



# Passing the Test

## A Jataka Tale<sup>1</sup>

The Bodhisattva<sup>2</sup> was once born as the son of a learned Brahmin (Indian priest) and was sent to a teacher for education as was the custom in those days. To test his students, the teacher lamented about his own poverty and asked his students to steal for him. He said, “The only way to become rich and get rid of poverty in a short time is to steal.” All the students, except the Bodhisattva, began planning how and what they were going to steal for their teacher. The Bodhisattva sat with downcast eyes feeling ashamed of what was going on. Seeing him, his teacher came up to him and accused him of being indifferent to his plight. At this, the Bodhisattva humbly replied that he sympathised with him and was willing to do anything to help. The teacher was pleased with his reply and hugged him, saying, “Well said, my son! You are indeed a virtuous soul and have passed my test.”

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Jataka tales’ are the accounts of the Buddha’s former lives.

<sup>2</sup> Here ‘Bodhisattva’ refers to Buddha himself in one of his former lives. A ‘Bodhisattva’ is someone who has aroused the compassionate wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings and also wishes to bring them to that state.