



JATAKA TALES

Collection of Buddha Fables

A god who came in different forms, in different ages, but born for one single purpose – to uphold righteousness.

The *Jataka Tales* is a collection of stories Bodhisatwa, the previous lives of Lord Buddha. Of paramount importance to the Buddhist religion and Indian literature, these stories have been a source of wisdom to the whole world. Teaching us to be fair, just and good, the *Jataka Tales* is one of the biggest contributions of Indian culture.

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COLLECTED STORIES



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Collection of Buddha Fables

Retold by Sujatha Reghunathan

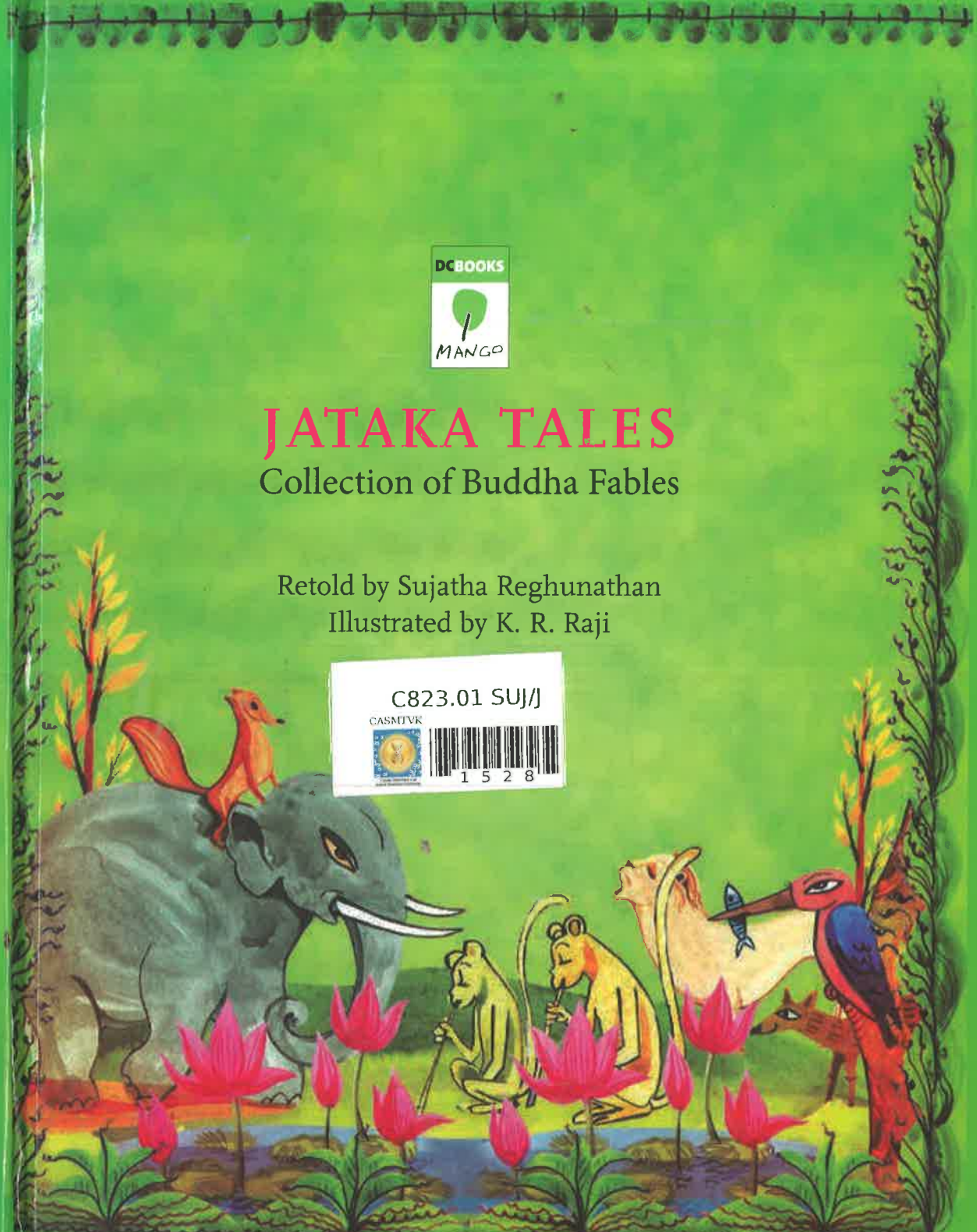
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A Collection of Buddha Fables

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PREFACE

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The *Jataka Tales* are stories from the previous births of Lord Buddha. *Jataka* means life.

Buddhists believe that before being born as Prince Siddhartha of Kapilavastu, Lord Buddha had five-hundred-and-forty-six previous lives. Even though there is some disagreement about the exact number of these previous lives, the prevalent belief is that Lord Buddha did indeed live through many.

In his previous lives, Lord Buddha was known as Bodhisatwa. Based on the karmic outcome of each life, Bodhisatwa would be a deity in one life and a human in another; a king in one life and a simpleton in another; and sometimes, he was born as a bird or an animal.

In his life as the Lord Buddha, he shared the experiences of each of these lives as Bodhisatwa with his followers. These stories became the *Jataka Tales*.

Bodhisatwa would be the hero of many of these stories. While in some others, he would play just a small part. And sometimes, he would be a mere spectator.

While the stories might seem simple, they contain moral values and lessons that could guide one in the right path and make his life worthy of having been lived.