

THE JATAKAS TALES OF INDIA

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The Jatakas Tales of India by Ellen C. Babbitt & Ellsworth Young

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ELLEN C. BABBITT & ELLSWORTH YOUNG

**THE JATAKAS
TALES OF INDIA**

Jataka Tales

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Jataka Tales

Re-told by
Ellen C. Babbitt

With illustrations by
Ellsworth Young



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**Dedicated
to
DOT**

FOREWORD

Long ago I was captivated by the charm of the Jataka Tales and realized the excellent use that might be made of them in the teaching of children. The obvious lessons are many of them suitable for little people, and beneath the obvious there are depths and depths of meaning which they may learn to fathom later on. The Oriental setting lends an additional fascination. I am glad that Miss Babbitt has undertaken to put together this collection, and commend it freely to teachers and parents.

FELIX ADLER.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Jatakas, or Birth-stories, form one of the sacred books of the Buddhists and relate to the adventures of the Buddha in his former existences, the best character in any story being identified with the Master.

These legends were continually introduced into the religious discourses of the Buddhist teachers to illustrate the doctrines of their faith or to magnify the glory and sanctity of the Buddha, somewhat as mediæval preachers in Europe used to enliven their sermons by introducing fables and popular tales to rouse the flagging interest of their hearers.

Sculptured scenes from the Jatakas, found upon the carved railings around the relic shrines of Sanchi and Amaravati and of Bharhut, indicate that the "Birth-stories" were widely known in the third century B.C., and were then considered as part of the sacred history of the religion. At first the tales were probably handed down orally, and it is uncertain when they were put together in systematic form.