around to shake the mountain, but the Bodhisatta still did not fall off. Finally, Punnaka climbed inside the mountain and uttered a tremendous roar, but the Bodhisatta was unfazed.

Realizing he had to kill the Bodhisatta himself, Punnaka grabbed him and hung him head down over a cliff. Finally, the Bodhisatta asked Punnaka why he wanted to kill him. Hearing about the naga queen's request and the princess's promise, the Bodhisatta realized this was all a misunderstanding: the heart of sages is their wisdom. There being no reason for a naga queen to want him dead, she must have asked someone to bring him there to preach and others misinterpreted her words.

The Bodhisatta asked Punnaka to let him explain the four duties of a righteous man before he died. Punnaka agreed to listen and put him back down on the ground. Good men, the Bodhisatta said, follow the path of those who came before, don't harm those who support them, are loyal to their friends, and don't fall under the spell of wicked women.

Punnaka reflected on this advice and felt shame. Marrying the naga princess was not worth the price, and Punnaka told the Bodhisatta he would take him back home. But the Bodhisatta wanted to go talk with the naga king. He knew this was dangerous but was confident in his powers of persuasion—he had just converted a bloodthirsty goblin, after all—and since he had never done anything evil in his life, he did not fear death. So Punnaka took the Bodhisatta to the naga realm, and without fear the Bodhisatta conversed

about virtue with the king and queen, and both were pleased. The queen got what she wanted and Punnaka got his bride. After the Bodhisatta stayed in the glorious naga realm for six days, the newlyweds took him home. Punnaka gave the Bodhisatta his magical lapis lazuli jewel as thanks for changing his life.

King Dhananjaya had dreamed that the Bodhisatta would come back this day, so he ordered the whole city decorated, and he sat with a great multitude in a jeweled hall awaiting his return. The Bodhisatta shared his recent adventure with the assembled crowd and gave his magical jewel to King Dhananjaya. The king ordered a month-long festival with much food and drink in the Bodhisatta's honor, and the city was full of joy.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he was so quick-witted that he always crushed his opponents' arguments, even reducing revered sages to silence. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he said it was no big deal that he could convince others because he had reached enlightenment. Then he told them this story so they knew that he'd also been able to do the same in the past.

The Bodhisatta's father, mother, wife, and eldest son were earlier births of the Buddha's father, birth mother, wife, and son. Indra, the naga king, the garuda king, and King

Dhananjaya were earlier births of Anuruddha, Sariputta, Moggallana, and Ananda, four of the Buddha's top disciples.

Maha-Ummagga Jataka (#546)

The Bodhisatta was once a king's advisor. On the day the Bodhisatta was conceived in his mother's womb, King Vedeha dreamed of tall columns of fire in the four corners of his palace's royal court, and in the middle of them was a fifth flame the size of a firefly that suddenly blazed up into heaven and illuminated the whole world. The fire did not harm anybody and people worshipped it. The dream terrified the king and at dawn he summoned his four advisors. They explained that the dream meant prosperity for the king because a fifth advisor, wiser than all other men and gods, would soon be born and eventually serve him.

Indra, king of the gods, wanted everyone on earth and in the heavens to know that a future perfect Buddha had been born, so on that day he placed a medicinal herb in the Bodhisatta's hand while he was still in the womb. The Bodhisatta's delivery caused his mother no pain (he came out as easily as water from a sacred pot) and he told her to give the medicine to people afflicted with ailments of any kind. She ground it into a powder, and just a dash applied to his father's forehead cured a headache that had persisted for seven years. Word spread, and all who were sick came to the Bodhisatta's house for some medicine, and it cured their diseases.

Indra had sent one thousand other boys to earth along with the Bodhisatta to become his servants. The Bodhisatta's father, a wealthy merchant, knew that such a special child must have been sent by the gods and would not have come

alone, so he hired nurses and gave clothing to all other children born on the same day, and they all grew up playing together in the village.

When he was seven years old, his mouth still smelling of milk, as the saying goes, the Bodhisatta was as beautiful as a golden statue and as strong as an elephant, and nobody in the whole kingdom was wiser. Sometimes it frustrated him that his playtime was disturbed by rain, heat, and wild animals. After a particularly powerful storm blew in unexpectedly, causing his young companions to fall over each other and hurt themselves as they ran into the house, the Bodhisatta built a play hall. He told each of the one thousand boys to give him one coin, and he hired a master builder. But even this man could not grasp the Bodhisatta's innovative ideas, so the Bodhisatta drew out the plans himself and helped the builder follow them. Together they created a hall that rivaled Indra's heavenly palace and garden. Besides a place for him to play, there was a court of justice, a hall for religious gatherings, lodging for priests and the destitute, a place for foreign merchants to store their goods, and an alms hall open to anyone in need. Crowds gathered there to hear the Bodhisatta discuss morality and judge disputes, all with the wisdom and demeanor of a Buddha.

It was at this time that King Vedeha decided to seek the sage foretold in his dream, and he put his four advisors on the task. One of the advisors went out the east city gate and saw the Bodhisatta's magnificent building, and he knew that an ordinary person could not have made it. The people living there told him about the young Bodhisatta, and everything fit

with the dream's prediction, so he sent a message to the king asking whether he should bring the boy to the palace.

King Vedeha was thrilled by the news and asked his top advisor, Senaka, whether or not he should summon the Bodhisatta. Not wanting to lose his status, Senaka told the king that architectural skill is no way to judge a person's wisdom. The king suspected Senaka's selfish motive but agreed to investigate further, and told the reporting advisor to stay there and watch the Bodhisatta. Over the next few days, the advisor reported the following remarkable deeds. Each time King Vedeha heard about one he asked Senaka whether it was time to summon the Bodhisatta, and in each case Senaka said it was only a small matter and they should wait.

A hawk snatched a slab of meat from a slaughterhouse and flew off. Wanting the meat for themselves, some of the Bodhisatta's playmates futilely threw stones at the hawk. The Bodhisatta said he would make the hawk drop the meat, and he gave chase. He stepped on the hawk's shadow and shouted, and by his energy the shout pierced the bird's belly, scaring it into dropping the meat. By watching its shadow, the Bodhisatta caught the meat before it hit the ground.

A man bought some cattle from another village. The next day, he took the cattle to graze, and when he fell asleep, a thief stole them. The man woke up just in time to see the thief running off and confronted him: they argued, both claiming to own the cattle. After the two pleaded their cases, the Bodhisatta asked each man what they fed the cows. The first

man answered rice gruel, sesame flour, and kidney beans, while the second said he couldn't afford to buy food for his cows, which is why he took them to eat grass in the field. The Bodhisatta fed the cows panic seeds and they all vomited up grass, so the thief was caught by his own lie. The Bodhisatta told the thief he would suffer for his sins in both this life and in hell after it, and his assistants cut off the thief's hands and feet.

A poor, elderly woman made a necklace by tying together colorful threads. When she went to bathe, she laid the necklace atop her clothes. A young woman admired it and asked to try it on so she could check the size for making one of her own. The old woman said yes, and the young woman put it on and ran off. The old woman quickly got dressed and chased the thief down. A crowd gathered, and both women claimed the necklace was hers. The Bodhisatta asked each woman what fragrance they used on the necklace. The young woman said it was a fancy blended perfume, while the elderly lady answered that she could only afford panic seed flowers. The Bodhisatta put the necklace in a bowl of water and asked a perfume seller to smell it. He identified it as panic seed flower, and the exposed thief confessed.

A woman watching over cotton fields spun some fine thread and rolled it into a ball. She placed the thread atop her dress while bathing and another woman picked it up and told the maker it was beautiful, then casually walked off with it. The woman got dressed and chased after the thief. The Bodhisatta asked the women what they put inside the ball to roll the thread around. The thief said it was a cottonseed and

the other woman said it was a timbaru fruit seed. The Bodhisatta untwisted the thread and found a timbaru seed, so the thief had to confess her guilt.

A hungry goblin saw a mother with her baby. The goblin told the mother how adorable her boy was and asked to breastfeed him; she agreed. The goblin sat with the boy a little bit, and then ran off with him. The mother gave chase and caught the goblin, and both claimed the child was theirs. The Bodhisatta saw the goblin's red, unblinking eyes and lack of shadow and knew immediately she was not the mother, but he did not let on, and they both agreed to accept his verdict.

The Bodhisatta drew a line on the ground and laid the child on it, telling each woman to grab an end and pull. Whichever woman got the baby over the line could keep the child. They began pulling, but when the child uttered a loud cry of pain the mother let go and began weeping. Telling the crowd that being tender to children is in a mother's heart, he revealed that the other woman was a goblin planning on eating the baby. The goblin confessed her identity and intent and the Bodhisatta rebuked her, saying she was born as a goblin for sins of a past life, and now she would not escape the path of the unrighteous because she sinned again. He taught her the five precepts and sent her away.

A man named Black Ball—due to his dark skin and dwarfish size—worked for a family for seven years, and they gave him one of their daughters as a wife. One day he suggested they visit her parents with some food and a gift. They set out

walking and came to a stream, and both being afraid of water, they were hesitant to cross it. They asked a poor local man about the stream's condition. Seeing an opportunity for himself, he lied that it was deep and full of crocodiles and vicious fish. But he'd befriended these animals, he said, so he could cross safely, and he would carry them over in exchange for some meat and drink.

After eating, the man put the wife on his shoulders and walked into the stream, crouching down low to make it appear very deep. When he reached the middle of the stream, he told the woman she should leave her husband and go off with him; he wasn't deformed and would take good care of her. She was immediately infatuated and agreed, so once they got to the other bank, they left the stunned Black Ball behind. Enraged by their betrayal, he made a desperate leap and discovered how shallow the stream was. He chased after the other man and they started to fight about whose wife she really was. The Bodhisatta got each of them alone and asked all three to tell him the others' names. The local man and the woman did not know each other's names, and by this method the Bodhisatta knew who the woman belonged to. The local man confessed.

Indra wanted to spread the fame of the Bodhisatta's wisdom and power, so he came down to earth in the form of a man and got onto the back of a chariot, telling the owner he wanted to serve him. The owner agreed. Later, when the owner stopped for a call of nature, Indra jumped into the driver's seat and took off toward the Bodhisatta's play hall

with the chariot's owner running after him. There, they both claimed ownership.

The Bodhisatta recognized Indra right away by his fearlessness and unblinking eyes, but he went through with the trial anyway. He got another driver for the chariot and told the two claimants to grab the back and run with it for as long as they could. The owner could only keep up for a short time before letting go, but Indra ran with the chariot the whole way out and back. The Bodhisatta pointed out to the audience that he didn't sweat or pant while running, so it was Indra, not a human, and the other man was the actual owner. Indra confessed and explained his goal. The Bodhisatta told him not to do this kind of thing again.

The advisor reporting the Bodhisatta's deeds was so amazed at seeing a child rebuke Indra, that instead of sending a message, he went to the palace unsummoned and asked why King Vedeha and Senaka did not recognize the boy's obvious superiority. Senaka still insisted it was not enough and devised some difficult tests for the Bodhisatta. Each time the Bodhisatta passed one, the king was pleased, but Senaka devised another.

- A short piece of wood was cut out of an acacia tree, carved perfectly round, and sent to the Bodhisatta with the demand to identify which was the root end. Knowing a tree's roots are heavier than its top, he floated it in water and said the end that sank first was the root end.
- Two skulls, one male and one female, were sent to be distinguished. The Bodhisatta knew that the sutures in a

man’s head are straight, and in a woman’s head they’re crooked.

- Two snakes, one male and one female, were sent to be distinguished. The Bodhisatta could tell because male tails are thicker than female tails, male eyes are bigger than female eyes, and male heads are thick and round, whereas female heads are long and thin.
- A request was made for a “white bull with horns on his legs and a hump on his head that utters his voice three times without fail.” The Bodhisatta realized they wanted a rooster and sent one.
- An octagonal lucky jewel had a broken thread running through it, which nobody could figure out how to replace. The Bodhisatta smeared the two holes with honey and pushed a wool thread in as far as he could. Ants living in the hole ate the old thread to get all the honey, and while doing so, they bit down on the new thread and pulled it through to the other end.
- The royal bull was fattened up for months so he appeared pregnant, and then it was sent over to the Bodhisatta with the order to deliver a calf. In reply, the Bodhisatta sent a man to the palace with orders to weep loudly at the palace gate and demand to talk to King Vedeha. When the king asked why he was sad, the man answered that his son had been in labor for seven days and the baby wouldn’t come out; he needed the king’s help. When the king said he couldn’t help because it is impossible for men to bear children, the man asked, “Then why do you expect a calf from a bull?”
- A request was made for rice cooked under seven specific conditions: without rice, without water, without a pot,

without an oven, without fire, without firewood, and without being sent along a road either by woman or man. The Bodhisatta had people use broken rice, snow, an earthen bowl, chopped-up wood blocks, a kindle fire started by rubbing, leaves, and delivered by a eunuch walking on footpaths.

- A request was sent for rope made of sand to replace a broken rope from King Vedeha's swing. The Bodhisatta sent some men to the palace to ask for a sample of the old sand rope so they knew what thickness to make the new one. When the king could not supply it, the men responded that if a king can't make a sand rope, nobody else can.
- King Vedeha said he wanted to swim in a new pond covered with lilies and ordered that one be sent to him at the palace. The Bodhisatta had some men play in water until their eyes turned red and then go to the palace door soaking wet and tell the king they had brought him a wonderful pond from the forest, but when their pond saw the city's fortifications it got scared, broke the ropes, and ran back to the forest. They asked for the old pond so they could tie them both together and let the old one lead the new one into the city. When the king said he'd never had a pond brought in from the forest before, they answered that if this was true, then the Bodhisatta couldn't send him one.
- King Vedeha said he was tired of his old royal park and asked to be sent a new one. The Bodhisatta replied with the same ruse he used for the pond test.

Senaka still would not acknowledge that the Bodhisatta was the predicted sage, but King Vedeha finally had enough of his stalling and rode off on his horse with a great entourage to bring the boy back to the palace. On the way to the village, his horse stepped in a hole and broke a leg, so the king returned to the palace, where Senaka greeted him with an I-told-you-so. But, unable to delay any longer, Senaka suggested a final test. The king sent a message to the Bodhisatta saying his horse broke a leg, so "send us a better horse and a more excellent horse." The Bodhisatta understood this meant the king wanted to meet both him and his father. He sent his father ahead in the company of one thousand merchants and they were invited in by the king.

As the Bodhisatta, attended by the one thousand youths, traveled in a magnificent chariot to the city, he saw a male donkey along the road and had a strong man tie its mouth shut, put it in a bag, and carry it to the palace over his shoulder. The Bodhisatta entered the city to great applause and was warmly welcomed by the king, who told him to take a seat wherever he pleased. The Bodhisatta looked at his father, who, as he'd been instructed, stood up and said, "Wise son, take my seat." He did so, and the four chief advisors laughed loudly and cried out, "This is the boy celebrated as wise? Only a blind fool would disrespect his father like this."

King Vedeha was visibly upset by the Bodhisatta's behavior. "My Lord," the Bodhisatta asked, "Do you think the father is always better than his sons?" The king answered yes, so the Bodhisatta released the donkey and asked the king its worth.

“At most eight coins,” he answered. Then the Bodhisatta asked the price of a mule born to this donkey and a thoroughbred horse—“It would be priceless.” Thus the Bodhisatta disproved the king’s assertion that the father is always better than the offspring, and this made the king happy again. Then, to hammer home the point, the Bodhisatta mocked, “If you still believe the father is always better than the son, hire my father as your advisor instead of me.”

The room erupted in praise and applause—there was snapping of fingers and waving of a thousand scarves—except from the four advisors, who were upset at having been so thoroughly outdone. King Vedeha not only made the Bodhisatta his fifth advisor, he adopted him as his own son, giving the Bodhisatta’s parents all kinds of ornaments and command over their village. The Bodhisatta and his one thousand friends took up residence in a suitable house, and from then on he faithfully served the king.

When people saw a precious jewel in a lake, they alerted King Vedeha, who sent Senaka to get it for him. Senaka got a group of men to drain the lake and dig up the mud at the bottom, but they could not find the jewel. When the lake was full again, the jewel could still be seen, so Senaka futilely drained it a second time. After two failures, the king took the Bodhisatta to the lake, and he realized the jewel was in a crow’s nest and people were only seeing its reflection in the lake. To prove it, he showed people the same jewel in a pail of water. The king sent a man up the tree, and he got the

jewel for the king. The king rewarded the Bodhisatta and the thousand youths with strings of pearls.

Once while King Vedeha and the Bodhisatta were walking in the royal park, a chameleon came and lay down in front of the king. The Bodhisatta told the king it was paying respect. Pleased by this, the king ordered one of his men to deliver meat to the chameleon every day, and he did. One holy day (when no killing is allowed), the man could not buy any meat, so he drilled a hole in a half-anna coin and hung it around the chameleon's neck. This made the creature feel so proud and rich that he did not come and bow the next time he saw the king. The king asked the Bodhisatta what was in the chameleon's mind, and he explained it. The king sent for the man who delivered the meat and he confirmed that the Bodhisatta was right. Impressed, he gave the Bodhisatta the tax revenue earned at the four city gates. And, angry at the chameleon, the king wanted to stop sending meat, but the Bodhisatta told him it was unfitting of a king to break a promise.

A boy cursed with bad luck had gone off from the Bodhisatta's city to study with a famous teacher in Taxila. The teacher had a daughter as beautiful as a nymph come of age right at the time the student completed his studies, so the teacher gave her to him. The student didn't want to marry her, but did so out of respect for his teacher. Since good luck cannot mate with bad luck, he avoided her as much as possible, including sleeping on the floor at night. Then, when they traveled back to his city, the student climbed a tree to eat some ripe figs. His wife asked for some and he told her to

climb up and pick her own. After she went up the tree, he quickly climbed down and piled thorns around it so she could not leave. Then he ran off alone.

That afternoon, King Vedeha rode his elephant past the fig tree and saw the entrapped woman. He fell in love at first sight. Since she had been abandoned, the king claimed the woman as his own, consecrating her as Queen Udumbara ("Fig") the moment they reached the palace.

The next day, the king took his new chief consort to the royal park, and the man who had deserted her was among the people cleaning the road ahead of them. When Queen Udumbara saw him, she could not restrain feeling triumphant at her good fortune and she smiled in happiness. The king did not believe that the man she smiled at was her former husband and he drew his sword to kill her for flirting. She begged him to consult his advisors first. Senaka said he did not believe any man would leave such a beautiful woman. The Bodhisatta, however, explained that good luck and bad luck can never be together. The king was relieved and thanked the Bodhisatta for saving his precious queen from the foolish advice of Senaka. The king gave him one thousand coins as a reward, and the queen became a loyal supporter of the Bodhisatta.

One time when King Vedeha went for a morning walk, he saw a goat and a dog, natural enemies, being friendly. The goat fed on the grass thrown to the elephants at their stable, running in to eat before the elephants arrived. But when the mahouts saw the goat, they beat him away. The dog lived on

the bones, skin, and other scraps from the royal kitchen, but that same day, he lost patience and snuck inside the kitchen to eat cooked meat. The cook saw the dog and beat him with sticks and stones. The two suffering animals met and shared their tales of woe, both depressed because they would never be able to return to their feeding spots for risk of death. But as they talked, the goat came up with the plan that he would go to the kitchen and bring back meat, while the dog would go to the elephant stables for a bundle of grass. Nobody would pay them any attention because their species don't eat those foods, and they could bring them to the palace wall and eat together.

The king was astonished by their friendship and wondered if his advisors could figure out how it happened. When they next met, the king asked them, "Two natural enemies have become inseparable friends: what is the reason?" and said he would banish any of them who couldn't figure it out because he didn't want stupid men around him. Knowing the king wasn't smart enough to create a riddle, the Bodhisatta realized he must have seen something. He went to ask Queen Udumbara where King Vedeha had been for most of the day before, and she mentioned he had done a lot of walking alongside the palace wall and staring out his window. The Bodhisatta went to the palace wall and found the dog and goat, and he watched them to figure out their story.

The other four advisors came to the Bodhisatta, knowing he would find the answer, and asked for help. He agreed, but instead of telling them the answer directly, he taught them each a stanza in a language they didn't know but that the

king did. And the next day, when they were asked to give answers, they recited the stanzas by memory, and the king believed they knew. After the Bodhisatta gave a longer, more detailed answer, the king showed his pleasure by giving each of the men a chariot, a mule, and a wealthy village.

Queen Udumbara felt it was unfair the Bodhisatta got the same reward as the others, and she told the king how the Bodhisatta had shared his answer. The king respected him for doing this and said he would make things right by asking the Question of the Poor and Rich, certain that the Bodhisatta would be the winner. The next time they were together, the king asked Senaka and the Bodhisatta, “Which is better, a wealthy fool or a poor wise man?” Senaka answered that wealth was the only thing that really mattered. People flock to rich men the way birds flock to a tree full of fruit, he said. The mighty Ganges River is nothing compared to the sea and the words of rich men, no matter their truth, carry more weight than what a wise man says—just look at how the five advisors bow to the king. The Bodhisatta, on the other hand, chose wisdom, reasoning that fools who get wealth are struck by bad luck and commit sins, suffering in both this life and the next. Fools suffer shame and misery—a king would lose his throne without the help of wise advisors.

The Bodhisatta’s answer left Senaka speechless, like one who had used up all the food in his granary, and the king was so pleased he gave him a bull, an elephant, ten chariots pulled by thoroughbred horses, sixteen excellent villages, and a thousand cows.

When the Bodhisatta turned sixteen, he went out to find a wife, knowing he would not be happy if King Vedeha and Queen Udumbara chose one for him. He put on the outfit of a tailor and walked out of the city. He saw a beautiful woman with all the marks of good luck walking down the road carrying rice gruel, and when they saw each other, they fell instantly in love. From afar, the Bodhisatta clenched his fists to ask if she was married, and she spread her hands out flat to answer no. So the Bodhisatta walked up to her, and she answered all his questions with riddles, which he solved easily.

- “What is your name?” he asked. “My name is that which neither is, nor was, nor ever shall be,” she answered. Knowing that nothing in the world is immortal, the Bodhisatta guessed correctly that her name was Amara (“Immortal”).
- “Who are you taking this gruel to?” “It’s for the god of old time.” The Bodhisatta knew she meant her father.
- “What does your father do?” “He makes two out of one.” This meant plowing a farm field.
- “And where is your father plowing?” “Where those who go come not again.” Near a cemetery.
- “Will you come again today?” “If it comes, then I will not; if it does not come, then I will.” The Bodhisatta figured her father was plowing next to a riverside and she was talking about a flood.
- “Why is there so little rice in your pot?” “We got no water.” She meant water for the field to grow rice, not water for cooking rice.

Pleased that she was as smart as she was beautiful, the Bodhisatta said he wanted to visit her family, and she told him where they lived: “By way of cakes and gruel, and the double-leaf tree in flower, by the eating hand, not the not-eating hand, this is the secret path to my home.” The Bodhisatta walked past a cake shop, a rice gruel shop, and a blooming Mountain Ebony tree, then turned right and found her home.

Amara’s mother guessed the Bodhisatta was in love with her daughter and welcomed him. When he saw the family’s poverty (and also that they had previously been wealthy merchants), he offered to mend their clothes for free, and then had her tell neighbors to bring any clothes that needed repair. At the end of the day, he’d earned one thousand coins for the family through his sewing.

Amara returned that evening and was exceptionally polite, entering the house through the back door, washing her parent’s and the Bodhisatta’s feet, and serving everyone else before she ate. He stayed at their home for several days to further investigate her for proper behavior. One day the Bodhisatta tested Amara’s pride. He told her to cook him rice gruel, a rice cake, and boiled rice. The rice gruel thrilled him with its flavor, but he spat it on the ground and insulted her. Without anger, she gave him the rice cake and then the boiled rice, and the Bodhisatta spat out both, insisting they were terrible. Feigning anger, he mixed the three together and smeared them on her head and body and told her to sit at the door. Pleased by Amara’s meek behavior, the

Bodhisatta changed his tone and told her to put on a beautiful dress; then he took her and her family to the city.

On arrival, the Bodhisatta tested Amara again. He had her sit in the gatekeeper's house while he went home. He sent some of his men to tempt her with one thousand coins, but she told them they were "not worth the dust on my master's feet." They tried again, unsuccessfully, twice more; then on the fourth time, at the Bodhisatta's command, they dragged her away. It was during this abduction that she saw the Bodhisatta without his humble disguise for the first time, and not knowing that he was her fiancée, she smiled and cried simultaneously: smiling at his magnificence and crying because he was going to hell for these sins. Then she saw who he really was. Having passed his test of her chastity, the Bodhisatta introduced her to King Vedeha and Queen Udumbara, and they were married that day. Amara sent half of each wedding gift back to the giver, thus winning the people's hearts.

Over time, the other four advisors grew increasingly jealous and resentful of the Bodhisatta, and finally Senaka schemed to get rid of him. They each stole something from the king and sent it to the Bodhisatta's house hidden within a gift. Senaka sent a jewel from the royal crest in a pot of dates. Amara was skeptical about Senaka's intentions for the gift, and when the slave girl who delivered it wasn't looking, Amara put her hand in the pot and confirmed her suspicions. She carefully noted all the details of the delivery. After this, a golden necklace came in a box of jasmine flowers, a woolen

robe in a basket of vegetables, and a golden slipper in a bundle of straw; and Amara wrote down everything.

After sending the stolen goods, the advisors told the king that the Bodhisatta was a thief. Worried he'd not get a chance to clear his name, the Bodhisatta quickly fled in disguise and worked as a potter in another town. Amara had the four wicked advisors seized, beaten, heads shaved, and thrown down the toilets; then she told King Vedeha what really happened. The king didn't know what to think about the conflicting stories, but since the Bodhisatta was not there and he had no other advisors, he sent all four home without punishment.

The goddess who lived in the royal parasol missed hearing the Bodhisatta preach and wanted him back. So one night she asked King Vedeha four riddles about who is dearer than a husband, and he took them to his four advisors. They had no idea how to answer them.

The next night the goddess returned and the king said he couldn't solve the riddles. She rebuked the king's foolishness for relying on Senaka and the others and said only the Bodhisatta was smart enough to figure them out. "When you want fire, you don't blow on a firefly. Putting fireflies under grass and cow dung will not make them burn," she said. "And when you want milk, squeeze a cow's udder, not its horn. To know something's weight, use a balance, not your hand. Senaka is a firefly; the Bodhisatta is a bonfire blazing with wisdom. If you do not bring him back to the palace to answer these questions, you are a dead man."

The terrified king sent men out to find the Bodhisatta, and when one of them did, he was covered in clay from having just finished working at a potter's wheel. The man, being of Senaka's faction, insulted the Bodhisatta for having sunk so low despite supposedly possessing such wisdom, and the Bodhisatta shot back that he would restore his prosperity when the time was right. And, he added, the fact that he was needed to answer the goddess's riddles proved that wisdom is superior to riches.

The Bodhisatta rushed back to the palace without cleaning up. Seeing that the Bodhisatta arrived dirty with neither pomp nor entourage, the king knew he was not a thief or an enemy. To show respect and forgiveness, the king gave him a grand welcome. Then the king asked why he showed no anger, and the Bodhisatta answered that this is what wise men do; it would be foolish to cut off a tree branch that shades a man, and the king had been very good to not only him, but also his parents. But, after promising his loyalty, the Bodhisatta rebuked the king's actions and implored him to think carefully before acting in the future.

Their friendship restored, King Vedeha had the Bodhisatta sit on his throne under the royal parasol and listen to the four riddles. He easily answered them all.

- "He strikes with hands and feet, beats the face; and he is dearer than a husband." – A happy child sitting on its mother's lap playfully beats his mother with hands and feet, pulls her hair, and hits her face with his fists. And

the loving mother, unable to restrain her affection, hugs and kisses him.

- “She abuses him roundly, yet she wishes him to be near; and he is dearer than a husband.” – A young child of seven years, old enough to help with household chores, will ask for a tasty treat when told to go to the field or market, but after getting it refuses to go. The mother yells and threatens to hit him with a stick, so he runs off to play at some relative’s home. Her heart pained and her eyes red from tears, she searches around for her son and squeezes him tight when she finds him.
- “She reviles him without cause and criticizes without reason; yet he is dearer than a husband.” – Without reason, a woman will accuse her secret lover of not really caring for her and criticize him over nothing, yet their love grows ever stronger.
- “People provide food, drink, clothes, and lodging, and good men take them away; yet they are dearer than a husband.” – Devout people delight in giving alms to religious brahmins who give nothing in return.

Both the goddess and the king rewarded the Bodhisatta with perfumes, flowers, gold, jewels, and more for answering the riddles, and the king elevated him to commander-in-chief.

Thwarted in his first attempt, Senaka hatched a new plot against the Bodhisatta. He asked him whether it was ever okay to share a secret, and the Bodhisatta answered no. Knowing King Vedeha would disagree with this, Senaka told him the Bodhisatta was a traitor, and to prove it, he should ask the Bodhisatta who secrets should be shared with. The

next time the five advisors came together, the king asked each of them this question.

Answering his own question first, King Vedeha said that if they are virtuous, faithful, affectionate, and subservient to their husbands, wives should be let in on secrets. Senaka and the others each gave friends, brothers, sons, and mothers as examples of who to trust. When the Bodhisatta answered that wise men always keep secrets to themselves, he saw the displeasure on the king's face and realized he was being tested. Not trusting the foolish king, the Bodhisatta promptly left the palace. Right after he did, the king gave Senaka his own sword and ordered him to chop off the Bodhisatta's head when he returned the next morning.

The Bodhisatta surmised that his rivals had shared sinister secrets with the people they mentioned as trustworthy. Knowing that after they met with the king, the four always sat on an overturned water trough next to the palace door and chatted, the Bodhisatta climbed underneath it to spy on them. When they sat down, the men asked Senaka if he'd ever shared a secret with a friend and he admitted he had, but it was too important to tell: If the king ever found out, he'd be executed for it. And what if the Bodhisatta was lying under the trough, listening? The men mocked his worry and promised they could be trusted. So Senaka mentioned a well-known woman who had gone missing, and he admitted to having sex with her in a grove of trees and then killing her to steal her jewelry; and only his friend knew.

Then the others revealed their darkest secrets, which they had only ever shared with one other person. One had a spot of leprosy on his thigh that his brother washed and bandaged each morning; and when the king got sad he would cry and unknowingly lay his head atop it. Another got possessed by a goblin every evening on the holy days and barked like a mad dog, so his son needed to tie him up indoors and host a party to hide the noise. The last had stolen one of the king's lucky jewels, and he always took it to the palace with him, which is why the king spoke to him first and gave him so much money.

That evening, King Vedeha thought about all the good things the Bodhisatta had done for him over the years and regretted ordering him executed. Queen Udumbara noticed his grief, and he told her the Bodhisatta would die the next morning. She was aghast, but hid her feelings from the king. After the king fell asleep, she sent a message warning the Bodhisatta what was planned for him at the palace.

Arriving early the next morning, the four advisors stood at the palace gate, but the Bodhisatta stayed away until after they went inside. Then, in the company of guards and a great crowd of people, he safely approached the palace and saluted the king, who, playing dumb, invited him in. The Bodhisatta told the king he knew his secret, that he'd ordered his beheading. (But to protect the queen, he did not admit she had told him.) Then he revealed the other four advisors' secrets, offering this as proof that he was right that secrets should be kept to one's self. The furious king ordered the four men executed, but after they got one hundred blows at every

street corner, the Bodhisatta suggested they be pardoned, and the king consented.

With things back to normal again, the Bodhisatta put the kingdom's well-being in his own hands because King Vedeha was so useless. He built a great rampart around the city with watchtowers at all the gates and surrounded it with three moats: a water moat, a mud moat, and a dry moat. He restored old buildings, dug new reservoirs, and filled the storehouses with grain. When merchants arrived from other realms, they were asked what things their kings liked. Later, the Bodhisatta sent soldiers to spy on all the other kings of India. Lying about where they came from and bearing suitable gifts, the soldier spies were able to get work in the palaces and report back to the Bodhisatta.

The Bodhisatta also sent a spy parrot out to gather news from the kings. One day, while checking out King Culani, the parrot heard he and his chaplain, Kevatta, secretly planning to conquer all of India. They would lead their army to besiege cities one by one, and at each, Kevatta would give the cornered king the choice to submit to their rule or be destroyed. The kings would likely choose to join them rather than fight and die; but either way, King Culani would absorb that king's army and march to the next city and repeat. The conquest complete, the subordinate kings would be invited to a gathering at King Culani's palace and be killed with poisoned liquor. They'd be replaced with loyalists of King Culani, fully cementing his dominion of India.

The parrot, who heard everything, dropped a lump of dung on Kevatta's head and then another in his mouth while mocking him for failing to keep their plan confidential. He flew back to the Bodhisatta with the important news, and the Bodhisatta began readying the city's defenses. He sent all the poor people outside the city walls and moved the wealthy in, and also stocked up on food.

King Culani and Kevatta's strategy worked, and after seven years, seven months, and seven days, every kingdom except King Vedeha's was under their control. Kevatta knew of the Bodhisatta's great power and convinced King Culani they could not defeat him, so they left his small kingdom alone.

Back home, King Culani prepared a lavish feast for the second part of his plan. Determined to save the other kings' lives, the Bodhisatta sent his birthmates to join the party and run amok, trashing all the food and drink so nobody would be poisoned. Their riot left King Culani and everyone in his circle so angry that they marched off with one hundred eighty million soldiers to attack King Vedeha.

King Culani laid siege to the city and struck fear into the people with a thunderous display of soldiers, elephants, and horses. The Bodhisatta assured the worried King Vedeha of victory and organized a seven-day festival with free food and drink to take people's minds off the threat outside the city walls. King Culani heard their merriment, and in anger at the disrespect he ordered his soldiers to charge, but they were easily beaten back.

Since they could not take the city, King Culani proposed various ways to force King Vedeha into surrender, but all failed due to the Bodhisatta's wisdom and the assistance of the Bodhisatta's spies, who sent messages into the city by arrow detailing King Culani's plans. When Kevatta advised cutting off their access to water, the Bodhisatta threw giant water lilies over the walls to show there was plenty of water inside. When Kevatta proposed cutting off the food supply, the Bodhisatta planted rice on the rampart (and due to his powers, it grew overnight) and a spy explained that the Bodhisatta had so much rice in storage the excess had been thrown on the rampart where it was growing like a weed. When Kevatta suggested cutting off the supply of wood, the Bodhisatta built a heap of firewood so tall it could be seen by everyone outside so they knew that there was plenty on hand.

King Culani decided to give up and go home, but Kevatta convinced him to try one more thing—a Battle of the Law. Instead of armies fighting, just he and the Bodhisatta would go head-to-head, the loser being the one who first bowed down to the other—but they would not tell the Bodhisatta what a Battle of the Law meant. Since Kevatta was older than the Bodhisatta, he was sure to win. The Bodhisatta accepted the challenge; only it was no mystery since one of his spies explained it. The next day, he took King Vedeha's lucky octagonal jewel with him to the western gate. He stood before Kevatta and dropped the jewel at his feet, and in his greed, Kevatta stooped down to get it. The Bodhisatta held Kevatta down, pushing his face into the ground until it was bloody, all while yelling, "Rise, teacher. I am young enough to

be your grandson. You should not bow down before me," loud enough for everyone around to hear.

Thinking they had been defeated, King Culani and his multitude fled. They had traveled many leagues before Kevatta was able to reach the king and explain he'd been tricked and had not actually bowed down. The king turned back to renew the siege, but this time intending to be patient until the people grew so frustrated they'd open the city gates and let him in.

Not wanting his people to endure any more distress, the Bodhisatta summoned a clever brahmin and shared his plan to get rid of the invaders promptly. It was a dangerous mission, but the brahmin accepted. As instructed, he went atop the rampart and gave food to some enemy soldiers. When they saw him, King Vedeha's soldiers, who were in on the plan, captured and beat the brahmin (some of it fake, but some of it real for the sake of selling the story), then lowered him by rope over the wall.

The brahmin was brought before King Culani and he explained that he turned traitor because the Bodhisatta had ruined his life and he wanted to see him shorter by a head. Through this story and various sweet talk, he won the king's confidence. When the brahmin said he knew where the city defenses had weak points, he was put in charge of the army; and on his first mission, he led the soldiers into an ambush at a spot full of snakes and crocodiles. Those of his soldiers who were not slaughtered by King Vedeha's forces waiting on the battlements, turned back. The brahmin blamed their retreat

not on the danger, but on the soldiers being bribed by the Bodhisatta. To prove it, he told the king to check the subordinate kings' clothes and swords, and he found the Bodhisatta's name inscribed on them all—because the spies had given them these items. He also accused Kevatta of corruption, saying the jewel he had taken in the Battle of the Law had been a bribe.

Finally accepting that he could not outwit or outfight the Bodhisatta, King Culani left that night in his chariot. As his final act of sabotage, the brahmin yelled urgently to King Culani's troops to retreat and filled them with terror. Assuming King Vedeha's soldiers had launched a surprise attack, they fled in haste, leaving everything behind. It took months for King Vedeha's people to gather all the gold, jewels, swords, shields, and other things discarded around the city.

A year later, Kevatta saw the scar on his forehead from the time the Bodhisatta shoved his face into the ground, and an angry desire for revenge arose. He met King Culani in his bedchamber where nobody could hear them speak and proposed to lure the Bodhisatta to them by offering the king's daughter, Princess Pancalacandi, who was as beautiful as a nymph, as a wife for King Vedeha. Then they could easily kill both the king and the Bodhisatta.

Still wanting to rule all of India, the king agreed to Kevatta's plan. They started by hiring poets to write songs about the gorgeous princess, one of which declared that only King Vedeha was worthy of such beauty, and then sent musicians

out far and wide to sing them. When the time was right, Kevatta set out to see King Vedeha. Word spread that Kevatta was traveling to their city to propose the marriage, and everyone wondered about it, including the Bodhisatta, who assumed there was nefarious intent. He contacted his spies, but all they knew was that the king and Kevatta had recently held a secret meeting; only the king's myna bird heard what they had talked about.

At his meeting with King Vedeha, Kevatta declared friendship between the two kingdoms and formally offered Princess Pancalacandi for marriage. King Vedeha welcomed the idea, though he wanted Kevatta to reconcile with the Bodhisatta first, so he went to meet him. But the Bodhisatta did not want to talk: he feigned illness, removed all the furniture from his room except his couch, smeared cow dung on his floor, lay down wearing a red robe, and had his servants beat Kevatta to make him leave.

The Bodhisatta told King Vedeha the proposal was probably a dangerous ruse, but the other four advisors, knowing they would receive clothes and jewelry as part of the wedding ceremonies, told him not to waste a chance for good luck. Even though the king, ever greedy and foolish, knew that the Bodhisatta was probably right, he was so angered by the lack of support he sent the Bodhisatta away with a volley of insults.

The Bodhisatta knew he could not change the mind of a man in love; he had to find another way to protect the king. So he sent his parrot to get information from King Culani's myna

bird. The parrot flew to the king's bedchamber and befriended her with a made-up story. His former wife, he said, was a myna who was killed by a hawk, and his owner, a king, told him of King Culani's virtuous pet myna who lived alone and would make a good mate. She was excited by the opportunity, but decided to feign resistance, saying parrots should be with parrots and mynas with mynas. The parrot knew she was just playing hard to get, so he made her trust him by saying differences don't matter in love and told her of a king who made an untouchable his chief queen and an ascetic who married a half-human, half-bird kinnara. She finally confessed her love for him and they took their pleasure together that evening.

When the time was right, the parrot asked the myna what she thought about the upcoming royal marriage. She said it was an unlucky thing to talk about and didn't want to discuss it. But the parrot said he would leave her if she kept secrets from him, so she relented and said the marriage was just a scheme to kill the Bodhisatta and King Vedeha. The next morning, the parrot left with the excuse of going back to tell his king he found a new wife and promised to return in a week. He rushed home and told the Bodhisatta of Kevatta's real plan.

The Bodhisatta knew that King Vedeha wouldn't believe this story, so he needed to save him. He told the king he was ready to help with the marriage, and with an army and a large company of masons, blacksmiths, and other artisans he set out for King Culani's realm to build a palace for King Vedeha to live in during the marriage celebration. Every

league along the way, the Bodhisatta founded a village and left a man in charge with the duty of keeping elephants, horses, and chariots ready at all times. At the Ganges River he ordered men to build three hundred ships and keep them hidden away. He chose an ideal spot on the riverbank to build the palace and measured the distances for a pair of tunnels. Then he went to the city and announced his arrival.

King Culani welcomed the Bodhisatta with great honor, gave him a house to stay at within the palace grounds, and agreed to let him build a palace in the city, which is where he told the king he wanted to build it. Not wanting to disappoint the Bodhisatta, so he wouldn't say anything bad to King Vedeha that might keep him away, King Culani told him he could build anywhere he wanted, no matter who complained. He and his men first went to the house of the queen mother and acted as though they were going to demolish it. She was furious, but the king would not see her, so she paid the Bodhisatta a bribe of one hundred thousand coins to build elsewhere. Then they did the same to Kevatta and many other wealthy people around the city. In this way, the Bodhisatta scammed ninety million coins.

The Bodhisatta then told King Culani that whenever they chose a spot to build, the people were stricken with grief over losing their home, so it would be better to build down along the river. The king was pleased with this because it would be easier for him to attack outside the city than within. Before he departed, the Bodhisatta asked for and received permission to let their elephants play in the river, even

though this would muddy the water and upset people downstream.

Over the next four months, the Bodhisatta oversaw construction of not only a large palace, but also a village for the workers and two secret tunnels. The main tunnel, big enough to ride an elephant through, stretched half a league between the city and the river. Sixty thousand men dug it, dumping the excavated dirt in the river, but no suspicions were raised because the murky water was blamed on the elephants. No roots and stones hindered them; these all magically disappeared to fulfill the Bodhisatta's will. Inside the tunnel, he fit hundreds of doors and lanterns that could be opened and closed simultaneously with a single lever, and the walls and ceiling were covered with brick, stucco, and wood and were painted with beautiful scenes of heaven. The other tunnel, half as long, started at the main tunnel and came out under some stairs in the Bodhisatta's house, giving access to King Culani's palace.

When construction was complete, the Bodhisatta summoned King Vedeha, who had been waiting eagerly to depart. He arrived in due time and, suspecting nothing, promptly sent a message asking to get his bride without delay. King Culani promised to send her first thing in the morning. But in reality, he mustered his vast army that night and surrounded King Vedeha, waiting for sunrise to attack.

When he saw the troops approaching, the Bodhisatta sent three hundred of his men through the tunnels to kidnap Princess Pancalacandi and also King Culani's chief queen, son,

and mother, and bring them to the tunnel. By the element of surprise, the men were able to bind and gag all the guards, hunchbacks, dwarfs, and everyone else in the palace and hide them away. Then they told the family that King Culani had sent them to bring everyone to the victory celebration. Though the family were surprised about the tunnel, it was so beautiful that they believed the men, who said it was used only for very special occasions, and went along without hesitation. Some men stayed behind to plunder the palace's treasure.

When King Vedeha realized he was surrounded and seemingly doomed, he fell into whimpering misery. He knew nothing of the Bodhisatta's plan, and the Bodhisatta decided to keep it to himself until he'd gotten a little revenge for King Vedeha's past behavior. He rebuked the king mercilessly as greedy, careless, and stupid for ignoring his advice not to marry the princess and for insulting him as a clodhopper who grew up a farmer's son. And when both the king and Senaka begged him to save them, the Bodhisatta said it was too late to act now; there was nothing he could do. Only after King Vedeha and the other four advisors decided to commit suicide rather than face a lingering death at the hands of King Culani did the Bodhisatta finally reveal that he would save them and open the door to his secret tunnel.

The Bodhisatta took King Vedeha and Senaka to the princess and her family, who all shrieked with fear when they realized they'd been tricked. Without delay, the Bodhisatta placed Princess Pancalacandi on a pile of treasure and married her to King Vedeha. He then led them all to the river where

everyone except he boarded a ship for the first leg of the long journey home. The Bodhisatta, vowing to bring everyone back safely, stayed behind to take care of the soldiers and craftsmen; he buried a sword in the sand at the tunnel gate and went back through it to his house. By changing horses and elephants at each of the villages built along their route, King Vedeha and the others arrived home the next morning.

At sunrise, King Culani rallied his troops and ordered them to capture King Vedeha alive. But before they attacked, the Bodhisatta stepped out onto his terrace so the king could see him. The king charged on the back of his elephant to kill the Bodhisatta, who fearlessly mocked him: “You think you have found what you want, but you might as well just throw down your bow and arrow. King Vedeha has already gone home.” King Culani was furious that his rival had escaped, but decided that killing the Bodhisatta would still be satisfying, and he ordered his troops to cut off the Bodhisatta’s hands, feet, ears, and nose, cook his flesh on skewers, and string up his skin like cowhide being tanned.

The Bodhisatta smiled at this threat and gave the king the rest of the bad news: that his family had been kidnapped. “Whatever you do to me, King Vedeha will do to your family, which we snuck away through a tunnel. This is my shield against your arrows.” The king did not believe him, but the Bodhisatta spoke with such confidence he sent a man to check just in case, and it was confirmed they were not in the palace and the guards were all tied up. Worried the king might act rashly out of warrior pride, the Bodhisatta praised Queen Nanda’s beauty and grace to calm him down. And the

Bodhisatta promised that his queen, mother, and son would come back unharmed if he and his men were allowed to return home safely.

Hearing that his family had not been harmed, King Culani felt relieved. He asked to see the tunnel, and the Bodhisatta walked him and the subordinate kings and many courtiers and soldiers through it. The king was astounded. When they reached the end, the Bodhisatta pulled the lever, locking everyone but him and King Culani in the pitch dark. The Bodhisatta grabbed his buried sword and leaped toward the defenseless king, grabbing his arm and asking, “Who rules all the kingdoms of India?” The terrified king yelled back, “It’s yours, spare me!” The Bodhisatta lowered his sword and said he wasn’t going to hurt the king and he did not want to rule any kingdom; he just made the threat to demonstrate his wisdom. Then he handed the king his sword and said if he wanted to kill him, now was the time to do it. The king said he also would not do any harm. Then the two sat and talked and struck up a genuine friendship.

The people locked in the tunnel knew nothing of what was happening outside and feared death, so when the Bodhisatta finally released them, the subordinate kings thanked him for saving their lives. The Bodhisatta told them this was actually the second time he had done so and exposed the plan to poison them. King Culani blamed everything on Kevatta, and the other kings forgave him.

King Culani hosted a seven-day festival in the city and gifted the Bodhisatta eighty villages, one hundred wives, four

hundred female slaves, and one thousand gold coins. The other kings gave him many more riches. The Bodhisatta promised to come serve King Culani after King Vedeha died. He departed with a large entourage, and on the way sent men to collect the taxes from his new villages.

Back at home, King Vedeha ordered his own seven-day festival for the Bodhisatta's return, and then sent King Culani's queen, son, and mother home, where the latter told everyone they had been treated as if they were gods. The two kings lived in friendship forever after.

King Vedeha loved Queen Pancalacandi very much, and they had a son. When King Vedeha died eight years later, the Bodhisatta consecrated the boy-prince as king and, despite people begging him to stay, kept his promise and moved to King Culani's kingdom, where his arrival was greeted with excitement. He served his new king as wisely and faithfully as his old.

Despite his loyalty to her husband, Queen Nanda had never forgiven the Bodhisatta for kidnapping her, and she wanted to create conflict between them. She enlisted five of her friends to secretly keep tabs on the Bodhisatta, hoping to catch him doing something improper.

There was a wise, virtuous ascetic named Bheri who took her meals in the palace. When she and the Bodhisatta first met, Bheri tested how smart he really was by asking questions with hand gestures. She wanted to know if the king was taking good care of him, so she opened her hand. He

understood and clenched his fist to answer that the king gave him nothing. Wondering why he didn't become an ascetic like her, she rubbed her head; and to say it was because many people relied on him, he rubbed his belly.

The queen's spies saw this silent exchange from a window and went to tell King Culani the Bodhisatta was plotting with Bheri to overthrow him and should be put to death. They explained the hand gestures they'd seen as follows: the open hand signified crushing the king and seizing the throne, the closed fist was holding a sword, rubbing her head signaled cutting off the king's head, and rubbing his belly meant he would cut the king in half.

King Culani was skeptical, but the next day he asked Bheri if she'd had a conversation with the Bodhisatta, and she explained how it went with their hand signals. Then he asked the Bodhisatta, who answered the same. The king now knew that the queen's friends were wrong; and being pleased about it, he appointed the Bodhisatta as commander-in-chief. But the Bodhisatta now had his doubts about the king, wondering if this new job was just a distraction while the king prepared to kill him. With a gift of flowers and perfumes, the Bodhisatta asked Bheri to find out if King Culani was devoted or devious, and she said she would.

To get her answer, Bheri took the king aside and asked him the Water Demon Question: "If there were seven of you voyaging on the ocean and a demon demanded a human sacrifice, in which order would you give people up?" The king answered, "First I would give my mother, next my wife, then

my brother, fourth my friend, fifth my chaplain, sixth myself, but I would not give up the Bodhisatta under any circumstance."

Pleased that the king genuinely cherished the Bodhisatta, Bheri gathered a large company of people from the inner palace to ask him the question again so others would understand the Bodhisatta's exceptional merit as clearly as they saw the moon shining in the sky. This time, after King Culani answered for all to hear, Bheri asked for an explanation. First to die in this hypothetical situation was the queen mother, who Bheri said was smart and helpful, unlike most mothers; and also, when the king was a child, she saved his life by faking his death, letting him escape from an evil stepfather. She had her virtues, the king replied, but she had even more faults, including wearing inappropriate jewelry and being rude to the people who worked for her. Next on the list was Queen Nanda, who Bheri said was prudent, polite, wise, devoted, and calm. King Culani said her faults were greed and leading him into temptation by her sensuality. His younger brother, Bheri said, brought Culani back to be king after killing their stepfather instead of seizing the throne for himself. The king said his brother was arrogant. Bheri said the king's friend was his closest companion since childhood and they'd shared everything throughout their lives. The king said his friend didn't respect personal boundaries. The chaplain, according to Bheri, possessed great merit and frequently used his mastery of omens and dreams to help the king. The king said the chaplain stared at him with open eyes and puckered brows. Then Bheri asked King Culani to explain why he would give his own life to protect the

Bodhisatta. The king said in all the years he knew him, the Bodhisatta had never done even the most trifling thing wrong, and he knew everything from the past and the future: he would not give a man without sin to the water demon.

Wanting even more people to hear of the Bodhisatta's greatness, Bheri arranged to have the king answer the Water Demon Question in the palace courtyard, where everybody could come listen. And by hearing the king's praise of the Bodhisatta, they were drawn toward good in this world and happiness in the next.

In the lifetime of the Buddha

One day some of the Buddha's disciples were discussing his supreme wisdom; in particular, how he had humbled and converted a vast multitude of brahmins, ascetics, thieves, goblins, gods, and more. When the Buddha heard them talking about it, he told them this story so they knew that he'd also had perfect knowledge in the past.

King Vedeha was an earlier birth of Laludayi, an elder disciple of the Buddha who was so shy that he could not speak when around more than a single other person, and he often said one thing when he meant another; Senaka was an earlier birth of Saccaka, a Jain who converted to be a disciple of the Buddha; and the other three advisors were earlier births of Potthapada, Ambattha, and Pilotika, three ascetics who respected the Buddha. King Culani was an earlier birth of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's top disciples, and Kevatta was Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis

and tried to kill him three times. Princess Pancalacandi was Sundari, a woman who sought to destroy the Buddha's reputation so her partners would receive more praise and alms, and the ascetic Bheri was Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples. The Bodhisatta's wife, Amara, and his father and mother were the Buddha's wife, father, and birth mother. The parrot and myna were Ananda and Kundali, two of the Buddha's top disciples.

Vessantara Jataka (#547)

The Bodhisatta was once a prince. His father, King Sanjaya, was wealthy beyond measure and honored by all the other kings of India for his virtue, and his mother, Queen Phusati, was the most beautiful and generous woman in the realm. Phusati was previously the chief queen of Indra, king of the gods, and before her rebirth on earth, he had granted her ten wishes, the final of which was to have a son who would be a righteous, respected, and powerful king. Indra chose the Bodhisatta to fulfill this wish, and he was born free from impurity. Immediately after leaving the womb, the Bodhisatta, named Prince Vessantara, asked his mother for something he could give away as a gift: she gave him one thousand coins. Indra had also sent sixty thousand boys to be his companions, and they were born to courtier families on the same day.

As he grew up, the Bodhisatta was as generous as anyone could be and often gave out gifts to help people. He was cared for by two hundred forty nurses, all full of sweet milk and free of faults.1 His father had given him a necklace worth one hundred thousand coins, and at age four he gave it to his nurses in thanks for their work. His father replaced the necklace nine times and the Bodhisatta gave each of them to his nurses. At age eight he felt unsatisfied with his charity because everything he gave away came from others. He wanted to give something of his very own. He pondered the matter, vowing that if someone asked for his heart, eyes, or flesh, he would cut them out with his own hands and give them. Indra, Brahma, and other heavenly gods were so

pleased by his dedication that the earth shook, lightning flashed, and the ocean stirred. By age sixteen, the Bodhisatta had mastered all his studies, so his parents married him to his cousin Maddi and abdicated so he could take the throne. They soon had a son, Jali, and a daughter, Kanhajina.

As king, the Bodhisatta continued his extraordinary generosity, giving six hundred thousand coins' worth of alms every day. His subjects were happy and prosperous. The nearby kingdom of Kalinga, on the other hand, was suffering drought and famine, and many people had turned to robbery. The King of Kalinga tried to make rain by observing the holy-day vows for a whole week, but no rain came. Then his advisors suggested he could bring rain to the kingdom with the Bodhisatta's auspicious white elephant: wherever it went, rain fell. The King of Kalinga sent eight brahmins to request it, and without hesitation the Bodhisatta gave them not only his elephant but also all its priceless gold and jeweled ornamentation and the five hundred servants who cared for it. And again the earth shook over his generosity.

Though the gods were delighted by what he'd done, the Bodhisatta's subjects were horrified. Believing that ruin would surely befall the kingdom without their sacred elephant talisman, the people went to Sanjaya and demanded he banish the Bodhisatta to Mount Vamka deep in the Himalayas. He had no choice but to accept their demand and take back the throne. He gave the Bodhisatta one final day in the city before having to leave.

The Bodhisatta rejected the idea that his donation was wrong, but chose not to resist the will of the people. For his final day at home, he decided to give the Gift of the Seven Hundreds—giving away seven hundred of many kinds of things—and ordered his servants to immediately begin gathering elephants, horses, chariots, girls, cows, slaves, and more, and also to prepare every kind of food and drink imaginable, including hard liquor. (Giving alcohol would earn him no merit, but he did not want anybody to go away without getting exactly what they wanted.) With the preparations for the next day underway, the Bodhisatta told Maddi to carefully store their treasure so she could support herself and their children without him, and that she should remarry. But she insisted she would rather die than leave him behind. She and the children were going to live in the forest with him, and she predicted life there would be so wonderful he would forget he had ever been king.

All day the Bodhisatta gave away things to everyone who came, from brahmins to untouchables. Then, early the next morning, he bid farewell to his friends and family and rode off in a gorgeous carriage pulled by four thoroughbred horses, giving out ornaments adorned with the seven precious jewels to beggars he met along the road. Four brahmins who had arrived too late to get anything during the Gift of the Seven Hundreds chased them down and asked the Bodhisatta for his horses, which, of course, he gave them. Four gods, taking the form of red deer, arrived to pull the carriage, but a short time later, another brahmin came and took that. So they walked, carrying the tired children on their hips. It was a long journey, and everyone they met along the

way pitied them; even the trees, which bowed their branches so they could easily pick fruit.

It was thirty leagues to his uncle's city, Ceta, but the gods shortened the journey so the Bodhisatta arrived before nightfall that same day. The royal family came to greet him, suspecting he had fled from defeat in a battle since he had no army, carriage, or horses. He told them his tale of woe, and they invited him to stay and be their new king, but he refused. The Bodhisatta wouldn't even enter the city proper; he lodged in a room at the city gate to avoid creating any conflict between the two kingdoms.

After a day of rest, the Bodhisatta set out again toward the Himalayas. Sixty thousand nobles accompanied him to the edge of the forest to see the family off. Due to more divine assistance, the Bodhisatta reached Mount Vamka in only two days rather than two weeks. Just before they arrived, Indra noticed what had happened, so he sent Vissakamma, heaven's chief builder, to make the family a home with covered walkways and a lush garden, and he also drove away all animals that make harsh sounds.

The Bodhisatta and his family put on ascetics' clothes and began their new lives, he living in one room and Maddi and the children in another. The Bodhisatta made Maddi promise not to approach him at night (ascetics must stay chaste), and she made him promise to let her be the one to go out into the forest to gather fruits and roots. She was in no danger because the Bodhisatta's compassion was so strong that all

animals living within three leagues of them fell under his influence and ceased killing.

In another kingdom lived Jujaka, a decrepit old brahmin with a very young wife, Amittatapana, who was given to him in lieu of a debt her parents could not repay. She cared for him devotedly, and some men criticized their own wives for not meeting her high wifely standard. This angered the other women of the village and they cruelly mocked her, hoping she would leave Jujaka and go back to her family. One day Amittatapana took her waterpot down to the river and heard their nasty words; she returned home in tears. Jujaka felt bad for her and offered to get water himself from then on, but she thought it improper for a man to do this work and said they should have a slave or a maid to help them—and if he did not find one, she would leave him. Jujaka didn't have enough money for this, so Amittatapana suggested he go to Mount Vamka and ask the Bodhisatta to give him a slave. Being old, Jujaka did not want to make the long, rough trip; but he also did not want to lose his wife, so he agreed to go.

Jujaka first went to the Bodhisatta's city to ask how to find him, but people there said greedy men like him were the cause of the Bodhisatta's downfall, and they beat him with fists, feet, and sticks. But the gods, wanting to support the Bodhisatta's generosity, guided Jujaka onto the right road. After he reached the forest, he was chased by a pack of dogs and climbed a tree to safety. A wise and skilled forester, who had been told by the King of Ceta to keep watch for anyone trying to reach the Bodhisatta, heard Jujaka's cries for help. Certain this man had no good intent, the forester drew his

bow and declared he was going to kill Jujaka to protect the Bodhisatta and his family from good-for-nothing fools like him. Jujaka thought quickly and claimed he was an ambassador from the king (meaning he had immunity and could not be killed) and had come to tell the Bodhisatta he had been forgiven and could return home. Thrilled by the good news, the forester called off his dogs and told Jujaka to come down. He pointed the way to Mount Vamka and gave Jujaka roast deer and honey for the journey.

As suggested by the forester, Jujaka stopped to see the ascetic Accuta to get directions for the final part of the path. Accuta also initially doubted Jujaka's intentions, but eventually believed him when he said he was only going to pay respects. Accuta hosted Jujaka for one night, then pointed him in the right way. Jujaka reached the Bodhisatta's home in the early evening, but slept on a nearby hill so he could approach the Bodhisatta when Maddi was not there to object.

At dawn the next morning, Maddi had a terrifying nightmare of a man in yellow robes with red flowers in his ears dragging her out of her hut by her hair, tearing out her eyes, cutting off her arms, ripping open her chest, and seizing her heart. The Bodhisatta knew that the dream foretold someone coming and asking for his children that day, but he did not want to upset her, so he lied and said it must have just been a result of uneasy sleep or indigestion. "Fear nothing," he said. So Maddi did her chores at home and then walked into the forest as usual.

The Bodhisatta took a seat and stared down the path to their home with excitement, like a drunkard craving a drink, waiting for the predicted suitor to arrive. He had not been able to practice charity for seven months and was overjoyed that someone had sought him out. When Jujaka appeared in the distance, Jali went to help carry his bags, but Jujaka snapped his fingers and yelled, “Go away!” Jujaka, however, greeted the Bodhisatta warmly, and he did likewise in return, offering fruits to eat and cool water to drink. When Jujaka asked to have his children, the Bodhisatta agreed without hesitation, delighted that his dream interpretation had been correct.

The Bodhisatta asked Jujaka to stay at their camp one day so the children and their mother could say goodbye. But Jujaka refused any delay because, he said, women are cunning and stingy, and she would try to stop him from taking her children. The Bodhisatta also suggested he take the children to their grandfather and collect a large reward rather than working them as slaves, but Jujaka rejected this too, saying he needed slaves to please his wife. Hearing this terrible conversation, the children ran away and hid under lily pads in a lake. The Bodhisatta followed their footprints to the lake and told them to stop hiding. Feeling guilty, they came out of the water, threw themselves at their father’s feet, and cried. He too broke out in tears, but explained that he must give them away as part of his quest for perfection. He told Jali that from then on he had a price of one thousand gold coins; this is what must be paid for him to become free again. Kanhajina, being so very beautiful, could only be bought by a king, he said, and her price was one hundred each of

elephants, horses, bulls, gold coins, and male and female slaves.

The Bodhisatta brought his children back to the hut and poured water over Jujaka's hands as a blessing to complete the transfer. And when he did, the earth shook at such a precious gift. Jujaka tied the children's wrists with a vine and beat them bloody to force them down the path like cattle. Knowing he was one step closer to perfection, the Bodhisatta first felt joy as he watched his children marched off to be slaves, but this changed to sadness and regret, and he broke into tears because he knew what a shameless, wicked man Jujaka was. He even briefly pondered going out and killing Jujaka to bring his children back. But charity is part of righteousness, and he realized the problem was his affection for his children. So through his superior mental ability he focused his mind on nonattachment and erased his feelings for them, finally feeling good again.

The gods knew that when Maddi came back and found her children gone, she would run after them, and this would get her into trouble. So three of them took the forms of a lion, tiger, and leopard and lay down blocking her path until after it was dark. When she got back home and her children did not run out to meet her as they usually did, Maddi assumed they were dead. She asked the Bodhisatta what had happened, but instead of answering, he criticized her for returning so late. Maddi explained the beasts blocking her path and implored him to answer her, but he stayed silent for the rest of the night. She ran around their forest patch in the light of

the full moon, searching in vain for her children in the trees, hills, lakes, and caves where they loved to play.

At dawn, Maddi fainted in front of the Bodhisatta. Ignoring his ascetic vows, he held her and splashed water on her face until she came to. Immediately she asked the Bodhisatta where the children were, and this time he told her what he had done, while also assuring her they would see them again someday. Maddi understood his desire to give away all he owned and knew there is no nobler gift than one's children. Her sorrow turned to joy for the sake of the Bodhisatta's future bliss, and together they rejoiced.

With the children gone, Indra realized the Bodhisatta would be left alone and helpless if some other horrible person came and asked for Maddi. So that morning he went to let the Bodhisatta achieve supreme perfection of generosity in a way that wouldn't cause any further hardship. Indra took human form and approached the Bodhisatta, asking to have Maddi as his wife. After the heartbreak of turning his children into slaves, the Bodhisatta hesitated before saying yes, but only for a moment; and once again the earth shook. Maddi smiled at her husband's achievement, and he praised her.

Indra promptly revealed himself and returned Maddi. He rose into the air, shining like the morning sun, and granted the Bodhisatta eight wishes. He requested to be recalled home by his father soon; to never condemn anyone to death; to help everyone, young and old alike; to never commit adultery; that his son would live a long, righteous life; to get to eat celestial

food every day; to always have things to give to others; and to be reborn in heaven after he died. Indra made it all so.

While Jujaka walked home through the forest, deities looked after the children. Each night for fifteen days, Jujaka tied them up on the ground while he slept safely up in trees, away from wild beasts. When he fell asleep, two gods taking the form of the Bodhisatta and Maddi untied the children, massaged their hands and feet, fed them, and let them sleep on a celestial couch. During the day, other gods guided Jujaka along the wrong route so that he ended up at the Bodhisatta's home instead of his own.

Jujaka and the children were taken to the palace and King Sanjaya rejoiced at seeing his grandchildren. Jujaka told the king that the Bodhisatta had given them as slaves, and many courtiers rebuked the Bodhisatta for giving away his children. Jali heard them and defended his father while Kanhajina explained how cruel Jujaka was. The king bought his grandchildren for the prices the Bodhisatta had set and threw in a seven-story palace as a special gift. Jujaka lay down on the couch of his new home and ate so many fine meats that he couldn't digest them and died. He had a funeral, but no relatives came, so all that Jujaka had received was returned to the king.

Jali told his grandparents about their difficult life in the mountains. Their mother worked so hard every day, he said, that she had grown thin with yellow skin, matted hair, and clumps of dirt in her armpits. King Sanjaya was filled with remorse and decided to bring his son back right away. He

ordered his commander-in-chief to prepare the Bodhisatta's sixty thousand noble birthmates, fourteen thousand elephants, and fourteen thousand horse-drawn chariots for the long journey. A week later, the road lined with food, flowers, and musicians, they set out for Mount Vamka with Jali showing the way and the Bodhisatta's auspicious white elephant part of the convoy, since the King of Kalinga had returned it.

After a long march, they set up camp at a lake near the Bodhisatta's home. When the six family members reunited, the earth shook once again and everyone fainted from the excitement. To revive them, Indra sent a magical rain that only fell on those who wanted to get wet. The Bodhisatta forgave his father, and by popular demand was crowned king again, which had been his dream ever since being banished. He performed a ceremony of thanks to his hut for sheltering him, then he and Maddi cleaned themselves up and changed into regal clothes. When the Bodhisatta mounted the sacred elephant, he radiated with the glory of a god.

They all stayed at the mountain camp, enjoying forest sports and leisure for a month before departing. And then, one year after being banished, the Bodhisatta returned home to a hero's welcome. He immediately set all the city's captive creatures free, even cats. But he worried about what he would give the next morning when people came to beg from him. At the thought, Indra's throne grew warm, and when he knew the reason, he sent a rain of the seven precious jewels that filled the entire city knee-deep and the palace grounds

waist-high. The Bodhisatta collected it all, and the royal treasuries were filled for a lifetime of charity.

In the Lifetime of the Buddha

Not long after reaching enlightenment, the Buddha returned to his hometown to visit his family. The men of his Sakya clan were arrogant, and when they went to the beautiful banyan grove where the Buddha stayed with his twenty thousand disciples, they would not bow down before him because he was younger. Not accepting their slight, the Buddha rose into the air and performed the Twin Miracle, so named because it featured opposites. Flames shot from one half of his body and water streamed from the other, alternating between top and bottom and left and right; and all the while, six-colored rays of light shone out of every pore of his skin, lighting up both heaven and hell. (The Buddha performed the Twin Miracle twice; the other time is discussed in Jataka #483.)

His father, the king, was so awed he bowed down at the Buddha's feet (the third time he had done so; the other two were when the Buddha was still a child) and so did everyone else. Then the Buddha floated back to his seat and caused magical rain to fall only on those who wanted to be wet. This second miracle also amazed the people, and the Buddha told this story so they knew that a similar rain had once before fallen on his kinsfolk.

Jujaka and his wife were earlier births of Devadatta, a disciple of the Buddha who became his nemesis, and Cinca-Manavika, a woman who had falsely claimed the Buddha impregnated

her. Indra and the ascetic Accuta were earlier births of Anuruddha and Sariputta, two of the Buddha's top disciples, and the forester was an earlier birth of Channa, Prince Siddhartha's charioteer, who later became a disciple. The Bodhisatta's father, mother, wife, and son were earlier births of the Buddha's father, birth mother, wife, and son. His daughter was an earlier birth of Uppalavanna, one of the Buddha's top female disciples. All the rest of the people in the story were earlier births of followers of the Buddha.

- The End -