



# ***Selected Stories from the Sutra of the Wise and Foolish***

**This Sutra is a very popular  
Buddhist Sutra talking  
about Karmic causes and  
effects.**

**It contains 51 stories in the  
Tibetan version. It is widely  
translated in Chinese and  
Mongolian.**

# **The Beggar Woman called “Relying on Joy”**

**Once, the Buddha and his assembly passed by. Kings, princes and ordinary people offered to the Buddha’s passing assembly.**

**A poor old woman was so sad. She thought, “I am so poor that I cannot even buy oil to offer a single lamp for the Buddha.”**

**Her money was not enough to buy her oil. Pitying her, an oil merchant gave her some oil. The woman then lighted this lamp and aspired, “I can only offer this lamp. By the virtue of this, may I be endowed with the light of wisdom in a future life.**

**May I purify the defilements of all sentient beings and enlighten them.”**

**The next morning, the Arhat Maudgalyayana woke up for alms-round. He saw a lamp in the monastery still burning. He tried to extinguish this lamp. But he cannot.**

**The Buddha watched him and said, “You cannot move this lamp, much less extinguish it. No Sravaka can extinguish it. Because it was offered with a mind of firm faith and it is of great benefit.”**

**The woman then appeared and requested for ordination. The Buddha accepted her request. He prophesized that she will become a Buddha called “Light of the Lamp” after two eons.**

**Ananda then asked, “Lord, what former cause made this woman a beggar? What former cause so that she is now a part of the**

**monastic order and will be enlightened in the future?**

**The Buddha said, “In times long past, Buddha Kasyapa appeared on earth. There was a wife of a prince who invited this Buddha to her home.**

**However, Buddha Kasyapa and his assembly first visited the home of a poor woman. This wealthy woman became angry.**

**Due to that thought of anger towards the Buddha, she was reborn in a poor condition for five hundred lives.**

**However, because she still invited the Buddha and his assembly to her house with faith and made offerings, she has now met me, joined the monastic order, and received the prophecy.”**

# **The Seven Sons of Minister Mrgara**

**King Prasenajit had a minister named Mrgara. This wealthy and virtuous minister's seven sons were handsome and comely. Only the youngest one had not been married.**

**One day, a beautiful and wise woman was married to him. They bore 32 sons. Each son was stronger than a thousand men.**

**The father was proud of them. But the townspeople feared them.**

**One day, a minister held a grudge against the sons. He accused them of plotting to kill the king. The king believed this and had the 32 men executed. Their heads were kept in a box and sent to their mother.**

**At that time, the boys' mother invited the Buddha. The box arrived. The Buddha knew what was inside the box, so he told her to open it after their meal.**

**After the meal, the Buddha taught thus,**

***“This body is impermanent. It is subject to suffering. It is tortured by misery, and bound to the defilements... This body is useless and without profit. He who understands this is wise.”***

**Hearing this with faith, the mother attained the state of a Non-returner. When she opened the box, she felt no anguish seeing the heads of her 32 sons. She said, “When a son is born, death is inescapable.”**

**Ananda then asked the Buddha, “Lord, what was the former cause of this horrendous act?”**

**The Buddha replied, “This is not the first time that King Prasenajit killed these boys. In eons long past, there was a group of 32 men who were**

**devoted to each other. Once, they met an old beggar woman. They killed a cow and shared the meat to this woman.**

**The cow said, “If you kill me now, may I kill you in future times!”**

**The old woman rejoiced at the killing and enjoyed the meat.**

**That cow is King Prasenajit, the 32 men are the 32 boys, and this woman is that beggar. The result is that for 500 lifetimes, the 32 have been killed, and this woman had to suffer their deaths as their mother.”**

**However, since she was able to meet me now, earned merit and attained the state of a Non-Returner, her suffering from attachment has ceased in this life.”**

**Ananda then asked, “What is the reason for the mother to have met you and received the Dharma?”**



**What is the reason for them to be born wealthy and very strong?**

**The Buddha said, “In eons long past, Buddha Kasyapa appeared in this world. A woman greatly venerated the Three Jewels. She also constantly annointed the Buddha’s stupa with oil and fragrant powder.**

**Once, 32 men appeared and helped her annoint the stupa. The old woman prayed that the 32 be born handsome, wealthy and strong.**

**In turn, the 32 men vowed to be born as her sons, meet the Buddha and hear his Dharma.**

**Due to those aspirations, they were reborn, have met me and have heard the Dharma.”**

# **The Buddha's Former Sacrifices**

**Many eons ago, the Dharma was not widely available.**

**A king searched for the Buddhadharma without success. He called near and far his kingdom for someone who can teach the Dharma. Sensing that the Dharma is in its last stages in their land, he made a decree.**

**“Whoever can teach me the Dharma, I shall give whatever he asks.”**

**One day, a Brahmin came to the palace and said, “The Dharma which I will teach is not easy to learn, nor can it be cheaply obtained.**

**“If you desire it, offer your own body, have it pierced with a thousand iron poles and burn with torches. Then, I will teach you the Dharma.”**

**The King agreed, “so be it.”**

**All of his citizens cried and wailed. They convinced the King to abandon this sacrifice.**

**But the King was stubborn, “Do not obstruct me! When Perfect Enlightenment has been obtained, I shall without fail, deliver you!” The king made such a dedication.**

**When the time has come, the King told the Brahmin, “Brahmin, I am ready. Pierce my body!” The Brahmin then got a pole, and pierced the King’s body.**

**The pole went through the King’s body.**

**The King then spoke, “Teacher, teach first the Dharma. If you pierce me with a thousand spokes, I will sure die and I will not hear the Dharma anymore.”**

**Upon hearing this, the Brahmin agreed and spoke these verses,**

***“All compounded things will disintegrate.  
What rises must fall.  
All meetings end in separation.  
What is born must die.”***

**After having spoken, the Brahmin pierced the king with the 999 remaining poles. Then all the poles were burned with torches.**

**The King made no regrets and dedicated every single pain and sacrifice so that he may achieved Enlightenment. Then, he promised to teach this same Enlightenment to all his subjects and citizens in the future.**

**That king was one of the past lives of Buddha Shakyamuni. Through that sacrifice, he earned great merit.**