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The Jatakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta (Penguin Classics)

Sara Janet Shaw

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When my concentrated mind was purified, I directed it to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives' The Buddha on the night of his enlightenment Associated with the living traditions of folk tale, drama and epic, the Jatakas recount the development of the Bodhisatta the being destined to become the present Buddha in his final life not just through the events of one lifetime but of hundreds. Written in Pali, the language of the Theravada Buddhist canon, the Jatakas comprise one of the largest and oldest collections of stories in the world dating from the fifth century BCE to the third century CE. Generations in South and South-East Asia have grown up with these tales. This volume contains twenty-six stories drawn from various ancient sources, and each story reflects one of the ten perfections giving, restraint, renunciation, wisdom, strength, acceptance, truthfulness, resolve, loving kindness and equanimity. A detailed introduction elaborates on the ten perfections, explains the forms of enlightenment as well as the structure, and the historical and geographical contexts of the stories. Sarah Shaw brings to life the teachings of Buddhism for the scholar and lay reader alike.

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