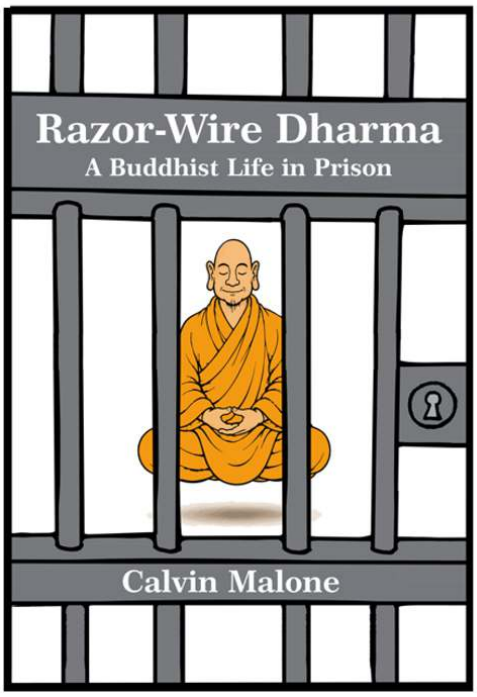
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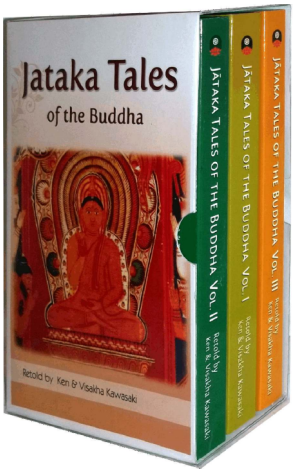
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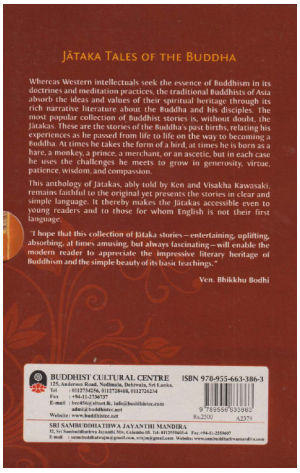
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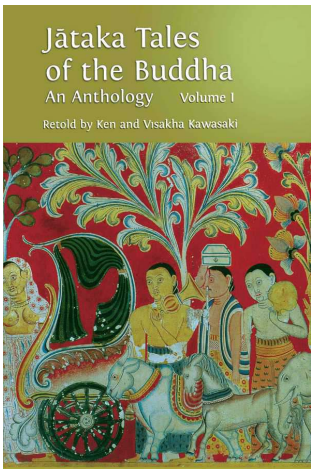


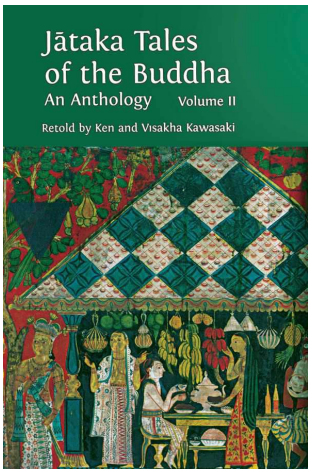


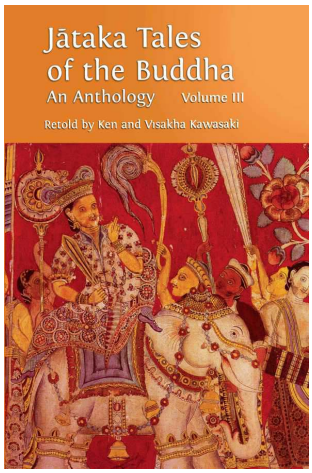
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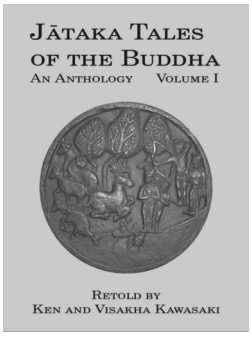
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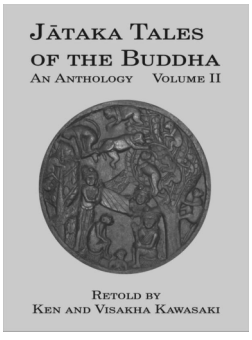
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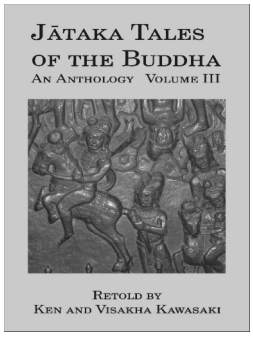
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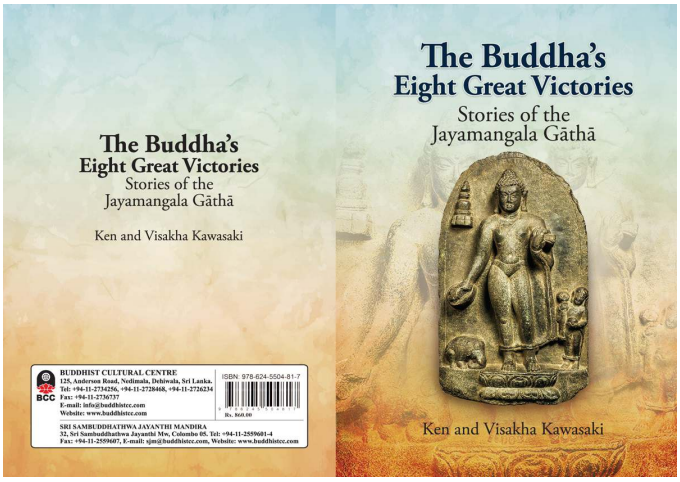




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In these stories, which inspired the popular Pali chant, the Buddha uses skillful means and non-violence to overcome the evil Mara, the vicious Angulimala, the ferocious Alavaka, and more. The Buddha's triumphs result from the marvelous, wholesome qualities which he exemplified and extolled, and which we should try to perfect in ourselves, namely, loving-kindness, compassion, generosity, courage, critical thinking, patience, and wisdom.









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1
Conquering Māra



After Prince Siddhattha, the Bodhisatta, left the palace, he practiced asceticism in Uruvela for six years as the ascetic Gotama. Having gained no satisfaction and seeing no benefit from such practice, on the Vesak full moon day, when he was thirty-five years old, he accepted a nourishing meal of rice cooked in milk from a woman named Sujata. After his meal, he accepted a gift of kusa grass from a grass cutter named Sotthiya. As he spread the grass under a Bodhi tree, a Diamond throne appeared.

He sat down on the Diamond Throne, facing east, and made a strong determination: "Even though my blood dries up, and my bones and skin waste away, I will not get up from this seat until I have attained perfect Enlightenment!" He began meditating and soon attained the tranquility of the *jhānas*. Many devas gathered around him to pay homage and to praise him for his determination.

At that time, Māra, the Evil One, seated in his abode in the highest heaven of the Sensuous World,[1] heard this determination and became both worried and angry. This mighty deva, the personification of death, realized that, if Gotama succeeded, he would free not only himself but also countless others from suffering. This would greatly weaken Māra's power over humankind.

Assuming the form of a fierce yakkha[2] with one thousand arms, each brandishing a deadly weapon, Māra mounted his elephant, Girīmekhala. Accompanied by his ten armies,[3] Māra roared loudly and stormed forward. All the other devas fled in terror.

Māra's soldiers assumed frightening forms and surrounded Gotama. They attacked him on all sides, but they could not break his concentration. All of

1. This heaven is called the Heaven of those who wield power over the creations of others *(Paranimmita-vasavatti)*.
2. A yakkha is a demon, often feeding on human flesh.
3. Māra's armies are: (1) Lust; (2) Discontent; (3) Hunger and thirst; (4) Craving; (5) Laziness; (6) Cowardice; (7) Doubt; (8) Hypocrisy and obstinacy; (9) Undeserved praise and gain; and (10) Praising oneself and looking down on others.

their dangerous weapons turned to flowers and fell at Gotama's feet. Then Māra plunged the world into absolute darkness. He created a thunderstorm and split the darkness with bolts of lightning. He first showered the meditating Gotama with ice and then with boiling water, followed by fiery hot sand and stones. He created a cyclone with a wind strong enough to uproot trees. He made the wind both foul smelling and poisonous, but Gotama remained calm and undisturbed. Failing at all of this, Māra sent his three daughters, Discontent *(Aratī)*, Passion *(Ragā)*, and Craving *(Taṇhā)*, to distract Gotama. They danced seductively, but he never looked at them. Unable to break the Bodhisatta's concentration, these beautiful young maidens changed into ugly old hags and disappeared.

Māra realized that he could neither frighten nor distract Gotama, so he decided to tempt him with a seemingly irresistible offer. "Gotama!" He shouted. "I will make you king of the entire world. You will have unlimited power, and you will enjoy unlimited pleasures. All you have to do is abandon your quest."

Gotama replied that his attainments were already greater than anything Māra could offer. In desperation, Māra asked what right Gotama had to sit on the Diamond Throne. All of Māra's soldiers again rushed forward to push Gotama from his seat. Gotama calmly touched the earth with the middle finger of his right hand.[4] The deva of the earth appeared and testified

4. In Buddhist art, this hand gesture is called "Earth Witness."

that the Bodhisatta had fulfilled the Ten Perfections[5] during his previous lives.

As proof of the Bodhisatta's virtue, this deva, who is sometimes called Mother Earth, wrung out her hair, releasing a great flood. From her hair flowed all the water which Prince Vessantara had poured in his innumerable acts of generosity.[6] There was so much water that it washed away Māra's armies. This perfect generosity was too much for Māra. He surrendered and paid homage to the Bodhisatta. As the sun was setting, all the devas joyfully returned and gathered around the Bodhisatta to celebrate his victory.

As the full moon arose, the Bodhisatta continued meditating and made even greater attainments. During the night, he recalled all his past lives. Then he saw the kamma[7] and rebirth of all living beings in *saṁsāra*, the round of existence. Finally, at dawn, having destroyed all his mental defilements, he attained perfect Enlightenment and became the Buddha.

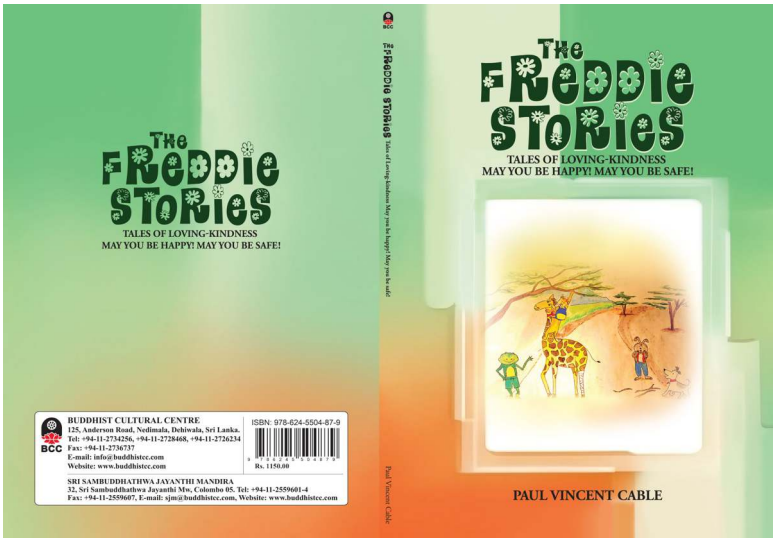
5. Generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity.
6. It was as Prince Vessantara that the Bodhisatta had spent his last life on earth. It was during this life that he supremely developed the Perfection of Generosity.
7. Kamma refers to intentional action or deeds. The law of kamma states that wholesome action *(kusala kamma)* produces favorable results *(kusala vipaka)* and that unwholesome action *(akusala kamma)* produces unfavorable results *(akusala vipaka)*.



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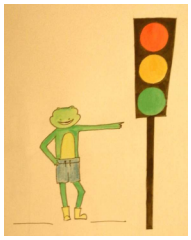
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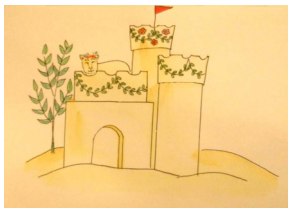


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1
Robbie Doesn't Know How to Write

It was the very first day of school for Freddie the Frog, Leoni the Lion, Donnie the Dog, and Robbie the Rabbit. They didn't know each other, and they didn't know anybody there. Ms Winnie, their teacher, who always had a huge smile on her face, was really nice, but, still, Freddie, Leoni, Donnie, and Robbie all felt pretty lonely.

After morning assembly, it was break time. Freddie was standing in one corner of the playground. Donnie was in another. Leoni was in another. And Robbie was in another. They were all too shy to talk to anyone or each other.



1

Leoni looked especially sad at being all alone, so Freddie walked over and said, "Hi, I'm Freddie. Let's be friends."



Leoni lit up in happiness and introduced herself. "Thank you, Freddie," she said. "Before, I was feeling lonely, but now I feel much better. My name is Leoni."

Freddie said, "Why don't we help the others, too?" Together they walked over to Donnie and then Robbie, and before long, all four of them were friends. The bell rang at the end of the break, and they wandered inside together.

"Wow! This is so great!" said Donnie. "At the beginning of break time, we were all alone, and now we're friends!"

"Yes, exactly," replied Freddie.

"I've a feeling we're going to have some adventures together," he said, laughing.



2



When class started, Ms Winnie announced that they were going to learn how to hold a pencil and to write their own names. The friends were very excited. They had never written anything before. Ms Winnie held up a huge pencil and showed the whole class how to hold a pencil.

Freddie, Donnie, and Leoni managed it with no problem, but every time Robbie tried, he dropped the pencil. He tried and tried and tried, but it was no good.

The tenth time he tried, the pencil fell on the floor and rolled around. Robbie was so sad that big tears started to roll down his face.



Ms Winnie was busy helping some others, and she didn't notice, but Freddie saw what was happening. He leaned over to Robbie and whispered, "Don't worry! We're your friends, and we will help you. May you be happy! May you be safe!"

Robbie stopped crying and whispered back, "Thank you!"

3

After school, the four new friends walked home together through the forest. Freddie lent Robbie his pencil, and he, Donnie, and Leoni took turns helping Robbie hold it. By the time they were nearly home, Robbie could easily hold the pencil exactly the way Ms Winnie had showed them. He was so happy that he turned three cart wheels, shouting,"I can do it! I can do it! I can do it!"

When he arrived home, Robbie said, "Mummy, there's something I need to do. Can you help me?"

"Of course," she said with a smile, and they sat down to work together before dinner time.

The next morning, as the friends arrived at school, Robbie stopped them and said, "I have something for you."

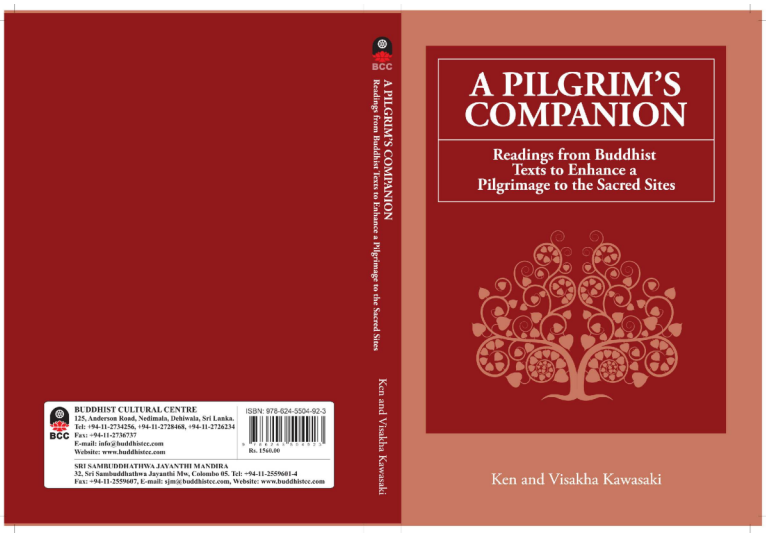
He gave them each a piece of paper with a beautiful picture of a heart. "Thank you so much for being my friends!" he said to them all. "I could draw this last night because you all helped me hold my pencil."

"May you be happy! May you be safe!" replied Freddie, as they all smiled at each other.

THE END



4



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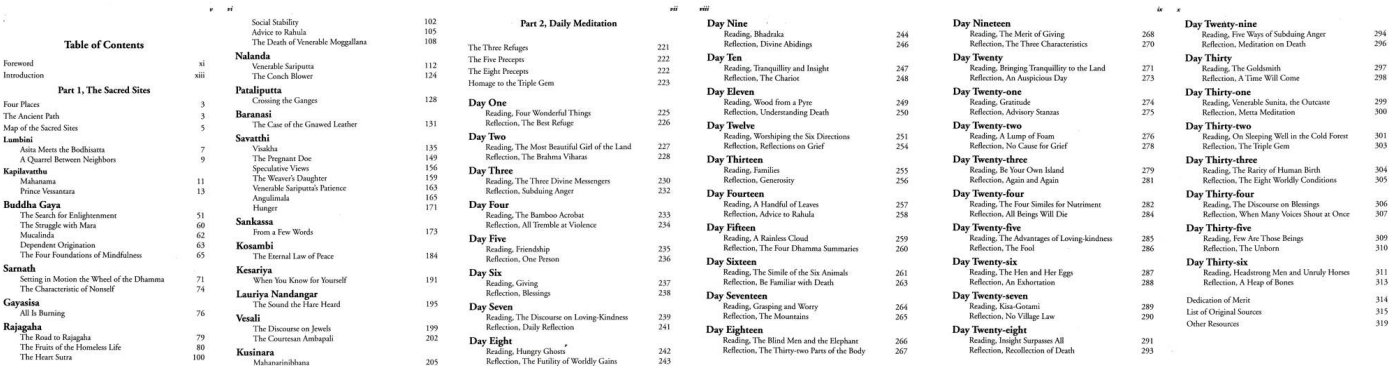


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The Sacred Sites

Lumbini

Asita Meets the Bodhisatta

One afternoon, the accomplished sage, Asita, used his supernatural powers to go to Tavatimsa. There he found the celestial city beautifully decorated and the thirty-three gods gathered in happy celebration, with banners flying and music playing. Seeing the gods' excitement, Asita respectfully asked why they were so joyful.

"In a village called Lumbini, in the Sakyan kingdom," answered one of the devas, "a Bodhisatta has been born! A being intent on Buddhahood has been born, a being without comparison, a precious pearl of goodness in the human world. That's why we're so glad! Of all beings, this one is the hero! This is the one who will set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma!"

When he heard this news, Asita left Tavatimsa and went directly to the palace of the Sakyans, where, long before, he had been spiritual advisor to the present king's father. As soon as he met King Suddhodana, he asked to see the prince.

The baby was beautiful; his body glowed like molten gold just poured from a crucible. To see the prince was to see brightness, and the sage was thrilled. The king lifted his son to have him pay respects to the sage, but, as he did so, the baby's feet turned up and touched the sage's head. Asita understood that that meant that there was no one deserving the infant's reverence. Recognizing all the signs of greatness in the baby, Asita proclaimed, "There is nothing to compare with this! Here is the ultimate! This is the perfect man!"

Suddenly, he began weeping. This so alarmed the king and queen that they asked, "Is the prince in danger?"

"No," Asita reassured them, with a smile. "There is no threat to the prince's life. In fact, for him, there won't be any obstacles at all. There cannot be any danger to him; he is not an ordinary being. This prince will reach the fulfilment of perfect Enlightenment."

"Then why did you shed tears just now, great sage?" the king asked.

"I do not have much longer to live. I will die too soon to see this man of unparalleled greatness teach the truth of how things are. Because I will be reborn in the formless realm, I will be unable to benefit from his liberating teaching. That's why I wept."

The Sakyans were relieved that the baby faced no danger and thrilled to hear Asita's predictions of the infant's future greatness.

As Asita was leaving the palace, he stopped to see his nephew, Nalaka, and, full of compassion, he told him about the baby. "For your own benefit," he urged Nalaka, "give up your fortune immediately, become an ascetic, and keep yourself in readiness. One day, you will hear talk about a Buddha, a man who has attained supreme Enlightenment. When you hear this, don't hesitate. Go and learn the details of his teaching. Find this Master, live with him, and follow his discipline."

Nalaka did as his uncle advised, and, helped by the merit he had accumulated by performing wholesome deeds, he remained alert and restrained, waiting to hear of the appearance of a Buddha in the world. In time, the news did come, and Nalaka set out to find the Enlightened One He arrived in Isipatana seven days after the Buddha had delivered the First Sermon in the deer park. After taking refuge in the Buddha, Nalaka was ordained and returned to the Himavat, where he stayed alone in the forest and, in no long time, attained arahatship. After his death, the Buddha visited that place with a group of bhikkhus, cremated Nalaka's body, and had a stupa built over the remains.

–Sutta Nipata 3, 11, and Vessantara Jataka

Daily Meditation

Day Five
Reading
Friendship

Once, in the Sakyan country, Venerable Ananda said to the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, good friendship is half of the holy life."

"Not so, Ananda!" the Buddha replied. "Good friendship is the entire holy life.

"When one has a good friend, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path–Right view, Right intention, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, and Right concentration–each stage is based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release.

"By relying upon me as a good friend, Ananda, beings are freed from birth, from aging, from illness, from death, and from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair. Thus, Ananda, it may be understood how the entire holy life is good friendship.

"Therefore, you should train yourself thus: 'I will be one who has good friends.'

"When you have good friends, you should dwell with one thing for support: diligence in wholesome states–avoiding unwholesome states not yet arisen, abandoning unwholesome states already arisen, developing wholesome states, and maintaining wholesome states.

"When you are thus dwelling diligently, those around you will think, 'Let us also dwell diligently, with diligence for support.'

"In this way, you will be guarded and protected."

–Samyutta Nikaya 3, 18

Reflection
One Person

There is one person whose birth into the world is for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, for the good, the welfare, and the happiness of devas and humans, out of compassion for the world.

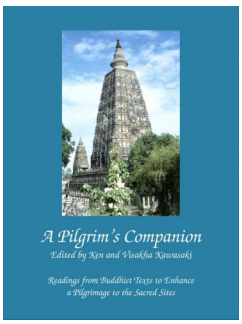
There is one person whose presence is hard to encounter in the world, whose teaching is seldom heard, and whose face is rarely gazed upon.

There is one person whose appearance in the world is unique, unequaled, incomparable, unparalleled, without counterpart, matchless, unrivaled, and who lifts up the hearts of devas and humans.

The passing away of one person from the world is regretted by the many and causes sorrow. Even though he admonished, "After I have passed away, let the Dhamma be your teacher," still his passing away is regretted.

Who is that person? It is the Tathagata, the Arahat, the fully Enlightened Buddha.

–Anguttara Nikaya 1,13



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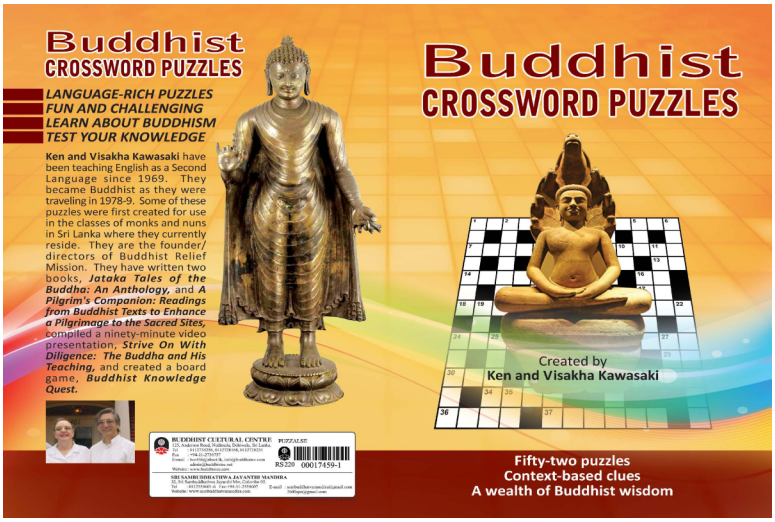
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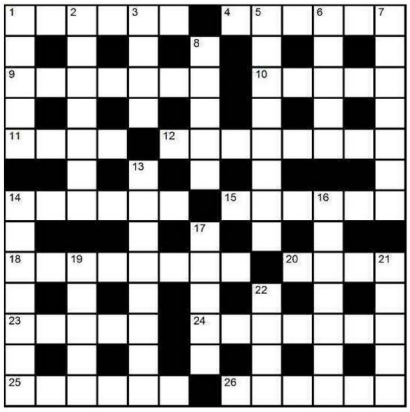
4

Across

1. King Pasenadi's _____, Ven. Sumana, attained arahatship, and the king built a nunnery for her and other bhikkhunis in front of Jetavana. [sibling]
4. Ciñca-Manavika tried to _____ the Buddha by claiming that he had made her pregnant. [slander]
9. For the arahat, there is no more _____. [new life]
10. Virtuous acts can help to weaken the effect of past kamma, but cannot _____ it. [wipe out]
11. The six senses are the five ordinary senses _____ consciousness. [in addition to]
12. One should establish oneself in _____ before beginning meditation. [virtue]
14. In the Sujata Jataka, the grieving landowner rushed to his son and cried, "What are you doing? The ox _____ _____. It cannot eat! It cannot drink!" (*2 words*) [2, 4]
15. "Even though you have good intentions, if you _____ _____ of delusion, you may end up causing harm." (*Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo*) (*2 words*) [3, 3]
18. Every _____ (*kalapa*) of matter is composed of the four primary elements of earth, water, air and fire, and of the secondary elements of color, odor, taste, and nutriment. (*Abhiddhamma*) [minute piece]
20. "Wherever that flayed cow stands, the creatures living there will nibble _____ _____." (*Puttamansa Sutta, Samyutta Nikaya 12, 63*) (*2 words*) [2, 2]
23. Upatissa (Venerable Sariputta) waited until Venerable Assaji had _____ his meal to approach him.[consumed]
24. "As from a great heap of _____ many garlands can be made, even so should many good deeds be done by one born a mortal." (*Dhammapada 53*) [blossoms]
25. Right speech is _____ at the right time, in truth, affectionately, beneficially, and with a mind of good-will. [uttered]
26. The expression on the face of an image of the Buddha is always _____. [calm]

Down

1. A bhikkhu often carries his bowl in an almsbowl holder with a _____ slung over his shoulder. [band of leather or cloth]
2. Ven. Moggallana _____ the mighty serpent Nandopananda by using extraordinary powers. (*Jayamangala Gatha*) [tamed]
3. After the Buddha had accepted Brahma Sahampati's request that he teach the Dhamma, he replied, "Open are the doors to the Deathless for those with _____. Let them show their faith." (*Ariyapariyesana Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya 26*) [auditory organs]
5. The Sukhothai Buddha has been described as having a boneless, weightless _____. (*See photo*) [refined grace]
6. Alavaka's mansion and banyan tree were near the city of _____. [*place name*]
7. The Buddha said, "This man, in five hundred successive states of existence, was reborn as a snake and fell asleep; not _____ _____ is he sated with sleep." (*Dhammapada Commentary on Verse 251*) (*2 words*) [4, 3]
8. Rare, indeed, is human birth. Don't _____ away this chance. [cast]

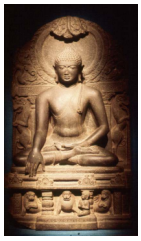


13. "_____ leads to Nibbana" is an old Burmese saying. [forbearance]
14. The Buddha did not permit bhikkhus to use their extraordinary powers simply to _____ other people. [produce a vivid effect on]
16. When asked why he lives in the forest, far from the town, a bhikkhu might reply, "I came _____ _____ so that I could meditate in silence." (*2 words*) [this far]
17. Before bowing at the Buddha's feet, Angulimala hurled his weapons over a _____. [precipice]
19. I wonder what the _____ of sangha to laypeople is in an ideal society. [proportion]
21. "A fool, even though he is associated with a wise man all his life, does not understand the Dhamma, just as a ladle does not know the _____ of soup." (*Dhammapada 64*). [flavor]
22. It is customary to offer a _____ to the Sangha in the Kathina ceremony at the end of the rains retreat. [garment]









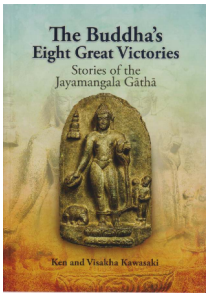






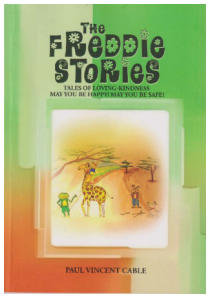


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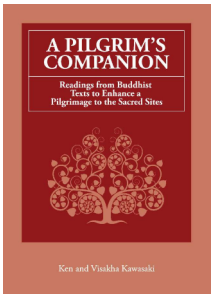
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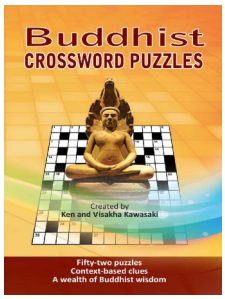
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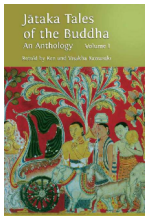
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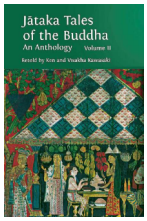


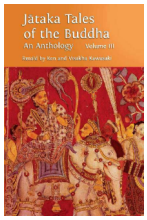
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