



Buddhist Tales

Monkeys Wearing Caps

ONCE ON a time a nice young man used to travel from village to village, selling caps for a living. One summer afternoon when he was crossing some vast forested plains he felt tired and wanted to take a nap in the shade of a mango tree with many branches. He placed his bag of caps beside him beside the trunk and fell asleep. When he woke up in a little while, there were not any caps in his bag.

"Good grief," he said to himself, "Did thieves have to rob *me* of all people?" Then he noticed that the mango tree was full of cute monkeys wearing colorful caps. He yelled at the monkeys and they screamed back. He made faces at them and they made similar funny faces. He threw a stone at them and they showered him with raw mangoes.

"How do I get my caps back?" he said to himself. Frustrated, he took off his own cap and slammed it on the ground. To his surprise, the monkeys threw their caps too. He did not waste a moment, but collected the caps and went on his way.

Fifty years later his grandson passed through the same jungle. After a long walk he found a nice mango tree with lots of branches and cool shade, and decided to rest a while. A few hours later, when he woke up, all the caps from his bag were gone. He started searching for them and soon found some monkeys who were sitting in the mango tree wearing his caps.

Then he remembered a story his grandfather had used to tell - and waved at the monkeys. The monkeys waved back. He blew his nose and the monkeys blew their noses. He pulled his ears and the monkeys pulled their ears. He threw his cap on the ground and then one of the monkeys jumped down from the mango tree, walked up to him, slapped him on the back and said,

"Do you think only you had a grandfather?"