Buddha at Bedtime

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Date

Category
Jatakas and other Indian stories.

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Remark:
The title continues: "Tales of Love and Wisdom for You to Read With Your Child to Enchant, Enlighten, and Inspire." First published in the USA and UK in 2008 by Duncan Baird. Twenty stories with lots of introduction and appendix materials. Some of the Jatakas and other fables are told straight, while others are slightly adapted, and some quite adapted. There seem to be several stories of monsters and gods transforming themselves into animals. In TT (32), the turtle calls up to ducks flying by overhead. He gets the idea to use a stick. Some children exclaim "Doesn't he look silly!" When he lands, he says "Ouch!" Moral: "If you can't say something kind, don't speak." "The Prince and the Sticky Hair" (37) urges us to transform the monster, who, as it turns out, only attacked people to stop them from attacking him. In "The Grateful Bull" (43), the bull responds to encouragement but not upbraiding. In "The Quails and the Hunter" (55), the leader has the bright idea before the flock is caught. They seem to need no rat to undo the net; they simply drop it. "The Elephant and the Dog" (48) seems to me a good-natured fable: take away a being's friend, and you make him sad. Return his friend and he will be happy. New to me and typical of these stories is "The Lion and the Jackal" (121). The story goes through several phases. In one, the jackal saves the lion and the two become fast friends. In another, the lion's wife becomes jealous of the jackal family, but, when confronted, she thinks better and life again becomes peaceful. The beginning material introduces the Buddha and his teachings, recommendations on how these stories address the needs of children, and even a recommended relaxation exercise for parents to do with children before reading the stories to or with them. The appended material includes lists of values and suggestions on "gently introducing your child to the Buddhist practice of meditation" (7).