



more jataka tales
The Stupid Monkeys



Once upon a time a king gave a holiday to all the people in one of his cities.

The king's gardener thought to himself: "All my friends are having a holiday in the city. I could go into the city and enjoy myself with them if I did not have to water the trees here in this garden. I know what I will do. I will get the Monkeys to water the young trees for me." In those days, a tribe of Monkeys lived in the king's garden. So the gardener went to the Chief of the Monkeys, and said: "You are lucky Monkeys to be living in the king's garden. You have a fine place to play in. You have the best of food—nuts, fruit, and the young shoots of trees to eat. You have no work at all to do. You can play all day, every day. To-day my friends are having a holiday in the city, and I want to enjoy myself with them. Will you water the young trees so that I can go away?"

"Oh, yes!" said the Chief of the Monkeys. "We shall be glad to do that."

"Do not forget to water the trees when the sun goes down. See they have plenty of water, but not too much," said the gardener. Then he showed them where the watering-pots were kept, and went away.

When the sun went down the Monkeys took the watering-pots, and began to water the young trees. "See that each tree has enough water," said the Chief of the Monkeys.

"How shall we know when each tree has enough?" they asked. The Chief of the Monkeys had no good answer, so he said: "Pull up each young tree and look at the length of its roots. Give a great deal of water to those with long roots, but only a little to those trees that have short roots."

Then those stupid Monkeys pulled up all the young trees to see which trees had long roots and which had short roots. When the gardener came back the next day, the poor young trees were all dead.

