

BUDDHA AND THE
GOSPEL OF BUDDHISM

BUDDHA AND THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHISM

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY



ASIA PUBLISHING HOUSE
BOMBAY · CALCUTTA · NEW DELHI · MADRAS

Copyright
December, 1956

 Library IAS, Shimla



00004807

PRINTED BY G. G. PATHARE AT THE POPULAR PRESS (BOM.) PRIVATE LTD., BOMBAY 7.
AND PUBLISHED BY P. S. JAYASINGHE, ASIA PUBLISHING HOUSE, BOMBAY 1

T O
A. E.



PLATE F

ROCK-CUT IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA

Chinese, Longmen, 6th century, A.D. After Cheyenne — *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*

BUDDHA AND THE
GOSPEL OF BUDDHISM



BUDDHA AND THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHISM

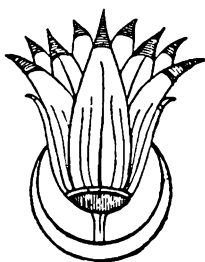
BY

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY D.Sc.

AUTHOR OF "ARTS AND CRAFTS OF INDIA AND CEYLON" "RAJPUT
PAINTING" AND "ESSAYS IN NATIONAL IDEALISM" JOINT-AUTHOR
OF "MYTHS OF THE HINDUS AND BUDDHISTS"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR BY
ABANINDRO NĀTH TAGORE C.I.E.
& NANDA LĀL BOSE

*AND THIRTY-TWO REPRODUCTIONS IN
BLACK AND WHITE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS*



NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

1916

TO
A. E.

PRINTED AT
THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
LONDON, ENGLAND

PREFACE

THE aim of this book is to set forth as simply as possible the Gospel of Buddhism according to the Buddhist scriptures, and to consider the Buddhist systems in relation, on the one hand, to the Brāhmanical systems in which they originate, and, on the other hand, to those systems of Christian mysticism which afford the nearest analogies. At the same time the endeavour has been made to illustrate the part which Buddhist thought has played in the whole development of Asiatic culture, and to suggest a part of the significance it may still possess for modern thinkers.

The way of the Buddha is not, indeed, concerned directly with the order of the world, for it calls on higher men to leave the market-place. But the order of the world can only be established on a foundation of knowledge : every evil is ultimately traceable to ignorance. It is necessary, then, to recognize the world for what it truly is. Gautama teaches us that the marks of this life are imperfection, transience, and the absence of any changeless individuality. He sets before us a *summum bonum* closely akin to the Christian mystic conception of 'self-naughting.' Here are definite statements which must be either true or false, and a clearly defined goal which we must either accept or refuse. If the statements be false, and if the goal be worthless, it is of the highest importance that the former should be refuted and the latter discredited. But if the diagnosis be correct and the aim worthy, it is at least of equal importance that this should be generally recognized : for we cannot wish to perpetuate as the basis of our sociology a view of life that is demonstrably false or a purpose demonstrably contrary to our conception of the good.

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

This book is designed, therefore, not as an addition to our already over burdened libraries of information, but as a definite contribution to the philosophy of life. Our study of alien modes of thought and feeling, if it is to be of any real use to us, must be inspired by other than curious motives or a desire to justify our own system. For the common civilization of the world we need a common will, a recognition of common problems, and to co-operate in their solution. At this moment, when the Western world is beginning to realize that it has failed to attain the fruit of life in a society based on competition and self-assertion, there lies a profound significance in the discovery of Asiatic thought, where it is affirmed with no uncertain voice that the fruit of life can only be attained in a society based on the conception of moral order and mutual responsibility. Let me illustrate by a single quotation the marvellous directness and sincerity of the social ethic to which the psychology of Buddhism affords its sanction: *Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy.*

Stories are told of Asiatic rulers paying the price of kingdoms for a single word of profitable counsel. One may well inquire whether any conceivable price could have been too high for Europe to have paid for a general recognition of this truth, ere now. There is, again, a passage of the Ruru-deer Jātaka which is perhaps unique in all literature in its supreme tenderness and courtesy: *For who—the Bodhisattva asks—would willingly use harsh speech to those who have done a sinful deed, strewing salt, as it were, upon the wound of their fault?*

It is with gifts such as this that Buddhism, and the Hinduism from which it issues and into which it has

Preface

again merged, stand over against the world of *laissez faire*, demanding of their followers only the abandonment of all resentment, coveting, and dulness, and offering in return a happiness and peace beyond our reasonable understanding. Can we deny that modes of thought which find expression thus must for ever command our deepest sympathy and most profound consideration? It is not possible that liberation from resentment, coveting, and dulness, should ever be ill-timed: and it is just this liberation which constitutes the ethical factor in Nibbāna, where the psychological part is self-forgetfulness.

It will be plainly seen to what extent I am indebted to the work of other scholars and students, and I wish to make a frank and grateful acknowledgment to all those from whose work I have freely quoted, particularly Professor and Mrs Rhys Davids and Professor Oldenberg, as well as to others to whom I am indebted for the use of photographs. The latter, reproduced in monochrome, illustrate the history of Buddhist art: but beside this, the work of modern Indian painters illustrating Buddhist thought and legend is reproduced in colour.

A few suggestions may be useful as a guide to pronunciation. Vowels generally are pronounced as in Italian: *a* as in *America*, *ā* as in *father*, *e* as *a* in *nave*, *i* as in *it*, *ī* as *ee* in *greet*, *o* as in *note*, *u* as *oo* in *room*, *ū* as *oo* in *boot*: *ai* has the sound of *i* in *bite*, *au* the sound of *ow* in *cow*. Every consonant is distinctly pronounced, and aspirates are distinctly heard. *C* has the sound of *ch* in *church*, while *s* in some cases has the sound of *sh*, e.g. in *Siva*, *Īśvara*, *Sankara*, etc. The accent falls on the first syllable or the third, rarely or never on the second.

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

Certain words, such as *kamma*, *Nibbāna*, *Bodhisatta*, etc., are quoted in these Pāli forms where Hīnayāna Buddhism is in question, and in the more familiar Sanskrit forms *karma*, *Nirvāna*, *Bodhisattva*, where the reference is to Mahāyāna.

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY

LONDON, *February* 8, 1916

CONTENTS

PART I : THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

PAGE

97

PART II : THE GOSPEL OF EARLY BUDDHISM

I	DHAMMA	90
II	SAMSĀRA AND KAMMA (KARMA)	104
III	BUDDHIST HEAVENS AND HOW TO REACH THEM	110
IV	NIBBĀNA	115
V	ETHICS	126
VI	CONSCIENCE	137
VII	SPIRITUAL EXERCISES	141
VIII	CONSOLATION	148
IX	THE ORDER	151
X	TOLERANCE	155
XI	WOMEN	159
XII	EARLY BUDDHISM AND NATURE	166 ✓
XIII	BUDDHIST PESSIMISM	176
XIV	A BUDDHIST EMPEROR	180

PART III : CONTEMPORARY SYSTEMS

I	VEDĀNTA	187
II	SĀMKHYA	194
III	YOGA	196
IV	BUDDHISM AND BRĀHMANISM	198

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

PART IV : THE MAHĀYĀNA	PAGE
I BEGINNINGS OF THE MAHĀYĀNA	222
II SYSTEM OF THE MAHĀYĀNA	226
III CH'AN, OR ZEN BUDDHISM	252
 PART V : BUDDHIST ART	
I LITERATURE	259
II SCULPTURE AND PAINTING	323
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	347
 GLOSSARY	351
 INDEX	359

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE	<i>Facing page</i>
A THE FORTY-NINE DAYS (CEYLON)	36
B THE FIRST SERMON (SĀRNĀTH)	38
C THE FIRST SERMON (NEPAL)	40
D THE BUDDHA TEACHING (JAPAN)	42
E STANDING IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA (MATHURĀ)	46
F ROCK-CUT IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA (LONG-MEN, CHINA)	52
G STANDING IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA WITH ATTENDANTS (CHINESE)	66
H THE QUELLING OF MĀLĀGIRI (AMARĀVATĪ)	68
J THE DEATH OF THE BUDDHA (POLONNĀRUVA)	80
K THE BUDDHA IN ŚAMĀDHI (ANURĀDHAPURA)	146
L BUDDHIST MONK (CHINESE)	152
M MONASTERY AND TEMPLE-COURT (CHINESE)	154
N BUDDHIST TEMPLES IN CEYLON	156
O SĀNCĪ STŪPA AND GATEWAY	184
P CAPITAL OF ASOKA COLUMN (SĀRNĀTH)	186
Q LAY-WORSHIPPERS AT A BUDDHA SHRINE (AMARĀVATĪ)	224
R AVALOKITESVARA (NEPAL)	230
S MAITREYA (CEYLON)	236
T MĀRA'S BATTLE AND A BUDDHIST LIBRARY (CEYLON)	262
U THE BUDDHA TEACHING (LAOS)	274

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

PLATE		<i>Facing page</i>
W	YAKKHĪ AND NĀGARĀJA (BHARHUT)	322
X	YAKKHĪ (SĀNCĪ)	324
Y	STANDING IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA (ANURĀDHAPURA)	326
Z	IMAGES OF THE BUDDHA AND OF BODHISATTVAS (CEYLON AND CHINA)	328
AA	THE FIRST SERMON (GANDHĀRA)	330
BB	THE BUDDHA (CAMBODIA)	332
CC	BODHISATTVA, PERHAPS AVALOKITESVARA (AJANTĀ)	334
DD	MANJUSRĪ (JAVA)	336
EE	BODHISATTVA (CHINA)	338
FF	THE BUDDHA (CHINA)	340
GG	KWANYIN (JAPAN)	342
HH	KWANYIN (CHINA)	344

LIST OF PLATES IN COLOUR

THE TEMPTATION OF BUDDHA	<i>Nanda Lāl Bose</i>	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE DEPARTURE OF BUDDHA	<i>Nanda Lāl Bose</i>	PAGE 24
SUJATA AND THE BOWL OF MILK-RICE	<i>Nanda Lāl Bose</i>	30
YASODHARĀ AND RĀHULA	<i>Nanda Lāl Bose</i>	50
BUDDHA AND ANANDA	<i>Nanda Lāl Bose</i>	76
THE FINAL RELEASE	<i>Abanindro Nāth Tagore</i>	88
THE VICTORY OF BUDDHA	<i>Abanindro Nāth Tagore</i>	126
BUDDHA AS MENDICANT	<i>Abanindro Nāth Tagore</i>	150

QUOTATIONS

*I will go down to self-annihilation and eternal death,
Lest the Last Judgment come and find me unannihilate,
And I be seiz'd and giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood.*

Blake, "Milton."

But, alas, how hard it is for the Will to sink into nothing, to attract nothing, to imagine nothing.

Let it be granted that it is so. Is it not surely worth thy while, and all that thou canst ever do?

Behmen, "Dialogues."

Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you. You must travel it for yourself.

Walt Whitman.

You cannot step twice into the same waters, for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you.

Herakleitus.

Vraiment comencent amours en ioye et fynissent en dolours.

Merlin.

By a man without passions I mean one who does not permit good and evil to disturb his internal economy, but rather falls in with whatever happens, as a matter of course, and does not add to the sum of his mortality.

Chuang Tau.

Profound, O Vaccha, is this doctrine, recondite, and difficult of comprehension, good, excellent, and not to be reached by mere reasoning, subtle, and intelligible only to the wise; and it is a hard doctrine for you to learn, who belong to another sect, to another faith, to another persuasion, to another discipline, and sit at the feet of another teacher.

'Majjhima Nikaya,' "Sutta 72."

PART I : THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

His Birth

THE name Buddha, 'the Knower,' 'the Enlightened,' 'the Wake,' is the appellation by which the wandering preaching friar Gautama became best known to his disciples. Of this man we are able to say with some certainty that he was born in the year 563 B.C. and died in 483 B.C. He was the heir of a ruling house of the Sākya, whose little kingdom, a rich irrigated plain between the Nepalese foot-hills and the river Rapti, lay to the north-east of the present province of Oudh. To the south-west lay the larger and more powerful kingdom of the Kosalas, to whom the Sākya owed a nominal allegiance. The Buddha's personal name was Siddhattha, his family name Gautama, his father's name Suddhodana, his mother's Māyā. It is only in later legend that Suddhodana is represented as a great king; most likely he was in fact a wealthy knight and land-owner. Siddhattha's mother died seven days after his birth, and her sister Mahajāpatī, another wife of Suddhodana, filled the place of mother to the young prince. He was brought up in Kapilavatthu, a busy provincial capital; he was trained in martial exercises, riding, and outdoor life generally, and in all knightly accomplishments, but it is not indicated in the early books that he was accomplished in Brāhmanical lore. In accordance with the custom of well-to-do youths, he occupied three different houses in winter, summer, and the rainy season, these houses being provided with beautiful pleasure gardens and a good deal of simple luxury. It is recorded that he was married, and had a son, by name Rāhula, who afterwards became his disciple. Siddhattha experienced the intellectual and spiritual

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

unrest of his age, and felt a growing dissatisfaction with the world of pleasure in which he moved, a dissatisfaction rooted in the fact of its transience and uncertainty, and of man's subjection to all the ills of mortality. Suddhodana feared that these thoughts would lead to the loss of his son, who would become a hermit, as was the tendency of the thinkers of the time; and these fears were well founded, for in spite of every pleasure and luxury that could be devised to withhold him, Siddhattha ultimately left his home to adopt the 'homeless life' of the 'Wanderer,' a seeker after truth that should avail to liberate all men from the bondage of mortality. Such enlightenment he found after years of search. Thereafter, during a long ministry as a wandering preacher, he taught the Four Ariyan Truths and the Eightfold Path; attracting many disciples, he founded a monastic order as a refuge for higher men, the seekers for everlasting freedom and unshakable peace. He died at the age of eighty. After his death his disciples gathered together the "Words of the Enlightened One," and from this nucleus there grew up in the course of a few centuries the whole body of the Pāli canon, and ultimately, under slightly different interpretation, the whole mass of the Mahāyāna Sūtras. That so much of the story represents literal fact is not only very possible, but extremely probable; for there is nothing here which is not in perfect accordance with the life of that age and the natural development of Indian thought. We know, for example, that many groups of wandering ascetics were engaged in the same quest, and that they were largely recruited from an intellectual and social aristocracy to whom the pretensions of Brāhmanical priestcraft were no longer acceptable, and who were no less out of sympathy with the multitudinous cults

The Legendary Buddha

of popular animism. We know the name of at least one other princely ascetic, Vardhamāna, a contemporary of the Buddha, and the founder of the monastic system of the Jainas.

The Legendary Buddha

But while it is easy to extract from the Buddhist books such a nucleus of fact as is outlined above, the materials for a more circumstantial biography of the Buddha, extensive as they are, cannot be regarded as historical in the scientific usage of the word. What is, however, far more important than the record of fact, is the expression of all that the facts, as understood, implied to those to whom they were a living inspiration; and it is just this expression of what the life of Buddha meant to Buddhists, or Bauddhas, as the followers of Gautama are more properly called, that we find in the legendary lives, such as the *Lalitavistara*, which is familiar to Western readers in Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*. Here, then, we shall relate the life of Buddha in some detail, from the various sources indicated,¹ regardless of the fact that these presuppose a doctrinal development which can only have taken place after the Buddha's death; for the miraculous and mythological elements are always very transparent and artistic. The history of the Buddha begins with the resolve of the individual Brāhman Sumedha, long ago, to become a Buddha in some future birth, that he might spread abroad saving truth for the help of suffering humanity. Countless ages ago this same Sumedha, retiring one day to the upper chamber of his house, seated himself and fell into thought: "Behold, I am subject to birth, to

¹ Chiefly the *Nidānakathā* (introduction to the Pāli Jātakas), the *Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta*, and the *Lalitavistara*.

Buddha ☸ the Gospel of Buddhism

decay, to disease, and to death; it is right, then, that I should strive to win the great deathless Nibbāna, which is tranquil, and free from birth and decay, sickness, and woe and weal. Surely there must be a road that leads to *Nibbāna* and releases man from existence.” Accordingly, he gave away all his wealth and adopted the life of a hermit in the forest. At that time Dīpankara Buddha appeared in the world, and attained enlightenment. It happened one day that Dīpankara Buddha was to pass that way, and men were preparing the road for him. Sumedha asked and received permission to join in the work, and not only did he do so, but when Dīpankara came Sumedha laid himself down in the mud, so that the Buddha might walk upon his body without soiling his feet. Then Dīpankara’s attention was aroused and he became aware of Sumedha’s intention to become a Buddha, and, looking countless ages into the future, he saw that he would become a Buddha of the name of Gautama, and he prophesied accordingly. Thereupon Sumedha rejoiced, and, rejecting the immediate prospect of becoming an Arahāt, as the disciple of Dīpankara, “Let me rather,” he said, “like Dīpankara, having risen to the supreme knowledge of the truth, enable all men to enter the ship of truth, and thus I may bear them over the Sea of Existence, and then only let me realize Nibbāna myself.”

Incarnation of the Buddha

When Dīpankara with all his followers had passed by Sumedha examined the Ten Perfections indispensable to Buddhahood, and determined to practise them in his future births. So it came to pass, until in the last of these births the Bodhisatta was reborn as Prince Vessantara, who exhibited the Perfection of Supernatural Generosity, and

Incarnation of the Buddha

in due time passed away and dwelt in the Heaven of Delight. When the time had come for the Bodhisatta to return to earth for the last time, the deities of the ten thousand world-systems assembled together, and, approaching the Bodhisatta in the Heaven of Delight, said: "Now has the moment come, O Blessed One, for thy Buddhahood; now has the time, O Blessed One, arrived!" Then the Bodhisatta considered the time, the continent, the district, the tribe, and the mother, and, having determined these, he assented, saying: "The time has come, O Blessed Ones, for me to become a Buddha." And even as he was walking there in the Grove of Gladness he departed thence and was conceived in the womb of the lady Mahā Māyā. The manner of the conception is explained as follows. At the time of the midsummer festival in Kapilavatthu, Mahā Māyā, the lady of Suddhodana, lay on her couch and dreamed a dream. She dreamt that the Four Guardians of the Quarters lifted her up and bore her away to the Himālayas, and there she was bathed in the Anotatta lake and lay down to rest on a heavenly couch within a golden mansion on Silver Hill. Then the Bodhisatta, who had become a beautiful white elephant, bearing in his trunk a white lotus flower, approached from the North, and seemed to touch her right side and to enter her womb. The next day when she awoke she related the dream to her lord, and it was interpreted by the Brāhmins as follows: that the lady had conceived a man-child who, should he adopt the life of a householder, would become a Universal Monarch; but if he adopted the religious life he would become a Buddha, removing from the world the veils of ignorance and sin.

It should be told also that at the moment of the incarnation the heavens and the earth showed signs, the

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

dumb spake, the lame walked, all men began to speak kindly, musical instruments played of themselves, the earth was covered with lotus flowers, and lotuses descended from the sky, and every tree put forth its flowers. From the moment of the incarnation, moreover, four angels guarded the Bodhisatta and his mother, to shield them from all harm. The mother was not weary, and she could perceive the child in her womb as plainly as one may see the thread in a transparent gem. The Lady Mahā Māyā carried the Bodhisatta thus for ten lunar months; at the end of that time she expressed a wish to visit her family in Devadaha; and she set out on the journey. On the way from Kapilavatthu to Devadaha there is a pleasure-grove of Sāl-trees belonging to the people of both cities, and at the time of the queen's journey it was filled with fruits and flowers. Here the queen desired to rest, and she was carried to the greatest of the Sāl-trees and stood beneath it. As she raised her hand to take hold of one of its branches the pains came upon her, and so standing and holding the branch of the Sāl-tree she was delivered. Four Brahmā angels received the child in a golden net, and showed it to the mother, saying: "Rejoice, O Lady! a great son is born to thee." The child stood upright, and took seven strides and cried: "I am supreme in the world. This is my last birth: henceforth there shall be no more birth for me!"

At one and the same time there came into being the Seven Connatal Ones, viz., the mother of Rāhula, Ānanda the favourite disciple, Channa, the attendant, Kanthaka, the horse, Kāludāyī, the minister, the great Bodhi tree, and the vases of Treasure.

Kāla Devala

Kāla Devala

When the Bodhisatta was born there was great rejoicing in the heaven of the Thirty-three Gods. At that time also a certain hermit by name Kāla Devala, an adept, sat in trance, visiting the heaven of the Thirty-three, and seeing the rejoicing he learnt its cause. Immediately he returned to earth, and repaired to the palace, asking to see the new-born child. The prince was brought in to salute the great adept, but he rose from his seat and bowed to the child, saying: "I may not work my own destruction"; for assuredly if the child had been made to bow to his feet, the hermit's head would have split atwain, so much had it been against the order of nature. Now the adept cast backward and forward his vision over forty æons, and perceived that the child would become a Buddha in his present birth: but he saw that he himself would die before the Great Enlightenment came to pass, and being reborn in the heaven of No-form, a hundred or even a thousand Buddhas might appear before he found the opportunity to become the disciple of any; and seeing this, he wept. He sent, however, for his nephew, then a householder, and advised him to become a hermit, for at the end of thirty-five years he would receive the teaching of the Buddha; and that same nephew, by name Nālaka, afterwards entered the order and became an Arahāt.

On the fifth day the name ceremonies were performed, and the child was call Siddhattha (Siddhārtha). On this occasion eight soothsayers were present amongst the Brāhmans, and of these seven foresaw that the child would become either a Universal Monarch or a Buddha, but the eighth, by name Kondañña, predicted that he would of a surety become a Buddha. This same

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

Kondañña afterwards belonged to the five who became the Buddha's first disciples.

Then the prince's father inquired: "What will my son see, that will be the occasion of his forsaking the household life?" "The Four Signs," was the answer, "a man worn out by age, a sick man, a dead body, and a hermit." Then the king resolved that no such sights should ever be seen by his son, for he did not wish him to become a Buddha, but desired that he should rule the whole world; and he appointed an innumerable and magnificent guard and retinue to protect his son from any such illuminating omens, and to occupy his mind with worldly pleasures.

Seven days after the child's birth the Lady Mahā Māyā died, and was reborn in the heaven of the Thirty-three Gods, and Siddhattha was placed in the charge of his aunt and stepmother the Matron Gautamī. And now came to pass another miracle, on the occasion of the Ploughing Festival. For while the king was inaugurating the ploughing with his own hands, and the nurses were preparing food, the Bodhisatta took his seat beneath a Jambu-tree, and, crossing his legs like a yogī, he exercised the first degree of contemplation; and though time passed, the shadow of the tree did not move. When the king beheld that miracle he bowed to the child, and cried: "This, dear one, is the second homage paid to thee!"

As the Bodhisatta grew up his father built for him three palaces, respectively of nine, five, and seven stories, and here he dwelt according to the seasons. Here the Bodhisatta was surrounded by every luxury, and thousands of dancing-girls were appointed for his service and entertainment. Taken to the teachers of writing and the other

The Prince Marries

arts, he soon surpassed them all, and he excelled in all martial exercises.

The Prince Marries

At the age of sixteen, the king sought for a wife for his son; for by domestic ties he hoped to attach him still more to the worldly life. The prince had already experienced the desire to become a hermit. But in order, as the books say, to conform with the custom of former Bodhisattas, he consented to marry, if it were possible to find a girl of perfect manners, wholly truthful, modest, congenial to his temperament, and of pure and honourable birth, young and fair, but not proud of her beauty, charitable, contented in self-denial, tender as a sister or a mother, not desiring music, scents, festivities or wine, pure in thought and word and deed, the last to sleep and the first to rise in the house where she should dwell. Brāhmans were sent far and wide to seek for such a maiden amongst the Sākya families. At last the choice fell upon Siddhattha's cousin Yasodharā, the daughter of Suprabuddha of Kapilavatthu. And the king devised a plan to engage the young man's heart. He made ready a display of beautiful jewels which Siddhattha was to distribute amongst the Sākya maidens. So it came to pass: but when all the jewels had been bestowed, Yasodharā came late, and there was nothing left for her. Thinking that she was despised, she asked if there was no gift meant for her. Siddhattha said there was no such thought in his mind, and he sent for other rings and bracelets and gave them to her. She said: "Is it becoming for me to receive such gifts?" and he answered: "They are mine to give." And so she went her way. Then Suddhodana's spies reported that

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

Siddhattha had cast his eyes only upon Yasodharā, and had entered into conversation with her. A message was sent to Suprabuddha asking for his daughter. The answer came that daughters of the family were only given to those who excelled in the various arts and martial exercises, and “could this be the case with one whose whole life had been spent in the luxury of a palace?” Suddhodana was grieved because his son was considered to be indolent and weak. The Bodhisatta perceived his mood, and asked its cause, and being informed, he reassured his father, and advised that a contest in martial exercises should be proclaimed, and all the Sākya youths invited. So it was done. Then the Bodhisatta proved himself the superior of all, first in the arts of literature and numbers, then in wrestling and archery, and each and all of the sixty-four arts and sciences. When Siddhattha had thus shown his prowess, Suprabuddha brought his daughter to be affianced to the prince, and the marriage was celebrated with all magnificence. Amongst the defeated Sākyas were two cousins of the Buddha, the one Ānanda, who afterwards became the favourite disciple, the other Devadatta, whose growing envy and jealousy made him the life-long enemy of the victor.

The Four Signs

The Bodhisatta is never entirely forgetful of his high calling. Yet it is needful that he should be reminded of the approaching hour; and to this end the cosmic Buddhas made audible to Siddhattha, even as he sat and listened to the singing of the dancing-girls, the message—“Recollect thy vow, to save all living things: the time is at hand: this alone is the purpose of thy birth.” And thus as the

The Four Signs

Bodhisatta sat in his beautiful palaces day after day surrounded by all the physical and intellectual pleasures that could be devised by love or art, he felt an ever more insistent call to the fulfilment of his spiritual destiny. And now were to be revealed to him the Four Signs which were to be the immediate cause of the Great Renunciation. The Bodhisatta desired one day to visit the royal pleasure-gardens. His father appointed a day, and gave command that the city should be swept and garnished, and that every inauspicious sight should be removed, and none allowed to appear save those who were young and fair. The day came, and the prince drove forth with the charioteer Channa. But the Devas¹ are not to be diverted from their ends: and a certain one assumed the form of an old and decrepit man, and stood in the midst of the street. "What kind of a man is this?" said the Prince, and Channa replied, "Sire, it is an aged man, bowed down by years." "Are all men then," said the prince, "or this man only, subject to age?" The charioteer could but answer that youth must yield to age in every living being. "Shame, then, on life!" said the prince, "since the decay of every living thing is notorious!" and he turned to his palace in sadness. When all that had taken place was reported to the king, he exclaimed: "This is my ruin!" and he devised more and more amusements, music and plays calculated to divert Siddhattha's mind from the thought of leaving the world.

Again the prince drove out to visit the pleasure-gardens of Kapilavatthu: and on the way they met a sick man, thin and weak and scorched by fever. When the meaning of this spectacle was made clear by the charioteer, the

¹ Devas, the Olympian deities, headed by Sakka, who dwell in the Heaven of the Thirty-three: spiritual powers generally, 'gods.'

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

Bodhisatta exclaimed again: "If health be frail as the substance of a dream, who then can take delight in joy and pleasure?" And the car was turned, and he returned to the palace.

A third time the prince went forth, and now they met a corpse followed by mourners weeping and tearing their hair. "Why does this man lie on a bier," said the prince, "and why do they weep and beat their breasts?" "Sire," said the charioteer, "he is dead, and may never more see his father or mother, children or home: he has departed to another world." "Woe then to such youth as is destroyed by age," exclaimed the prince, "and woe to the health that is destroyed by innumerable maladies! Woe to the life so soon ended! Would that sickness, age, and death might be for ever bound! Turn back again, that I may seek a way of deliverance."

When the Bodhisatta drove forth for the last time, he met a hermit, a mendicant friar. This Bhikkhu was self-possessed, serene, dignified, self-controlled, with downcast eyes, dressed in the garb of a religious and carrying a beggar's bowl. "Who is this man of so calm a temper?" said the prince, "clothed in russet garments, and of such dignified demeanour?" "Sire," said the charioteer, "He is a Bhikkhu, a religious, who has abandoned all longings and leads a life of austerity, he lives without passion or envy, and begs his daily food." The Bodhisatta answered "That is well done, and makes me eager for the same course of life: to become religious has ever been praised by the wise, and this shall be my refuge and the refuge of others and shall yield the fruit of life, and immortality." Again the Bodhisatta returned to his palace.

When all these things had been reported to Suddhodana, he surrounded the prince's pleasure-palace by triple walls

The Great Renunciation

and redoubled the guards, and he commanded the women of the palace to exercise all their charms, to divert the prince's thoughts by music and pleasure: and it was done accordingly. And now Yasodharā was troubled by portentous dreams: she dreamed that the land was devastated by storms, she saw herself naked and mutilated, her beautiful jewels broken, the sun the moon and the stars fell from the sky and Mount Meru sank into the great deep. When she related these dreams to the Bodhisatta, he replied in gentle tones: "You need not fear. It is to the good and the worthy alone that such dreams come, never to the base. Rejoice! for the purport of all these dreams is that the bond of mortality shall be loosed, the veils of ignorance shall be rent asunder, for I have completely fulfilled the way of wisdom, and every one that has faith in me shall be saved from the three evils, without exception."

The Great Renunciation

The Bodhisatta reflected that he ought not to go forth as a Wanderer without giving notice to his father; and therefore he sought the king by night, and said: "Sire, the time is at hand for my going forth, do not hinder me, but permit me to depart." The king's eyes were charged with tears, and he answered: "What is there needful to change thy purpose? Tell me whatever thou desirest and it shall be thine, be it myself, the palace, or the kingdom." The Bodhisatta replied, "Sire, I desire four things, pray thee grant them: the first, to remain for ever in possession of the fresh colour of youth; the second, that sickness may never attack me; the third, that my life may have no term; the last, that I may not be subject to decay." When the king heard these words, he was overcome by grief, for

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

the prince desired what it was not possible for a man to bestow. Then the Bodhisatta continued: "If then I cannot avoid old age, sickness, death and decay, grant at least this one thing, that when I leave this world I may nevermore be subject to rebirth." And when the king could give no better answer, he granted his son's desire. But the next day he established an additional guard of five hundred young men of the Sākya at each of the four gates of the palace, while the Matron Gautamī established an amazon guard within; for the king would not allow his son to depart with a free will.

At the same time the captains of the Yakkhas¹ assembled together, and they said "To-day, my friends, the Bodhisatta is to go forth; hasten to do him service."

The Four Great Kings² commanded the Yakkhas to bear up the feet of the prince's horse. The Thirty-three Devas likewise assembled, and Sakka ordered their services, so that one should cast a heavy sleep on all the men and women and young men and maidens of Kapilavatthu, and another should silence the noise of the elephants, horses, camels, bulls and other beasts; and others constituted themselves an escort, to cast down a rain of flowers and perfume the air. Sakka himself announced that he would open the gates and show the way.

On the morning of the day of the going forth, when the Bodhisatta was being attired, a message was brought to him that Yasodharā had borne him a son. He did not rejoice, but he said: "A bond has come into being, a hindrance for me." And the child received the name of Rāhula or 'Hindrance' accordingly. The same day the Bodhisatta drove again in the city, and a certain noble

¹ Yakkhas, nature spirits.

² The Four Kings, Guardians of the Four Quarters.

The Great Renunciation

virgin, by name Kisā Gotamī, stood on the roof of her palace and beheld the beauty and majesty of the future Buddha as he passed by, and she made a song :

*Blessed indeed is the mother, blessed indeed the
father,*

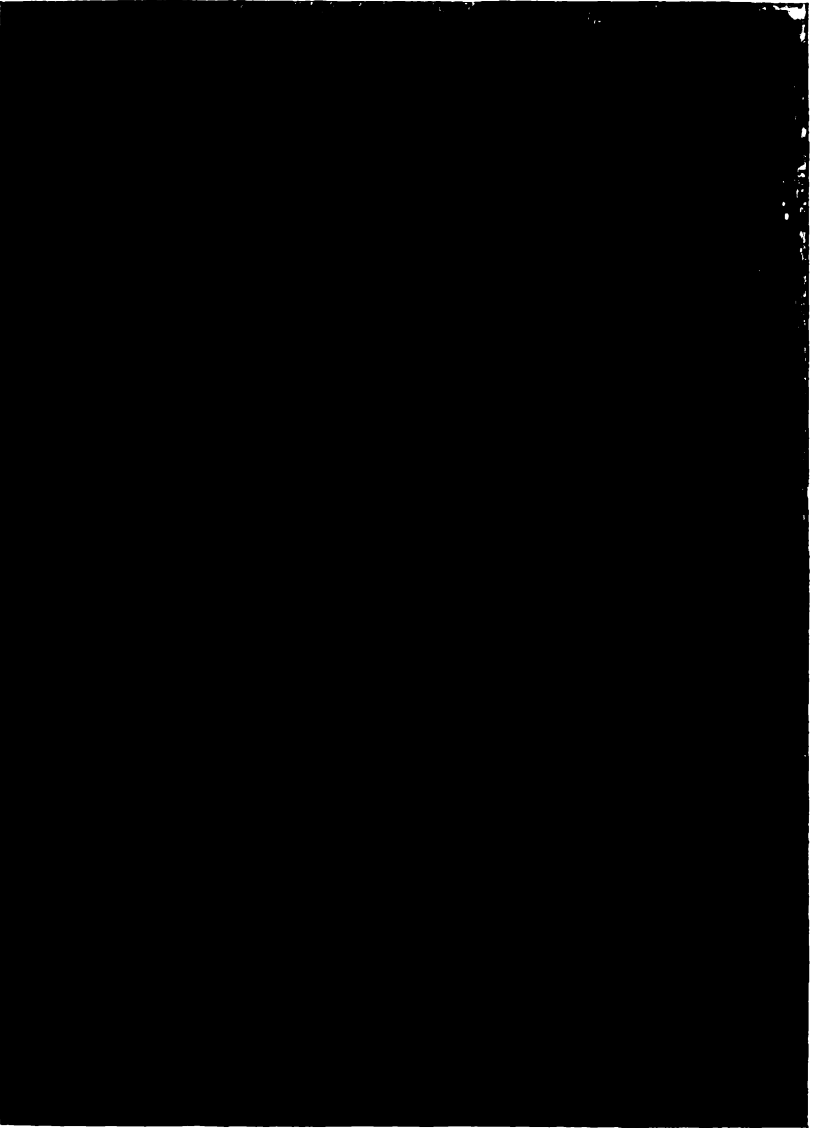
*Blessed indeed is the wife, whose is a lord so
glorious !*

On hearing this the Bodhisatta thought: "She does but say that the heart of a mother, or a father, or a wife is gladdened by such a sight. But by what can every heart attain to lasting happiness and peace?" The answer arose in his mind: "When the fire of lust is extinguished, then there is peace; and when the fires of resentment and glamour are dead, then there is peace. Sweet is the lesson this singer has taught me, for it is the Nibbāna of peace that I have sought. This day I shall relinquish the household life, nothing will I seek but Nibbāna itself." And taking from his neck the string of pearls he sent it as a teacher's fee to Kisā Gotamī. But she thought that the prince loved her, and sent her a gift because of his love. That night the singers and the dancing-girls exerted themselves to please the prince: fair as the nymphs of heaven, they danced and sang and played. But the Bodhisatta, his heart being estranged from sin, took no pleasure in the entertainment, and fell asleep. And the women seeing that he slept, laid aside their instruments and fell asleep likewise. And when the lamps that were fed with scented oil were on the point of dying, the Bodhisatta awoke, and he saw the girls that had seemed so fair, in all the disarray of slumber. And the king's son, seeing them thus dishevelled and disarrayed, breathing heavily, yawning and sprawling in unseemly attitudes,

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

was moved to scorn. "Such is the true nature of women," he thought, "but a man is deceived by dress and jewels and is deluded by a woman's beauties. If a man would but consider the natural state of women and the change that comes upon them in sleep, assuredly he would not cherish his folly; but he is smitten from a right will, and so succumbs to passion." And therewith he resolved to accomplish the Great Renunciation that very night, and at that very time, for it seemed to him that every mode of existence on earth or in heaven most resembled a delay in a house already become the prey of devouring flames; and his mind was irresistibly directed towards the state of those who have renounced the world.

The Bodhisatta therefore rose from his couch and called for Channa; and the charioteer, who was sleeping with his head on the threshold, rose and said: "Sire, I am here." Then the Bodhisatta said: "I am resolved to accomplish the Great Renunciation to-day; saddle my horse." And Channa went out to the stable and saddled Kanthaka: and the horse knew what was the reason of his being saddled, and neighed for joy, so that the whole city would have been aroused, had it not been that the Devas subdued the sound, so that no one heard it. Now while Channa was away in the stable yard, the Bodhisatta thought: "I will take one look at my son," and he went to the door of Yasodharā's chamber. The Mother of Rāhula was asleep on a bed strewn thick with jasmine flowers, and her hand was resting on her son's head. The Bodhisatta stopped with his foot upon the threshold, for he thought: "If I lift her hand to take up my son, she will awake, and my departure will be hindered. I will return and see him after I have attained enlightenment." Then he went forth, and seeing the horse ready saddled,



The Great Renunciation

he said, "Good Kanthaka, do thou save me this night, to the end that I may become a Buddha by thy help and may save the worlds of men and gods." Kanthaka neighed again, but the sound of his voice was heard by none.

So the Bodhisatta rode forth, followed by Channa: the Yakkhas bore up the feet of Kanthaka so that they made no sound, and when they came to the guarded gates the angel standing thereby caused them to open silently.

At that moment Māra the Fiend appeared in the air, and tempted the Bodhisatta, exclaiming: "Go not forth, my lord! for within seven days from this the Wheel of Sovereignty will appear, and will make you ruler of the four continents and the myriad islands. Go not forth!"

The Bodhisatta replied: "Māra! well I know that this is sooth. But I do not seek the sovereignty of the world.

I would become a Buddha, to make tens of thousands of worlds rejoice." And so the tempter left him, but resolved to follow him ever like a shadow, to lay hold of the occasion, if ever a thought of anger or desire should arise in the Bodhisatta's heart. It was on the full-moon day of Āsādhā when the prince departed from the city. His progress was accompanied by pomp and glory, for the gods and angels bore myriads of torches before and behind him, and a rain of beautiful flowers was cast down from the heaven of Indra, so that the very flanks of Kanthaka were covered. In this way the Bodhisatta advanced a great distance, until they reached and passed over the river Anomā. When they were come to the other side, the Bodhisatta alighted upon the sandy shore and said to Channa: "Good Channa, the time has come when thou must return, and take with thee all my jewels together with Kanthaka, for I am about to become a

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

hermit and a wanderer in these forests. Grieve not for me, but mourn for those who stay behind, bound by longings of which the fruit is sorrow. It is my resolve to seek the highest good this very day, for what confidence have we in life when death is ever at hand? And do you comfort the king, and so speak with him that he may not even remember me, for where affection is lost, there is no sorrow." But Channa protested, and prayed the Bodhisatta to take pity upon the king, and upon Yasodharā and on the city of Kapilavatthu. But again the Bodhisatta answered: "Even were I to return to my kindred by reason of affection, yet we should be divided in the end by death. The meeting and parting of living things is as when the clouds having come together drift apart again, or as when the leaves are parted from the trees. There is nothing we may call our own in a union that is nothing but a dream. Therefore, since it is so, go, and grieve not, and say to the people of Kapilavatthu: 'Either he will soon return, the conqueror of age and death, or he himself will fail and perish.'" Then Channa too would have become a hermit: but the Bodhisatta answered again: "If your love is so great, yet go, deliver the message, and return."

Then the Bodhisatta took the sharp sword that Channa bore and severed with it his long locks and jewelled crest and cast them into the waters: and at the moment when he felt the need of a hermit's dress, there appeared an angel in the guise of a hunter clad in the russet robes of a forest-sage and he, receiving the white muslin garments of the prince, rendered to him the dark red robes in return, and so departed.

Now Kanthaka attended to all that had been said, and he licked the Bodhisatta's feet; and the prince spoke to

The Search for the Way of Escape

him as to a friend, and said: "Grieve not, O Kanthaka, for thy perfect equine nature has been proved—bear with it, and soon thy pain shall bear its fruit." But Kanthaka, thinking: "From this day forth I shall never see my master more," went out of their sight, and there died of a broken heart and was reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three. Then Channa's grief was doubled; and torn by the second sorrow of the death of Kanthaka, he returned to the city weeping and wailing, and the Bodhisatta was left alone.

The Search for The Way of Escape

The Bodhisatta remained for a week in the Mango-grove of Anupiyā, and thereafter he proceeded to Rājagaha, the chief town of Magadha. He begged his food from door to door, and the beauty of his person cast the whole city into commotion. When this was made known to the king Bimbisāra, he went to the place where the Bodhisatta was sitting, and offered to bestow upon him the whole kingdom: but again the Bodhisatta refused the royal throne, for he had already abandoned all in the hope of attaining enlightenment, and did not desire a worldly empire. But he granted the king's request that when he had found the way, he would preach it first in that same kingdom.

It is said that when the Bodhisatta entered a hermitage for the first time (and this was before he proceeded to Rājagaha) he found the sages practising many and strange penances, and he inquired their meaning, and what was the purpose that each endeavoured to achieve and received the answer—"By such penances endured for a time, by the higher they attain heaven, and by the lower, favourable fruit in the world of men: by pain they come

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

at last to happiness, for pain, they say, is the root of merit." But to him it seemed that here there was no way of escape—here too, men endured misery for the sake of happiness, and that happiness itself, rightly understood, consisted in pain, for it must ever be subject to mortality and to rebirth. "It is not the effort itself which I blame," he said, "which casts aside the base and follows a higher path of its own: but the wise in sooth, by all this heavy toil, ought to attain to the state where nothing ever needs to be done again. And since it is the mind that controls the body, it is thought alone that should be restrained. Neither purity of food nor the waters of a sacred river can cleanse the heart: water is but water, but the true place of pilgrimage is the virtue of the virtuous man."

And now, rejecting with courtesy the king's offers, the Bodhisatta made his way to the hermitage of the renowned sage Ālāra Kālāma and became his disciple, learning the successive degrees of ecstatic meditation. Ālāra taught, it is clear, the doctrine of the Ātman, saying that the sage who is versed in the Supreme Self, "having abolished himself by himself, sees that nought exists and is called a Nihilist: then, like a bird from its cage, the soul escaping from the body, is declared to be set free: this is that supreme Brahman, constant, eternal, and without distinctive signs, which the wise who know reality declare to be liberation." But Gautama (and it is by this name that the books now begin to speak of the Bodhisatta) ignores the phrase "without distinctive signs," and with verbal justification quarrels with the animistic and dualistic terminology of soul and body: a liberated soul, he argued, is still a soul, and whatever the condition it attains, must be subject to rebirth, "and since each successive renunciation is held to be still accompanied by qualities, I

The Search for the Way of Escape

maintain that the absolute attainment of our end is only to be found in the abandonment of everything.”¹

And now leaving the hermitages of Rājagaha the Bodhisatta, seeking something beyond, repaired to a forest near to the village of Uruvelā and there abode on the pure bank of the Nairanjana. There five wanderers, begging hermits, came to him, for they were persuaded that ere long he would attain enlightenment: and the leader of these was Kondañña, the erstwhile Brāhman soothsayer who had prophesied at the festival of the Bodhisatta's name day. And now thinking: “This may be the means to conquer birth and death,” Gautama for six years practised there an austere rule of fasting and of mortification, so that his glorious body wasted away to skin and bone. He brought himself to feed on a single sesamum seed or a grain of rice, until one day, as he paced to and fro, he was overcome by a severe pain, and fainted and fell. Then certain of the Devas exclaimed “Gautama is dead!” and some reported it to Suddhodana the king at Kapilavatthu. But he replied: “I may not believe it. Never would my son die without attaining enlightenment.” For he did not forget the miracle at the foot of the Jambu-tree, nor the day when the great sage Kāla Devala had been compelled to offer homage to the child. And the Bodhisatta recovered, and stood up; and again the gods reported it to the king. Now the fame of the Bodhisatta's exceeding penances became spread abroad, as the sound of a great bell is

¹ We recognize here the critical moment where Buddhist and Brāhman thought part company on the question of the Ātman. Whether Ālāra failed to emphasize the negative aspect of the doctrine of the Brahman, or Gautama (who is represented as so far entirely innocent of Brāhmanical philosophy) failed to distinguish the neuter Brahman from the god Brahmā, we cannot tell. The question is discussed at greater length in Part III, Chapter IV. (p. 198 f.)

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

heard in the sky. But he perceived that mortification was not the road to enlightenment and to liberation—"that was the true way that I found beneath the Jambutree, and it cannot be attained by one who has lost his strength." And so again the Great Being resolved to beg his food in towns and villages, that his health and strength might be restored. This was in the thirtieth year of the life of Gautama. But the Five Disciples reflected that Gautama had not been able to attain enlightenment even by six years of the most severe austerities, "and how can he do so now, when he goes and begs in the villages and eats of ordinary food?"—and they departed from him and went to the suburb of Benares called Isipatana.

The Supreme Enlightenment

Now during the time that Gautama had been dwelling in the forest near by Uruvelā, the daughter of the village headman, by name Sujātā, had been accustomed to make a daily offering of food to eight hundred Brāhmans, making the prayer—"May the Bodhisatta at length, receive an offering of food from me, attain enlightenment, and become a Buddha!" And now that the time had come when he desired to receive nourishing food, a Deva appeared in the night to Sujātā and announced that the Bodhisatta had put aside his austerities and desired to partake of good and nourishing food, "and now shall your prayer be accomplished." Then Sujātā with all speed arose early and went to her father's herd. Now for a long time she had been accustomed to take the milk of a thousand cows and to feed therewith five hundred, and again with their milk to feed two hundred and fifty, and so on until eight only were fed with the milk of the rest, and this she called

III

SUJATA AND THE BOWL OF MILK-RICE

NANDA LĀL BOSE

Page 30



The Supreme Enlightenment

“working the milk in and in.” It was the full-moon day of the month of May when she received the message of the gods, and rose early, and milked the eight cows, and took the milk and boiled it in new pans, and prepared milk-rice. At the same time she sent her maid Punnā to the foot of the great tree where she had been wont to lay her daily offerings. Now the Bodhisatta, knowing that he would that day attain Supreme Enlightenment, was sitting at the foot of the tree, awaiting the hour for going forth to beg his food; and such was his glory that all the region of the East was lit up. The girl thought that it was the spirit of the tree who would deign to receive the offering with his own hands. When she returned to Sujātā and reported this, Sujātā embraced her and bestowed on her the jewels of a daughter, and exclaimed, “Henceforth thou shalt be to me in the place of an elder daughter!” And sending for a golden vessel she put the well-cooked food therein, and covered it with a pure white cloth, and bore it with dignity to the foot of the great Nigrodha-tree; and there she too saw the Bodhisatta, and believed him to be the spirit of the tree. Sujātā approached him, and placed the vessel in his hand, and she met his gaze and said: “My lord, accept what I have offered thee,” and she added “May there arise to thee as much of joy as has come to me!” and so she departed.

The Bodhisatta took the golden bowl, and went down to the bank of the river and bathed, and then dressing himself in the garb of an Arahāt, he again took his seat, with his face towards the East. He divided the rice into forty-nine portions, and this food sufficed for his nourishment during the forty-nine days following the Enlightenment. When he had finished eating the milk rice, he took the golden vessel and cast it into the stream, saying “If I am

Buddha ☸ the Gospel of Buddhism

able to attain Enlightenment to-day, let this pot go up stream, but if not, may it go down stream." And he threw it into the water, and it went swiftly up the river until it reached the whirlpool of the Black Snake King, and there it sank.

The Bodhisatta spent the heat of the day in a grove of Sāl-trees beside the stream. But in the evening he made his way to the foot of the tree of wisdom, and there, making the resolution: "Though my skin, my nerves and my bones should waste away and my life-blood dry, I will not leave this seat until I have attained Supreme Enlightenment," he took his seat with his face towards the East.

At this moment Māra the Fiend became aware that the Bodhisatta had taken his seat with a view to attaining Perfect Enlightenment; and thereupon, summoning the hosts of the demons, and mounting his elephant of war, he advanced towards the Tree of Wisdom. And there stood Mahā Brahmā holding above the Bodhisatta a white canopy of state, and Sakka, blowing the great trumpet, and with them were all the companies of gods and angels. But so terrible was the array of Māra that there was not one of all this host of the Devas that dared to remain to face him. The Great Being was left alone.

First of all, however, Māra assumed the form of a messenger, with disordered garments, and panting in haste, bearing a letter from the Sākya princes. And in the letter it was written that Devadatta had usurped the kingdom of Kapilavatthu and entered the Bodhisatta's palace, taken his goods and his wife, and cast Suddhodana into prison and they prayed him to return to restore peace and order. But the Bodhisatta reflected lust it was that had caused Devadatta thus to misuse the women, malice had made him imprison Suddhodana, while the Sākyas neutralized

The Supreme Enlightenment

by cowardice failed to defend their King: and so reflecting on the folly and weakness of the natural heart, his own resolve to attain a higher and better state was strengthened and confirmed.¹

Failing in this device, Māra now advanced to the assault with all his hosts, striving to overcome the Bodhisatta first by a terrible whirlwind, then by a storm of rain, causing a mighty flood: but the hem of the Bodhisatta's robe was not stirred, nor did a single drop of water reach him. Then Māra cast down upon him showers of rocks, and a storm of deadly and poisoned weapons, burning ashes and coals, and a storm of scorching sand and flaming mud; but all these missiles only fell at the Bodhisatta's feet as a rain of heavenly flowers, or hung in the air like a canopy above his head. Nor could he be moved by an onset of thick and fourfold darkness. Then finding all these means to fail, he addressed the Bodhisatta and said: "Arise, Siddhattha, from that seat, for it is not thine, but mine!" The Bodhisatta replied, "Māra! thou hast not accomplished the Ten Perfections, nor even the minor virtues. Thou hast not sought for knowledge, nor for the salvation of the world. The seat is mine." Then Māra was enraged, and cast at the Bodhisatta his Sceptre-javelin, which cleaves asunder a pillar of solid rock like a tender shoot of cane: and all the demon hosts hurled masses of rock. But the javelin hung in the air like a canopy, and the masses of rock fell down as garlands of flowers.

Then the Great Being said to Māra: "Māra, who is the witness that thou hast given alms?" Māra stretched forth his hand, and a shout arose from the demon hosts, of a

¹ Cf., "The sages of old first got Tao for themselves, and then got it for others. Before you possess this yourself, what leisure have you to attend to the doings of wicked men?"—Chuang Tzu. See also p. 126.

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

thousand voices crying: "I am his witness!" Then the Fiend addressed the Bodhisatta, and enquired: "Siddhattha! who is the witness that thou has given alms?" and the Great Being answered: "Māra thou hast many and living witnesses that thou hast given alms, and no such witnesses have I. But apart from the alms I have given in other births, I call upon this solid earth to witness to my supernatural generosity when I was born as Vessantara." And drawing his right hand from his robe, he stretched it forth to touch the earth, and said: "Do you or do you not witness to my supernatural generosity when I was born as Vessantara?" And the great Earth replied with a voice of thunder: "I am witness of that." And thereat the great elephant of Māra bowed down in adoration, and the demon hosts fled far away in dread. Then Māra was abashed. But he did not withdraw, for he hoped to accomplish by another means what he could not effect by force: he summoned his three daughters, Tanhā, Rati, and Rāga, and they danced before the Bodhisatta like the swaying branches of a young leafy tree, using all the arts of seduction known to beautiful women. Again they offered him the lordship of the earth, and the companionship of beautiful girls: they appealed to him with songs of the season of spring, and exhibited their supernatural beauty and grace. But the Bodhisatta's heart was not in the least moved, and he answered:

*Pleasure is brief as a flash of lightning
Or like an Autumn shower, only for a moment. . .
Why should I then covet the pleasures you speak of?
I see your bodies are full of all impurity:
Birth and death, sickness and age are yours.
I seek the highest prize, hard to attain by men—
The true and constant wisdom of the wise.*

The Supreme Enlightenment

And when they could not shake the Bodhisatta's calm, they were filled with shame, and abashed: and they made a prayer to the Bodhisatta, wishing him the fruition of his labour:

*That which your heart desires, may you attain,
And finding for yourself deliverance, deliver all!*¹

And now the hosts of heaven, seeing the army of Māra defeated, and the wiles of the daughters of Māra vain, assembled to honour the Conqueror, they came to the foot of the Tree of Wisdom and cried for joy:

*The Blessed Buddha—he hath prevailed!
And the Tempter is overthrown!*

The victory was achieved while the sun was yet above the horizon. The Bodhisatta sank into ever deeper and deeper thought. In the first watch of the night he reached the Knowledge of Former States of being, in the middle watch he obtained the heavenly eye of Omniscient Vision, and in the third watch he grasped the perfect understanding of the Chain of Causation which is the Origin of Evil, and thus at break of day he attained to Perfect Enlightenment. Therewith there broke from his lips the song of triumph:

*Through many divers births I passed
Seeking in vain the builder of the house.*²

¹ According to other books the temptation by the daughters of Māra is subsequent to the Supreme Enlightenment. In Plate A the Temptation by the Daughters of Māra takes place in the fifth week of the Forty-nine Days.

² The house is, of course, the house—or rather the prison—of individual existence: the builder of the house is desire (*tanhā*)—the will to enjoy and possess. See p. 97.

Buddha ☸ the Gospel of Buddhism

*But O framer of houses, thou art found—
Never again shalt thou fashion a house for me!
Broken are all thy beams,
The king-post shattered!
My mind has passed into the stillness of Nibbāna
The ending of desire has been attained at last!*

Innumerable wonders were manifest at this supreme hour. The earth quaked six times, and the whole universe was illuminated by the supernatural splendour of the sixfold rays that proceeded from the body of the seated Buddha. Resentment faded from the hearts of all men, all lack was supplied, the sick were healed, the chains of hell were loosed, and every creature of whatsoever sort found peace and rest.

The Forty-nine Days

Gautama, who was now Buddha, the Enlightened, remained seated and motionless for seven days, realizing the bliss of Nibbāna; and thereafter rising, he remained standing for seven days more, steadfastly regarding the spot where had been won the fruit of countless deeds of heroic virtue performed in past births: then for seven days more he paced to and fro along a cloistered path from West to East, extending from the throne beneath the Wisdom Tree to the place of the Steadfast Gazing; and again for seven days he remained seated in a god-wrought pavilion near to the same place, and there reviewed in detail, book by book, all that is taught in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, as well as the whole doctrine of causality; then for seven days more he sat beneath the Nigrodha tree of Sujātā's offering, meditating on the doctrine and the sweetness of Nibbāna—and according to some books it was at this time the temptation by the daughters of Māra took place;

1

2

3

4

5

6

7



PLATE A

36

THE FORTY-NINE DAYS

From an illustrated manuscript, Sinhalese (18th century)

The Forty-nine Days

and then for seven days more while a terrible storm was raging, the snake king Mucalinda sheltered him with his sevenfold hood; and for seven days more he sat beneath a Rājāyatana tree, still enjoying the sweetness of liberation.

And so passed away seven weeks, during which the Buddha experienced no bodily wants, but fed on the joy of contemplation, the joy of the Eightfold Path, and the joy of its fruit, Nibbāna.

Only upon the last day of the seven weeks he desired to bathe and eat, and receiving water and a tooth-stick from the god Sakka, the Buddha bathed his face and seated himself at the foot of a tree. Now at that time two Brāhman merchants were travelling with a caravan from Orissa to the middle country, and a Deva, who had been a blood relation of the merchants' in a former life, stopped the carts, and moved their hearts to make an offering of rice and honey cakes to the Lord. They went up to him accordingly, saying: "O Blessed One, have mercy upon us, and accept this food." Now the Buddha no longer possessed a bowl, and as the Buddhas never receive an offering in their hands, he reflected how he should take it. Immediately the Four Great Kings, the Regents of the Quarters appeared before him, each of them with a bowl; and in order that none of them should be disappointed, the Buddha received the four bowls, and placing them one above the other made them to be one, showing only the four lines round the mouth, and in this bowl the Blessed One received the food, and ate it, and gave thanks. The two merchants took refuge in the Buddha, the Norm, and the Order, and became professed disciples. Then the Buddha rose up and returned again to the tree of Sujātā's offering and there took his seat. And there, reflecting

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

upon the depth of truth which he had found, a doubt arose in his mind whether it would be possible to make it known to others: and this doubt is experienced by every Buddha when he becomes aware of the Truth. But Mahā Brahmā exclaiming: "Alas! the world will be altogether lost!" came thither in haste, with all the Deva hosts, and besought the Master to proclaim the Truth; and he granted their prayer.¹

The First Turning of the Wheel of the Law

Then he considered to whom he should first reveal the Truth, and he remembered Ālāra, his former teacher, and Uddaka, thinking that these great sages would quickly comprehend it; but upon close reflection he discovered that each of them had recently died. Then he thought of the Five Wanderers who had been his disciples, and upon reflection he saw that they were then residing in the Deer Park at Isipatana in Benares, and he resolved to go there. When the Five Wanderers, whose chief was Kondañña, perceived the Buddha afar off, they said together: "My friends, here comes Gautama the Bhikkhu. We owe him no reverence, since he has returned to a free use of the necessities of life, and has recovered his strength, and beauty. However, as he is well-born, let us prepare him a seat." But the Blessed One perceived their thought,

¹ "Great truths do not take hold of the hearts of the masses. . . . And now, as all the world is in error, I, though I know the true path—how shall I, how shall I guide? If I know that I cannot succeed and yet try to force success, this would be but another source of error. Better, then, to desist and strive no more. But if I strive not, who will?"—Chuang Tzu. It is highly characteristic of the psychology of genius that when this doubt assails the Buddha he nevertheless immediately responds to a definite request for guidance; the moment the pupil puts the right questions, the teacher's doubts are resolved.



PLATE B 38
THE FIRST SERMON, "TURNING THE WHEEL
OF THE LAW," AT BENARES
Gupta period (5th century A.D.), Sārnāth, Benares

The First Turning of the Wheel of the Law

and concentrating that love wherewith he was able to pervade the whole world, he directed it specially towards them. And this love being diffused in their hearts, as he approached, they could not adhere to their resolve, but rose from their seats and bowed before him in all reverence. But not knowing that he had attained enlightenment, they addressed him as 'Brother.' He, however, announced the Enlightenment, saying: "O Bhikkhus, do not address me as 'Brother,' for I have become a Buddha of clear vision even as those who came before."

Now the Buddha took his seat that had been prepared for him by the Five Wanderers, and he taught them the first sermon, which is called Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Law, or the Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness.

"There are two extremes which he who has gone forth ought not to follow—habitual devotion on the one hand to the passions, to the pleasures of sensual things, a low and pagan way (of seeking satisfaction), ignoble, unprofitable, fit only for the worldly-minded; and habitual devotion, on the other hand, to self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, unprofitable. There is a Middle Path discovered by the Tathāgata¹—a path which opens the eyes, and bestows understanding, which leads to peace, to insight, to the higher wisdom, to *Nirvāṇa*. Verily! it is this Ariyan Eightfold Path; that is to say Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right mode of livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Rapture.

"Now this is the Noble Truth as to suffering. Birth is

¹ That is by the Arahāt; the title the Buddha always uses of himself. He does not call himself the Buddha; and his followers never address him as such.

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving unsatisfied, that, too, is painful. In brief, the five aggregates of clinging (that is, the conditions of individuality) are painful.

“Now this is the Noble Truth as to the origin of suffering. Verily! it is the craving thirst that causes the renewal of becomings, that is accompanied by sensual delights, and seeks satisfaction, now here now there—that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the senses, or the craving for prosperity.

“Now this is the Noble Truth as to the passing away of pain. Verily! it is the passing away so that no passion remains, the giving up, the getting rid of, the emancipation from, the harbouring no longer of this craving thirst.

“Now this is the Noble Truth as to the way that leads to the passing away of pain. Verily! it is this Ariyan Eightfold Path, that is to say, Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, conduct, and mode of livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Rapture.”¹

Now of the band of Bhikkhus to whom the first sermon was thus preached, Kondañña immediately attained to the fruit of the First Path, and the four others attained to the same station in the course of the next four days. On the fifth day the Buddha summoned all five to his side, and delivered to them the second discourse called “On the Non-existence of Soul,” of which the substance is related as follows:

“The body, O Bhikkhus, cannot be the eternal soul, for it tends toward destruction. Nor do sensation, perception,

¹ Rhys Davids, *Early Buddhism*, pp. 51, 52.



PLATE C

THE FIRST SERMON, "TURNING THE WHEEL OF
THE LAW"

Nepalese gilt copper, 8th-9th century A.D.

Author's Collection

The First Turning of the Wheel of the Law

the predispositions, and consciousness together constitute the eternal soul, for were it so, it would not be the case that the consciousness likewise tends towards destruction. Or how think you, whether is form permanent or transitory? and whether are sensation, perception, and predispositions and consciousness permanent or transitory? 'They are transitory,' replied the Five. 'And that which is transitory, is it evil or good?' 'It is evil,' replied the Five. 'And that which is transitory, evil, and liable to change, can it be said that 'This is mine, this am I, this is my eternal soul?' 'Nay, verily, it cannot be so said,' replied the Five. 'Then, O Bhikkhus, it must be said of all physical form whatsoever, past or present or to be, subjective or objective, far or near, high or low, that "This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my eternal soul." ' And in like manner of all sensations, perceptions, predispositions and consciousness, it must be said, 'These are not mine, these am I not, these are not my eternal soul.' And perceiving this, O Bhikkhus, the true disciple will conceive a disgust for physical form, and for sensation, perception, predispositions and consciousness, and so will be divested of desire; and thereby he is freed, and becomes aware that he is freed; and he knows that becoming is exhausted, that he has lived the pure life, that he has done what it behoved him do, and that he has put off mortality for ever."

And through this discourse the minds of the Five were perfectly enlightened, and each of them attained to Nibbāna, so that at this time there existed five Arahats in the world, with the Buddha himself the sixth. The next day a young man of the name of Yasa, together with fifty-four companions likewise attained illumination, and thus there were sixty persons beside the Master himself,

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

who had attained to Arahatta. These sixty the Master sent forth in diverse directions, with the command: "Go forth, O Bhikkhus, preaching and teaching." But he himself proceeded to Uruvelā, and upon the way he received into the Order thirty young noblemen, and these also he sent forth far and wide. At Uruvelā the Master prevailed against three Brāhmanical ascetics, fire-worshippers, and received them into the Order with all their disciples, and established them in Arahatta. The chief of these was known as Uruvelā Kassapa. And when they were seated on the Gayā Scarp, he preached the Third Sermon called the Discourse on Fire:

"All things, O Bhikkhus are on fire. And what, O Bhikkhus, are all these things that are on fire? The eye is on fire, forms are on fire, eye-consciousness is on fire, impressions received by the eye are on fire; and whatever sensation—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—originates in the impressions received by the eye, is likewise on fire.

"And with what are all these on fire? I say with the fire of lust of resentment, and the fire of glamour (*rāga*, *dosa*, and *moha*); with birth, old age, death, lamentation, misery, grief and despair they are afire.

"And so with the ear, with the nose, and with the tongue, and in the case of touch. The mind too, is on fire, thoughts are on fire; and mind-consciousness, and the impressions received by the mind, and the sensations that arise from the impressions that the mind receives, these too are on fire.

"And with what are they on fire? I say with the fire of lust, with the fire of resentment, and the fire of glamour; with birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, and grief and despair, they are afire.

"And seeing this, O Bhikkhus, the true disciple conceives



PLATE D

THE BUDDHA TEACHING

42

Japanese lacquered wood image, 8th century. Kozan-ji Temple, Kyoto.
From the Kokka

Conversion of Sāriputta & Mogallāna

disgust for the eye, for forms, for eye-consciousness, for impressions received by the eye, and for the sensations arising therein; and for the ear, the nose, the tongue, and for the sense of touch, and for the mind, and for thoughts and mind-consciousness, impressions, and sensations. And so he is divested of desire, and thereby he is freed, and is aware that he is freed, and he knows that becoming is exhausted, that he has lived the pure life, that he has done what it behoved him to do, and that he has put off mortality for ever.”¹

And in the course of the Sermon upon Fire, the minds of the thousand Bhikkhus assembled there were freed from attachment and delivered from the stains, and so attained to Arahatta and Nibbāna.

Conversion of Sāriputta and Mogallāna

And now the Buddha, attended by the thousand Arahats of whom the chief was Uruvelā Kassapa, repaired to the Palm Grove near by Rājagaha, to redeem the promise that was made to Bimbisāra the king. When it was reported to the king: “The Master is come,” he hastened to the grove, and fell at the Buddha’s feet, and when he had thus offered homage he and all his retinue sat down. Now the king was not able to know whether the Buddha had become the disciple of Uruvelā Kassapa, or Uruvelā Kassapa of the Buddha, and to resolve the doubt Uruvelā Kassapa bowed down to the Master’s feet, saying: “The Blessed Lord is my master, and I am the disciple.” All the people cried out at the great power of the Buddha, exclaiming: “Even Uruvelā Kassapa has broken through the net of delusion and has yielded to the follower of the

¹ *Mahāvagga*, I. 21 (a summary of the version by Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 351).

Buddha ☸ the Gospel of Buddhism

Buddhas of the past!" To show that this was not the first time that Kassapa the Great had yielded to him the Blessed One recited the *Mahā Nārada Kassapa Jātaka*; and he proclaimed the Four Noble Truths. The king of Magadha, with nearly all his retinue entered the First Path, and those who did not so, became lay disciples. The king gave a great endowment to the Order, with Buddha at their head, and confirmed it by the pouring out of water. And when the Master had thus received the Bambu-grove Monastery, he returned thanks, and rose from his seat, and repaired thither. Now at this time there dwelt two Brāhmanical ascetics near to Rājagaha, by name Sāriputta and Mogallāna. Now Sāriputta observed the venerable Arahat Assaji on his begging round, and remarked the dignity and grace of his demeanour; and when the Elder had obtained alms, and was departing from the city, Sāriputta found occasion to speak with him, and enquired who was his teacher, and what the accepted doctrine. Assaji replied, "Brother, there is a great Sākya monk, to follow whom I left the world and this Blessed One is my teacher, and the doctrine I approve is his." Then Sāriputta enquired: "What then, venerable sir, is your teacher's doctrine?" "Brother," replied Assaji, "I am a novice and a beginner, and it is not long that I have retired from the world to adopt the discipline and Doctrine. Therefore I may only set forth to you the doctrine in brief, and give the substance of it in a few words." Then the venerable Assaji repeated to Sāriputta the Wanderer, the following verse:

*What things soever are produced from causes,
Of these the Buddha hath revealed the cause,
And likewise how they cease to be:
'Tis this the great adept proclaims.*

Return of the Buddha to Kapilavatthu

And hearing this exposition of the Doctrine, Sāriputta the Wanderer attained to a clear and distinct perception of the Truth that whatever is subject to origination is subject also to cessation.¹ And thus Sāriputta attained to the First Path. Then returning to Mogallāna, he repeated to him the same verse, and he too attained to the First Path. And these two, leaving their former teacher, entered the order established by the Buddha, and within a short time both attained to Arahatta, and the Master made them his Chief Disciples.

Return of the Buddha to Kapilavatthu

In the meanwhile it was reported to Suddhodana that his son, who for six years had devoted himself to mortification, had attained to Perfect Enlightenment, had set rolling the Wheel of the Law, and was residing at the Bambu Grove near by Rājagaha. And he sent a messenger with a retinue of a thousand men with the message "Your father, king Suddhodana, desires to see you." They reached the monastery at the hour of instruction, and standing still to listen to the discourse, the messenger attained to Arahatta with all his retinue, and prayed to be admitted to the Order; and the Buddha received them. And being now indifferent to the things of the world, they did not deliver the king's message. In the

¹ The most essential element of Buddhist doctrine, the full realisation of which constitutes the enlightenment of a Buddha, is here stated in the fewest possible words. The clear enunciation of the law of universal causation—the eternal continuity of becoming—is the great contribution of the Buddha to Indian thought; for it is only with comparative difficulty that the Vedānta is able to free itself from the concept of a First Cause. Assaji's verse is often called the Buddhist Confession of Faith; it is quoted in Buddhist inscriptions more frequently than any other text.

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

same way the king sent other messengers, each with a like retinue, and all of these, neglecting their business, stayed away there in silence. Then the king prevailed upon his minister Kāludāyin to bear the message, and he consented to do so only upon condition of receiving permission to become a member of the Order himself. "My friend," the king said, "thou mayst become a hermit or not, as thou wilt, only bring it about that I may see my son before I die."

Kāludāyin repaired to Rājagaha, and standing beside the disciples at the hour of instruction, he attained to Arahatta, and was received into the Order. Now at this time eight months had passed since the Enlightenment, and of this time, the first Lent or Rainy Season was spent at the Deer Park in Benares, the next three months at Uruvelā, and two months at Rājagaha. And now the cold season was over, the earth was decked with green grass, and the trees with scarlet flowers, and the roads were pleasant to the traveller. And on the full-moon day in March, Kāludāyin, a full week since his admission to the Order, spoke with the Buddha, and proposed to him that he should visit his father, who desired to see him. And the Master, foreseeing that salvation of many would result, assented, saying to Kāludāyin: "Well said, Udāyin, I shall go." For it was in accordance with the Rule that the Brethren should travel from place to place. Attended by twenty thousand well-born Arahats, and travelling each day a league, he reached Kapilavatthu in two months. But Kāludāyin went instantly through the air, and informed the king that his son had taken the road, and by praising the virtues of the Buddha every day, he predisposed the Sākyas in his favour.

The Sākyas considered what would be the most pleasant



PLATE E

STANDING IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA

Gupta period (5th century A.D.), Mathurā

Conversion of the Sākya Princes

place for his residence, and they chose the Nigrodha-grove near by the city. With flowers in their hands, and accompanied by children of the place and the young men and maidens of the royal family, they went out to meet him, and led him to the grove. But regarding him as younger than themselves, as it were a younger brother, a nephew, or a grandson, they did not bow down. But the Buddha, understanding their thoughts, performed the miracle of taking his seat upon a jewelled platform in the air, and so preaching the law. And the king seeing this wonder said: "O Blessed One, when Kāla Devala bowed down to your feet on the day of thy birth I did obeisance to thee for the first time. And when I saw that the shadow of the Jambu-tree remained motionless upon the occasion of the ploughing festival I did obeisance for the second time; and now, because of this great miracle, I bow again to thy feet." And there was not one of the Sākyas who did not bow to the Buddha's feet at the same time. Then the Blessed One descended from the air, and sat upon the throne that had been prepared for him, and there he delivered a discourse, to wit, the story of his former birth as Prince Vessantara.

Conversion of the Sākya Princes

The next day the master entered Kapilavatthu to beg his food, attended by the twenty thousand Arahats. When it was rumoured that the young prince Siddhattha was begging from door to door, the windows of the many storied houses were opened wide, and a multitude gazed forth in amazement. And amongst these was the mother of Rāhula, and she said to herself: "Is it right that my lord, who was wont to go to and from in this town in a gilded palanquin, with every sign of pomp, should now be

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

begging his food from door to door, with shaven hair and beard, and clad in russet robes?" And she reported the matter to the king. He, instantly rising, went forth to remonstrate with his son, that thus he put the Sākya clan to shame. "Do you think it impossible," said he, "that we should provide meals for all your followers?" "It is our custom, O king!" was the reply. "Not so, Master," said the king; "not one of all our ancestors has ever begged his food." "O king," replied the Buddha, "thy descent is in the succession of kings, but mine in the succession of the Buddhas: and every one of these has begged his daily food, and lived upon alms."

And standing in the middle of the street he uttered the verse:

*Arise and delay not, follow after the pure life!
Who follows virtue rests in bliss, alike in this
world and the next.*

And when the verse was finished the king attained to the Fruit of the First Path. Then the Buddha continued:

*Follow after the pure life, follow not after sin!
Who follows virtue rests in bliss alike in this
world and the next.*

And the king attained to the Fruit of the Second Path. Then the Buddha recited the *Dhammapāla Jātaka*, and the king attained to the Fruit of the Third Path. It was when he was dying that the king attained to Arahatta: he never practised the Great Effort in solitude.

Now as soon as the king had experienced the Fruit of Conversion, he took the Buddha's bowl and led the Blessed One and all his followers to the palace, and served them with savoury food.

Conversion of the Sākya Princes

And when the meal was over, the women of the house came and paid homage to the Blessed One, except only the Mother of Rāhula; but she stayed alone, for she thought, "If I have the least value in the eyes of my lord he will come himself to me, and then I will do him homage." And the Buddha went accordingly to the chamber of the Mother of Rāhula, and he was accompanied by the two chief Disciples, and he sat down on the seat prepared for him. Then the Mother of Rāhula came quickly and put her hands upon his ankles and laid her head upon his feet, and so did homage as she had purposed. Then the king said to the Blessed One, "When my daughter heard that thou hadst put on the russet robes, from that day forth she also dressed only in russet garb; and when she heard of thy one meal a day, she also took but a single meal; and when she heard that thou hadst forsaken the use of a high couch, she also slept upon a mat on the floor; and when her relatives would have received her and surrounded her with luxury, she did not hear them. Such is her goodness, Blessed One." "'Tis no wonder," said the Blessed One, "that she exercises self-control now, when her wisdom is matured; for she did no less when her wisdom was not yet matured." And he related the *Canda-kinnara Jātaka*.

On the second day the son of Suddhodana and the Lady Gautamī was to celebrate at the same time his inauguration as crown prince and his marriage with Janapada Kalyānī, the Beauty of the Land. But the Buddha went to his house, and there gave him his bowl to carry; and with a view to his abandoning the world, he wished him true happiness; and then rising from his seat he went his way. And the young man, not venturing to say to the Master, "Take back thy bowl," perforce followed

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

him to the place of his retreat: and the Buddha received him all unwilling as he was, into the Order, and he was ordained.

Upon the morrow the Mother of Rāhula arrayed the child in all its best and sent him to the Blessed One, saying to him: "Look, my dear, at yonder Monk, attended by so many Brethren: he is your father, who was the possessor of a great treasure, which we have not seen since he left us. Go now and say, 'O Father, I am thy son, and I have need of the treasure—give me the treasure, for a son is heir to his father's property.'" And even so the child went up to the Blessed One and stood before him gladly and cheerfully. And when the Blessed One had finished his meal, he arose and went away, and the boy followed him, saying, as his mother had taught him, "O Monk! give to me my inheritance." Then the Blessed One said to Sāriputta, "Well, then, Sāriputta, receive Rāhula into our Order."

But when the king learnt that his grandson had been ordained he was deeply grieved; and he made known his grief to the Master, and won from him the promise that henceforth no son should be received into the Order without the leave of his father and mother.

Now, after the King Suddhodana had attained the Fruit of the Third Path, the Blessed One, together with the company of Brethren, returned to Rājagaha, and took up his residence in the Sītā Grove.

But between Kapilavatthu and Rājagaha the Master halted for a short time at the Mango Grove of Anupiyā. And while he was in that place a number of the Sākya princes determined to join his congregation, and to this end they followed him thither. The chief of these princes were Anuruddha, Bhaddiva, Kimbila, Ānanda, the



Conversion of Anāthapindika

Buddha's cousin, who was afterwards appointed personal attendant, and Devadatta, the Buddha's cousin, who was ever his enemy.

Conversion of Anāthapindika

Now in these days there was a very wealthy merchant, by name Anāthapindika, and he was residing at the house of a friend at Rājagaha, and the news reached him that a Blessed Buddha had arisen. Very early in the morning he went to the Teacher, and heard the Law, and was converted; and he gave a great donation to the Order, and received a promise from the Master that he would visit Sāvattthi, the merchant's home. Then all along the road for the whole distance of forty-five leagues he built a resting-place at every league. And he bought the great Jetavana Grove at Sāvattthi for the price of as many pieces of gold as would cover the whole ground. In the midst thereof he built a pleasant chamber for the Master, and separate cells for the eighty Elders round about it, and many other residences with long halls and open roofs, and terraces to walk by night and day, and reservoirs of water. Then did he send a message to the Master that all was prepared. And the Master departed from Rājagaha, and in due course reached Sāvattthi. And the wealthy merchant, together with his wife and his son and two daughters in festal attire, and accompanied by a mighty train of followers, went out to meet him; while the Blessed One on his part entered the new-built monastery with all the infinite grace and peerless majesty of a Buddha, making the grove to shine with the glory of his person, as though it had been sprinkled with dust of gold.

Then Anāthapindika said to the Master: "What should I do with this monastery?" and the Master answered:

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

“Bestow it upon the Order, whether now present or to come.” And the great Merchant, pouring water from a golden vessel into the Master’s hands, confirmed the gift in these terms. And the Master received it and gave thanks and praised the uses of monasteries and the gift of them. The dedication festival lasted nine months. In those days there also resided at Sāvatti, the chief town of Kosala, the lady Visākhā, the wife of the wealthy merchant Punnavaddhana. She made herself the patroness and supporter of the Order, and was also the means of converting her father-in-law, who was previously an adherent of the naked Jainas; and for this reason she got the surname of the mother of Migāra. Beyond this was her dedication to the Order of the monastery of Pubbārāma, the value and splendour whereof were second only to those of the monastery erected by Anāthapindika himself.

The Buddha averts a War

Now three rainy seasons were spent by the Lord in the Bambu Grove. It was in the fifth season, when he was residing in the Kūtāgāra Hall of the Great Forest near to Vesāli that there arose a dispute between the Sākyas and the Koliyas regarding the water of the river Rohinī, which, because of a great drought, did not suffice that year to irrigate the fields on both banks. The quarrel rose high, and matters were come nearly to battle, when the Buddha proceeded to the place, and took his seat on the river bank. He enquired for what reason the princes of the Sākyas and Koliyas were assembled, and when he was informed that they were met together for battle, he enquired what was the point in dispute. The princes said that they did not know of a surety, and they made enquiry of the commander-in-chief, but he in turn knew not, and sought information

The Admission of Women

from the regent ; and so the enquiry went on until it reached the husbandmen, who related the whole affair. "What then is the value of water?" said the Buddha. "It is but little," said the princes. "And what of earth?" "That also is little," they said. "And what of princes?" "It cannot be measured," they said. "Then would you," said the Buddha, "destroy that which is of the highest value for the sake of that which is little worth?" and he appeased the wrath of the combatants by the recital of sundry Jātakas. The princes now reflected that by the interposition of Buddha much bloodshed had been avoided, and that had it not been so, none might have been left to report the matter to their wives and children. And since, had he become, as he might if he had so pleased, a universal monarch, they would have been his vassals, they chose two hundred and fifty of their number, from each party, to become his attendants, and join the Order. But these five hundred were ordained at the wish of their parents, and not by their own will, and their wives were filled with grief for their sake.

The Admission of Women

About this time Suddhodana fell ill with a mortal sickness, and as soon as this was reported to the Blessed One, he proceeded to Kapilavatthu and visited his father. And when he had come before him, he preached to him the instability of all things, so that Suddhodana attained to the Fruit of the Fourth Path ; to Arahatta, and Nibbāna, and thereafter he died.

After the death of her husband the widowed queen, the Matron Gautamī, decided to adopt the life of the hermitage, cut off her hair, and proceeded to the place where the Buddha was residing. She was accompanied by the wives

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

of the five hundred princes who had been ordained on the occasion of the imminent battle at the Rohinī river; for these considered that it was better for them to retire from the world, than to remain at home in widowhood. The Matron Gautamī said to the Buddha that as Suddhodana was now dead, and Rāhula and Nanda were both ordained Brethren, she had no wish to reside alone, and she asked that she might be admitted to the Order, together with the princesses who were with her. But this request the Buddha refused, a first, a second, and third time, for he reflected that if they were admitted, it would perplex the minds of many who had not yet entered the Paths, and would be the occasion of evil speaking against the Order. And when they were still refused, the women feared to ask a fourth time, and they returned to their homes. And the Buddha returned to the Kūtāgāra hall, near Vesāli.

Then the Matron Gautamī said to the other princesses:

My children, the Buddha has thrice refused us admission to the Order, but now let us take it upon ourselves to go to him where he now is, and he will not be able to deny us." They all cut their hair, adopted the garb of religieuses, and taking earthen alms-bowls, set out for Vesāli on foot; for they considered that it was contrary to the discipline for a recluse to travel by car. Then they who in all their life had walked only on smooth pavements, and regarded it as a great matter to ascend or descend from one story of their palaces to another, trod the dusty roads, and it was not until evening that they reached the place where the Buddha was. They were received by Ānanda. And when he saw them, their feet bleeding and covered with dust, as if half dead, his breast was filled with pity and his eyes with tears, and he

The Admission of Women

enquired the meaning of their journey. When this was made known he informed the Master, describing all that he had seen. But the Buddha merely said: "Enough, Ānanda, do not ask me that women retire from the household life to the homeless life, under the Doctrine and Discipline of Him-who-has-thus-attained." And he said this three times. But Ānanda besought the Blessed One in another way to receive the women into the homeless life. He asked the Blessed One: "Are women competent, Reverend Sire, if they retire from the household to the homeless life, to attain to the Fruits of the First, the Second, the Third, and the Fourth Paths, even to Arahatta?" The Buddha could not deny the competence of women. "Are Buddhas," he asked, "born into the world only for the benefit of men? Assuredly it is for the benefit of women also." And the Blessed One consented that women should make profession and enter the Order, subject to the conditions of the Eight Duties of Subordination to the Brethren. "But," he added, "if women were not admitted to the Order, then would the Good Law endure for a thousand years, but now it will stand for five hundred years only. For just as when mildew falls upon a field of flourishing rice, that field of rice does not long endure, just so when women retire from the household to the homeless life under a Doctrine and Discipline, the norm will not long endure. And just as a large reservoir is strengthened by a strong dyke, so have I established a barrier of eight weighty regulations, not to be transgressed as long as life shall last." And in this way the Matron Gautamī and the five hundred princesses were admitted to the order; and it was not long before Gautamī attained to Arahatta, and the five hundred princesses attained the Fruit of the First Path.

Buddha ☸ the Gospel of Buddhism

And this took place in the sixth year of the Enlightenment.

The Sixth to the Fourteenth Years

The sixth rainy season was spent at Sāvatti, and thereafter the Blessed One repaired to Rājagaha. Now the name of king Bimbisāra's wife was Khemā,¹ and such was her pride in her beauty that she had never deigned to visit the Master: but on a certain occasion the king brought about a meeting by means of a stratagem. Then the Buddha performed a miracle for her; he produced a likeness of one of the beautiful nymphs of Indra's heaven, and while she beheld it, he made it pass through all the stages of youth, middle age, old age, and death. And by this terrible sight the Queen was disposed to hear the Master's teaching, and she entered the First Path, and afterwards attained to Arahatta.

During the Master's residence in Rājagaha a wealthy merchant of that place became possessed of a piece of sandal wood, and he had a bowl made of it. This bowl he fastened to the tip of a tall bamboo, and raising it up in this way, he announced: "If any Wanderer or Brāhman be possessed of miraculous powers, let him take down the bowl." Then Mogallāna and other of the Brethren egged each other to take it down, and that other by name Pindola-Bhāradvāja, rose up into the sky and took the bowl, and moved three times round the city ere he descended, to the astonishment of all the citizens. When this was reported to the Buddha, he remarked: "This will not conduce to the conversion of the unconverted, nor to the advantage of the converted." And

¹ For other mention of the Bhikkunī Khemā, see p. 223.

The Sixth to the Fourteenth Years

he prohibited the Brethren from making an exhibition of miraculous powers.

The Buddha met with opposition to his teaching, particularly from six heretical teachers, each of whom had a large train of adherents. Of these heretical teachers one was Sanjaya, the former master of Sāriputta and Mogallāna, and another was Nigantha Nātaputta, who is better known as Vardhamāna, the founder of the sect of the Jains, whose history in many respects recalls that of Buddhism, while, unlike Buddhism, it still numbers many adherents in India proper. These various teachers failed to find any support in the realm of Bimbisāra, and therefore betook themselves to Sāvatti, hoping to secure greater influence with King Prasenajit. Now Sāvatti was the place where all former Buddhas have exhibited their greatest miracle, and remembering this the Buddha proceeded thither with the intention of confounding his opponents. He took up his residence in the Jetavana monastery. Very soon afterwards he exhibited to the people, the six teachers, and King Prasenajit, a series of great miracles, creating a great road across the sky from East to West, and walking thereon the while he preached the Good Law. By these means the heretical teachers were overcome.

Following upon the Great Miracle, the Buddha departed to the Heaven of the Thirty-three, and there preached the Law to his mother, Mahā Māyā. The Buddha remained in the Heaven of the Thirty-three for three months, and during that time he created a likeness of himself, that continued the teaching of the Law on earth, and went every day upon his rounds begging food. When the Buddha was about to descend from heaven, Sakka commanded Vissakamma, the divine architect, to create a triple

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

ladder, the foot of which was set down near the town of Sankissa. And the Buddha descended at this place, attended by Brahmā on the right and Sakka on the left.

From Sankissa the Master returned to the Jetavana monastery near Sāvatti. Here the heretical teachers induced a young woman of the name of Cincā so to act as to arouse the suspicion of the people regarding her relation to the Master. After many visits to the monastery, she contrived a means to assume the appearance of a woman far gone in pregnancy, and in the ninth month she brought an open accusation, and required that the Master should provide a place for her confinement. The Buddha answered with a great voice, "Sister, whether thy words be true or false, none knoweth save thou and I." At that very moment the strings gave way, wherewith the woman had bound upon herself the wooden globe by means of which she had assumed the appearance of pregnancy. Pursued by the indignant people, she disappeared in the midst of flames rising from the earth, and descended to the bottom of the lowest Purgatory.

The ninth retreat was spent in the Ghositārāma at Kausambī. Here there arose violent disagreements among the Brethren on matters of discipline, and the Buddha's wisdom and kindness availed not to restore peace. He therefore left the Brethren and proceeded to the village of Bālajalonakāra with the intention of residing alone as a hermit. He met on the way Anuruddha, Nandiya and Kimbila, who were living in perfect unity and content, and he rejoiced their hearts by a religious discourse. Then proceeding to the Rakkhita Grove at Pārileyyaka, he dwelt alone.

After residing for some time at Pārileyyaka, the Lord proceeded to Sāvatti. Now the contumacious Brethren

The Sixth to the Fourteenth Years

of Kausambī had received such signal marks of disrespect from the laity of that city that they resolved to proceed to Sāvattthi and lay the matter in dispute before the Master, and they abode by his decision, and peace was restored.

During the eleventh retreat the Master resided at Rājagaha. There he saw one day a Brāhman, by name Bhāradvāja, superintending the cultivation of his fields. The Brāhman, seeing the Buddha subsisting upon the alms of others, said: "O Wanderer, I plough and sow, and so find my livelihood. Do thou also plough and sow to the same end?" But the Buddha replied: "I, too, plough and sow, and it is thus that I find my food." The Brāhman was surprised, and said: "I do not see, O reverend Gautama, that you have a yoke, ploughshare, goad, or bullocks. How, then, say that thou too labourest?" Then the Lord said: "Faith is the seed I sow; devotion is the rain; modesty is the ploughshaft; the mind is the tie of the yoke; mindfulness is my ploughshare and goad. Energy is my team and bullock, leading to safety, and proceeding without backsliding to the place where there is no sorrow." And Bhāradvāja was so much affected by this parable that he was converted and made confession and was admitted to the Order.

In the thirteenth year, during his stay at Kapilavatthu, the Buddha was subjected to violent insults on the part of his father-in-law, Suprabuddha, and he uttered the prediction that within a week Suprabuddha would be swallowed alive by the earth. And, notwithstanding Suprabuddha spent the whole week in the tower of his palace, the earth opened and he was swallowed up in accordance with the prophecy, and he sank into the lowest Purgatory.

The Lord returned from Kapilavatthu to the Jetavana monastery at Sāvattthi and thence proceeded to Alavī, a

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

place that was haunted by a man-eating ogre who was accustomed to devour the children of the place day after day. When the Buddha appeared before him, he was received with threats, but the Master, by gentleness and patience, succeeded in softening his heart, and was able also to answer the questions propounded by the ogre, who became a believer and mended his life. The fierce robber Angulimāla, too, he won over to the Good Law, and notwithstanding his evil life he quickly attained to Arahatta.

About this time the pious Anāthapindika gave his daughter in marriage to the son of a friend residing in Anga, and as the Anga family were supporters of the heretical teacher Nigantha, he gave his daughter a train of maidservants to support her in the right faith. The young wife refused to do honour to the naked Jaina ascetics, and she awakened an eager desire in the heart of her mother-in-law to hear the preaching of the Master: and when he arrived the whole family together with many others were converted. Leaving the completion of the work of conversion to Anuruddha, the Buddha returned to Sāvattthi.

The Buddha's Daily Life

In this way there passed by year after year of the Buddha's wandering ministry, but the events of the middle years cannot be chronologically arranged with exactitude; it will suffice if we give a general description of the Master's daily life at this time.¹

“From year to year the change from a period of wandering to a period of rest and retirement repeated itself for Buddha and his disciples. In the month of June when, after the

¹ What follows is quoted from the admirable summary of Oldenberg.—*Buddha*, English translation by W. Hoey.

The Buddha's Daily Life

dry, scorching heat of the Indian summer, clouds come up in towering masses, and the rolling thunders herald the approach of the rain-bearing monsoon, the Indian to-day, as in ages past, prepares himself and his home for the time during which all usual operations are interrupted by the rain: for whole weeks long in many places the pouring torrents confine the inhabitants to their huts, or at any rate, to their villages, while communication with neighbours is cut off by rapid, swollen streams, and by inundations. 'The birds,' says an ancient Buddhist work, 'build their nests on the tops of trees: and there they nestle and hide during the damp season.' And thus also, it was an established practice with the members of monastic orders, undoubtedly not first in Buddha's time, but since ever there was a system of religious itinerancy in India, to suspend itinerant operations during the three rainy months and to spend this time in quiet retirement in the neighbourhood of towns and villages, where sure support was to be found through the charity of believers. . . . Buddha also every year for three months 'kept vassa, rainy season,' surrounded by groups of his disciples, who flocked together to pass the rainy season near their teacher. Kings and wealthy men contended for the honour of entertaining him and his disciples, who were with him, as guests during this season in the hospices and gardens which they had provided for the community. The rains being over, the itinerating began: Buddha went from town to town and village to village, always attended by a great concourse of disciples: the texts are wont to speak in one place of three hundred, and in another of five hundred, who followed their master. In the main streets, through which the religious pilgrims, like travelling merchants, used to pass, the believers who

Buddha & the Gospel of Buddhism

dwelt near had taken care to provide shelter, to which Buddha and his disciples might resort: or, where monks who professed the doctrine dwelt, there was sure to be found lodging for the night in their abodes, and even if no other cover was to be had, there was no want of mango or banyan trees, at the feet of which the band might halt for the night. . . .

“The most important headquarters during these wanderings, at the same time the approximately extreme points, to the north-west and south-east of the area, in which Buddha’s pilgrim life was passed, are the capital cities of the kings of Kosala and Magadha, Sāvatti, now Sahet Maheth on the Rapti, and Rājagaha, now Rājgir, south of Bihar. In the immediate neighbourhood of these towns the community possessed numerous pleasant gardens, in which structures of various kinds were erected for the requirements of the members. ‘Not too far from, nor yet too near the town,’ thus runs the standard description of such a park given in the sacred texts, ‘well provided with entrances and exits, easily accessible to all people who enquire after it, with not too much of the bustle of life by day, quiet by night, far from commotion and the crowds of men, a place of retirement, a good place for solitary meditation.’ Such a garden was the Veluvana, ‘Bambu Grove,’ once a pleasure-ground of King Bimbisāra, and presented by him to Buddha and the Church: another was the still more renowned Jetavana at Sāvatti, a gift made by Buddha’s most liberal admirer, the great merchant Anāthapindika. Not alone the sacred texts, but equally also the monumental records, the reliefs of the great Stūpa of Bharhut, recently explored, show how highly celebrated this gift of Anāthapindika’s was from the earliest days in the Buddhist Church. . . . If it is possible to speak of a

The Buddha's Daily Life

home in the homeless wandering life of Buddha and his disciples, places like the Veluvana and Jetavana may of all others be so called, near the great centres of Indian life and yet untouched by the turmoil of the capitals, once the quiet resting-places of rulers and nobles, before the yellow-robed mendicants appeared on the scene, and 'the Church in the four quarters, present and absent,' succeeded to the possession of the kingly inheritance. In these gardens were the residences of the brethren, houses, halls, cloisters, storerooms, surrounded by lotus-pools, fragrant mango trees, and slender fan-palms that lift their foliage high over all else, and by the deep green foliage of the Nyagrodha tree, whose roots dropping from the air to earth become new stems, and with their cool shady arcades and leafy walks seem to invite to peaceful meditation.

"These were the surroundings in which Buddha passed a great part of his life, probably the portions of it richest in effective work. Here masses of the population, lay as well as monastic, flocked together to see him, and to hear him preach. Hither came pilgrim monks from far countries, who had heard the fame of Buddha's teaching, and, when the rainy season was past, undertook a pilgrimage to see the Master face to face. . . .

"The fame of Buddha's person also drew together from far and near crowds of such as stood without the narrower circles of the community. 'To the ascetic Gotama,' people remarked to one another, 'folks are coming, passing through kingdoms and countries, to converse with him.' Often, when he happened to halt near the residences of potentates, kings, princes, and dignitaries came on wagons or on elephants to put questions to him or to hear his doctrine. Such a scene is described to us in the opening of the 'Sūtra on the fruit of asceticism,' and reappears in



Library IAS, Shimla



00004807