



The
Noble Teachings
of
Lord Buddha

Translations and Commentaries

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The Nativity of Buddha

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I feel more convinced than ever that Ashva Ghosha's Sanskrit Life of Buddha will be the Life of Buddha which will hold the attention of the world once it finds an adequate, readable, and popular translation in English. For, though Professor Cowell's Translation, in the Sacred Books of the East, is certainly adequate, from the point of scholarship, and though we all admit his easy supremacy in the Sanskrit Renaissance Literature, yet it would be flattery to call this formidable volume readable, or, indeed, much more than barely intelligible to anyone who does not follow it with the Sanskrit text in hand. I was fortunate enough to read the Sanskrit version first—several chapters in the middle of the book, that is to say—and only after that I discovered Professor Cowell's admirable scholarly version, bound up with a rendering of the Sukhavati Vyuha and the Vajrochchhetika, in a volume bearing the accurate but uninviting title "Mahayana Scriptures." I wonder what chance of popularity a book has with a title like that! I wonder how many readers Professor Cowell has had since his volume was published, or, indeed, will have during the next decade? It is sad to think of the vast quantity of splendid work buried, interred, entombed, in the Proceedings of our Oriental Society, our University Series, our Journals of Research, and the like; and to think how wholly they fail to touch the living world of men. Then comes a writer like Edwin Arnold, with his wonderful facility and his great popular gift, and does more for Buddhism than all the scholars put together—and this without any signal erudition, or any great claim to

scholarship at all. And the world is with Edwin Arnold, and the world is right. If we cannot make our work effectual in the world of living men and women, then our work is vain.

But to return to the nativity of Buddha. I know not whether we are to ascribe to Ashva Ghosha the first twenty stanzas with their gorgeous description of the Holy City of Kapila Vastu, in which the heavenly child was born. On the one hand, the Tibetan and Chinese versions leave out this description, while, on the other, it is perfectly in place, and even essential to the completeness and unity of the poem, and is quite in Ashva Ghosha's style and manner. Let me quote a few verses to show how the poet describes the Holy City of Buddhism:

“There was a City, the mighty sage Kapila's dwelling-place;
girt with the beauty of broad uplands, as with a chain of clouds;
its lofty roofs upreared against the sky.

There, neither darkness nor poverty found a dwelling-place, so
bright was it with the radiance of jewels; and smiling fortune
gladly dwelt among those righteous men.

And, for that there was not seen the like of the City in the
whole world, for the beauty of its arbours and arches, and spires
like lion's ears, the dwellings of it could vie with nothing but
each other.

And the sun even at his setting, could not forget the lovely
faces of its women, that put the lotus-blooms to shame; and
hastened toward the western ocean to slake his passion in the
waves.

By night, the silver cupolas, lit up by the moon's white rays,
made a mock of the water-lillies; by day, when the sunbeams
shone on the golden domes of the palaces, they took upon them
the beauty of the yellow lotuses.”

Even in a prose version, and that by no means a final one, we can easily see the rich, Oriental splendour of writing like this. And here let me anticipate a possible criticism. The whole story of the nativity of Buddha, with its immaculate conception by the Holy Law, its angel visitants, its wise men seeing his sign in the heavens, and coming to visit him, cannot but compel comparisons with the old, familiar story of the heavenly Child of Bethlehem, and the shepherds who watched

their flocks by night. And it will doubtless be pointed out how the simplicity, humility, and poverty of the one scene contrast with the almost impossible magnificence of the other—and thus we shall have prepared the way to a total misapprehension of the Buddhist poet's aim, in piling splendour upon splendour, and scattering the whole earth with pearls, and cloth of gold, and scented flowers. His aim is in the highest degree worthy, and shows the highest artistic sense. This is only one side of the medal; look at the companion picture, Buddha, homeless, friendless, in a single cloth, his beggar's bowl in hand, with one aim only—to bring the healing wisdom to the world. Every heightened touch of colour hears with it this refrain:—He left it all to set us free! That is, to the Buddhist writer, and to all sympathetic readers, the true meaning of these gorgeous descriptive stanzas that record the Buddha's birth.

The description of the Holy City is followed by a courtly picture of its King, Suddhodana, who plays a very dramatic part in the chapter of the Renunciation, at a subsequent stage of the story. Here we are told, in a passage of most skilful antithesis, that

“though sovereign of all, he was yet surrounded by friends; though very generous, he was not rashly lavish; though a King, he yet dealt equal justice to all; though very gracious, he was full of warlike fire.”

His consort, the Queen Maya, mother of the Master, was not less richly endowed, for

“she was loved as a mother by the simple folk, while the great esteemed her as a friend. She was a very goddess of good luck in the family of the King.”

Ashva Ghosha tells us that the Buddha was born in a garden, amongst flowering trees, and blossoms of the scarlet mandhara, with the hosts of celestials gathered round to bear him up, and streams of heavenly water to purify the new-born teacher of mankind:

“And the babe by the brightness of his limbs, dimmed all other lights, as does the sun; he lit up the whole world by his beauty. And, bright as the seven stars, he took seven steps, firm, unwavering, and thus he spoke:—‘For wisdom am I born to

save the world; this is my final birth.”

Then follows a long, and very beautiful passage, in which we are told how all Nature did homage to the new-born child, and how the heavenly visitants gathered round him, and ministered to him. We shall not be guilty of the shallow criticism which bids us reject all this because it savours of miracle; the true miracle is, that a man, born among men, should win such love and reverence from his fellows that, five centuries after his death, the poets should vie with each other in beautiful inventions and arts to do him honour; and that, twenty centuries later, the poet's words should still be lovingly remembered. It seems to me that much of our criticism of Buddha's doctrine, which represents the sage's teaching as hopeless, harsh, and cold, leaves out of account altogether the vital fact that Buddha has held the hearts of nearly a hundred generations, while such a doctrine as his critics attribute to him could appeal to no one, and even repels the critics themselves. What is certain is that Buddha's personality and words had an immense and immediate influence over his hearers, and a benign influence as well, and no account of his doctrine is trustworthy which does not reckon with this cardinal fact.

Very eloquent, and full of dramatic power, is the episode of the coming of the sage, Asita, who has been the Buddha's sign in the heavens, and comes from afar to pay him reverence:

“Then the mighty seer, Asita, through signs and his magical power, perceiving that He was born who should make an end of birth, came to the palace of the Shakya King, eager for the Good Law. And the King's confessor, himself a sage among sages, received the seer luminous with wisdom, and grace, and the magic of devotion. And he entered the inner chamber of the King, where all was gladness at the Prince's birth, full of power and holiness, and also full of years. The King then set the saint upon a seat, and had water brought to wash his feet, and hospitable offerings; welcoming him with deference, as Antideva of old welcomed Vashistha:—‘Fortunate am I, and favoured is my house, that thou art come to visit us! Let my lord command what shall be done, for I am thy disciple, therefore speak confidently to me.’ Thus the Saint was welcomed by the King,

with all honour, as was seemly. And the Saint, with wide-eyed wonder, spoke these words of deepest wisdom:—"This graces thee well, mightly-hearted King, that thy heart is open to me as a dear guest, who have renounced the world, and desire only the law; this becomes thy goodness, thy wisdom, and thine age. Thus did the Kingly sages, they who, for the Law, gave up the wealth that perishes, growing rich in holiness, though poor in this world's goods. But what is the purpose of my coming—hear thou, and rejoice:—A heavenly voice was heard by me, on the heavenly way, that a son was born to thee for wisdom. And hearing the voice and setting my mind to it, and discerning the signs, I am come here; my desire is to behold Him who shall raise aloft the banner of the Shakya name, as they raise Indra's banner at the festival.'

'The King, hearing this word, was tremulous with exultation, took the child from the nurse's arms, and showed it to the man of penances.'

I cannot resist the temptation to point out that, in spite of the miraculous element, this is a very human touch. Suddhodana is the proud papa all over, even though he is a King, and his baby a future sage. The seer verified the miraculous marks of the child—the circle on his palms, the membrane of skin between his fingers, the ring of hair between his brows, as he lay in the nurse's arms, like Agni's son in the arms of his goddess mother. And then comes a profound and pathetic touch. The sage, beholding him, and knowing that he was indeed the Teacher, turned aside with tears trembling on his eye lashes, and sighed deeply, looking up to heaven. The King, seeing Asita sorrowing, was greatly terrified, thinking that some evil should befall his son, that early death threatened him, or that misfortune menaced the kingdom. He begged Asita to tell him truly hardly daring to name the calamities he feared "with a sob, and his voice choked by tears." The sage thus replied:

"Change not thy faith, O King, for what I have said is fixed and sure. I am full of sorrow, not for any evil that shall befall him, but for my own disappointment. For my time has come to depart, but this teacher of the Law, whose like is hard to find, is

but newly born. He shall give up his kingdom, free himself from sensual temptations, and win the truth by strenuous effort. He shall shine forth to slay the darkness of the world, for he is a sun of wisdom.

From the ocean of sorrow, whose scattered foam is sickness, whose waves are age, whose swift tide is death, he shall rescue the world, carried away and afflicted, on the mighty boat of knowledge.

This thirsting human world shall drink his righteous river of the Law, whose tide is wisdom, whose banks are righteousness, whose cool waters are the soul's peace, and vows the birds upon its stream.

He shall point out the way of freedom to the sorrowing who are wandering in the bye-paths of the world, in the midst of the forests of sense who have lost their way.

To the people in the world who are burned with the fire of passion, whose fuel is lust, he shall bring the refreshing waters of the law, as a great cloud brings rain to a weary land.

He shall open the prison whose bolts are lust, and whose doors are delusion and darkness and shall set the people free. With the blows of the Good Law shall he break it open, the excellent and invincible Law.

He shall free from the bondage of their own delusions the people, bound, and sorrowing and hopeless; the King of righteousness shall set them free.

Therefore be not troubled at my sorrow; grieve only for those who will not hear the Law.

All my holiness is lost, its virtue gone, for that I shall not hear Him. I count it sorrow now to enter Paradise.”

It would be hard to match the eloquence and pathos of this passage by any other throughout the whole of Ashva Ghosha's work. It would be hard to match them even from the Bibles of the world.

Buddha's Renunciation

Being an Original Translation from the Sanskrit of
Ashvaghosha's Buddha-Charita.

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I.

It is not quite certain when the poem, from which is taken this story of The Great Renunciation, was written; but we shall go near the truth if we say it dates from about two thousand years ago. So famous was this life of the Redeemer of Asia, and so great was the honour in which its author was held, that, when the Good Law passed beyond the barrier of the Snowy Mountains that hem in India like a wall, this book, carried with them by the Buddha's followers, was translated into the tongues of northern lands, and versions of it, in both Chinese and Tibetan, are well known at the present day. These versions were made when Buddha's doctrine first penetrated to the north, and from them, more than from any other book, the ideal of Buddha, as it lives among the disciples beyond the Himalayas, was formed and confirmed.

The manuscripts of this life of Buddha, which have been brought to the west, are copies of a single original, preserved in the library at Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal; and from the same place came our earliest knowledge of Buddha's teaching, and our earliest copies of Buddhist books. Looking back to our first acquaintance with

Buddhism, and calling to mind the numberless books that have been written of recent years concerning Buddha's doctrine, we cannot refrain from marvelling at the persistence with which a teaching so simple and so full of light has been so grievously misunderstood. The truth seems to be that our linguists are no philosophers, and that our philosophers are no linguists; and so, between them, they have done the doctrine of the Buddha much wrong, painting it either as a pessimism so dreary and full of gloom that we are forced to wonder whether it was worth the prince's while to leave the pleasures of his palace, even though they had begun to taste bitter-sweet in his mouth, in order to discover so lugubrious an evangel; or giving us instead, as his authentic doctrine, a nihilism so complete that it could never have brought hope or light to the most miserable wretch that breathed, and from which even its expounders turn away repelled. In short, to hear his western prophets, the Buddha's mission was a ghastly failure, his glad tidings were something darker than our darkest fears, his gospel of hope, a confession of utter hopelessness, his renunciation made in vain.

But it is very certain that to no such doctrine as this would half the world have gladly turned, nor, in all the long years of his ministry, could one, bringing only such a message, have raised hope in a single sorrowing human heart, much less drawn after him those countless followers, the story of whose glad conversion is told in the annals of his faith.

To rid ourselves of these nightmare views of Buddhism, there is nothing like the teachings of Buddha himself, and the study of the books that have inspired his followers for twenty centuries. And in doing this, we shall be well-advised to turn first to this old Life of Buddha, written, as we have said, some two thousand years ago. Of all our western books on Buddhism, none has even rivalled the success of *The Light of Asia*, and this because the teaching put forth in it does really speak of hope and healing; does really appeal to the heart of man, as, the old traditions tell us, the spoken words of Buddha had appealed, when he first delivered his great Message, two and a half millenniums ago. The life of Buddha, one chapter of which we here translate, offers numberless most interesting points of comparison with *The Light of Asia*, and it is no disparagement of the modern poet, if we

award the palm to the more ancient, as having a deeper grasp of the great Teacher's thought, a more philosophic insight, and, withal, a richer and more abundant wealth of poetry, finer beauty of imagery, and a purer and robuster style. How easy, for instance, it would have been, for a lesser poet, to have fallen into faults of corruption in that last, splendidly coloured scene of Buddha's revulsion from the pleasures of life, and the supreme temptation of sensuous things. But the best comment on the poem is the poem itself.

THE GREAT RENUNCIATION.

So he, the Shaky a sovereign's son, unenslaved by things of sense, even those that are full of allurement, did not delight in them nor find contentment in his heart, like a lion pierced by a poisoned arrow. And, once on a time, with a following of the sons of the courtiers, most skilful, and of his companions eloquent, led by the desire to see the forest, and seeking pleasure there, he set forthwith the permission of the King. He was mounted on his steed, Kanthaka, decked with a bridle of new gold, with tinkling bells, and adorned with waving yak-tails, set in fair gold, as the moon might mount a comet. And led by the charm of the forest, he wandered on to the border of the wood, desiring to behold the beauty of the earth. And he beheld the fruitful earth being ploughed, as the path of the share divided the soil like the waves of the sea; and he saw also how, when the grassy sods were cut and thrown aside by the plough, the numberless lives of minute creatures were scattered and slain. Viewing the earth thus, he greatly grieved, as for the death of his own kin. Watching the men who were ploughing also, and how they were stained and parched by the sun and the wind and the dust, and seeing the draught oxen galled by the burden of the yoke, he, noblest of all, was full of pity. Thereupon, dismounting from his horse's back, he wandered slowly away, penetrated by grief; thinking on the birth and the passing away of the world. "Pitiful, indeed, is this!" he said, oppressed by sadness. Desiring, therefore, loneliness in his spirit, he sent back his friends that would have followed him, and sat down in a solitary place at the root of a rose-apple tree, heavily laden with luscious leaves; and he rested there on the earth, carpeted with grass and flowers, enamelled as with precious stones.

And meditating there on the coming into being, and the passing away again of the world, he sought for a firm pathway for his mind; and when he had reached a firm resting-place for his mind, the desire for things of sense, and all longing towards them, suddenly left him. He reached the first meditation, discernment with clear reason, full of peace, and of nature altogether free from fault. And reaching this, he passed on to the soul-vision born of discernment, which is happy with supreme delight; and he went forward in thought from this to the path of the world, understanding it perfectly.

“Pitiful is it, in truth, that man born thus, to sickness, to waste away, to perish, the life-sap sinking out of him, should despise another, oppressed by old age, full of sickness or stricken with death, blinded by desire; but if I also, being such as they, should despise another, then that were against the nature of my being. Nor may such a thing as this be possible for me, who know the higher law.”

As he thus spoke, beholding the world’s dark shadows, sickness and age and misfortune, in the full activity of his life and youth and force, the joy in them that had filled his heart, faded suddenly away. Nor was he thereby overcome with astonishment, nor did remorse overtake him, nor did he fall into doubt, nor into faintness and oblivion. Nor was his mind inflamed by the allurements of desire, nor did he hate or despise anyone. So this wisdom grew in him, free from every stain and pure, in him mighty-souled.

Then, unbeheld of other men, one drew near to him, in the garment of a wanderer; and that son of the king of the people questioned him, speaking thus:

“Say what man thou art!” thus he commanded him. And he made answer:

“Thou leader of the herd of men, I am a wanderer, oppressed by the fear of birth and death, a pilgrim seeking after liberation; I wander forth seeking to be free, in this world whose very nature it is to fade; and so I seek a blessed resting-place, unfading. No more akin to other men, I am equal-minded, turned back from sin and rage after things of sense. I rest wherever it may chance, at the root of a tree, or in some desert dwelling; or among the mountains, or in the forest. So I move through the world, without lust of possession, without hope or fear, a

pilgrim to the highest goal.”

And as the king's son thus beheld him, speaking these things he ascended again into heaven, for he was indeed a dweller of the celestials, who had taken that form to rouse the prince to memory, seeing that his thought was deeper than his mien. And when he had passed away through the air, like a bird of the air, he, the best of men was astonished, and marvelled greatly. Then understanding what should be, he prepared his soul for the battle, knowing well the law. So king over his senses, like the king of the gods, he mounted his steed most excellent.

Turning back his steed, that looked towards his followers, and thinking on the pleasant forest, he found no delight in the city, free from desire for it, as the king of the elephants enters the circle of the yard from the forest-land.

“Happy and blessed is that woman whose husband is even such as thou art, large-eyed one!” thus spoke the king's daughter, seeing him enter the long pathway to the palace; and he, whose voice was like the sound of the wind, heard this; he found therein great joy. Hearing that word of hers, of “happiness,” he set his mind on the way to supreme liberation. So the prince, whose body was like the pinnacle of a mount of gold, whose arm was in strength like an elephant, whose voice was as the deep voice of the wind, whose eye was keen as a bull, entered the dwelling, the desire of the imperishable law born within him, his face radiant as the moon, and lion-like in valour Advancing, stately like the king of the forest, he approached the king of the people, who was sitting there, in the midst of the host of his counsellors, as the mind-born son of the Creator might draw near to the king of heaven, naming in the midst of the powers of the breath. And making obeisance to him, with palms joined, he thus addressed him:

“O sovereign of the people, grant me this request! I would set forth a pilgrim, seeking for liberation, for certain is the dissolution of mankind here below.” The king, hearing this speech of his, shivered, as shivers a tree when an elephant strikes it. And clasping those two hands of his, lotus-like, he spoke to him this word, his voice choked with tears:

“Put away from thee, beloved, this mind of thine, for the time is

not yet come for thee to enter on the pilgrimage of the law. In the first age of life, when the mind is still unstable, they say it is a grievous fault to enter thus on the path of the law. For the heart of a young man, whose appetites are yet eager for the things of sense, infirm in the keeping of vows, and who cannot remain steadily determined, the mind of him, still without wisdom, wanders from the forest to the things of unwisdom. But mine, O lover of the law, is it now to seek the law instead of thee, giving up all my wealth to thy desire. O thou of certain valour, this law of thine would become great lawlessness, if thou turnest back from thy master. Therefore putting away this determination of thine, be thou devoted yet for a while to the duties of a householder. And after thou hast enjoyed the pleasures of manhood, thou wilt find truer delight in the forest and forgetfulness of the world."

Hearing this word of the king's he made answer in a voice modulated and low:

"If thou wilt become my surety in four things, king, then will I not seek the forest and renunciation: that this life of mine shall not turn toward death; that sickness shall never steal upon my health; that old-age shall not cast down the glory of my youth; and that calamity shall not rob me of my prosperity."

The king of the Shakyas made answer to his son, thus putting upon him such a heavy quest:

"Abandon thou this mind of thine, set upon going forth, and this plan of thine, worthy of ridicule, and full of wilfulness."

And so he, who was the lord of the world, spoke thus to his lord:

"If thou doest not as I have said, then is my course not to be hindered. For he who would escape from a dwelling that is being consumed by fierce flames, cannot be kept back. And as in the world separation is certain, but not in the Law; then better separation lest death carry me away, powerless to resist, with my mission unfulfilled, my peace unwon."

The king of the land, hearing this speech of his son, eager to set out on the search for freedom, thinking: "he shall not go!" set a strong guard upon him, and most excellent allurements. And he, escorted by the ministers, as was fitting, with much honour and obeisance as the

scripture teaches, thus forbidden by his father to depart, returned to his dwelling, greatly grieved. There he was waited on by fair women, their faces kissed by trembling earrings, their breasts rising and falling in gentle breathing, their eyes furtive, like the eyes of a fawn in the forest. And he, shining like a golden mountain, stirring the hearts of those fair-formed ones with passion, held captive their ears by the sweetness of his voice, their bodies by the gentleness of his touch, their eyes by his beauty, and their very hearts by his many graces. Then when the day was gone, lighting up the palace by his beauty like the sun, he slew the darkness by the shining of his presence, as when the day-star rises on the peak of the holy mountain. When the lamp was lit that sparkled with gold, and was filled with the excellent scent of the black aloe, he rested on his golden couch, very beautiful, whose divisions were splendid with diamonds. And then, in the gloom of evening, those fair women drew round him most fair, with sweet-sounding instruments, as they might draw near to Indra, king of the gods. Or as, on the crest of the Himalaya, on the snowy summit, the singers of the celestials might gather round the wealth-god's son; yet he found no joy in them, nor any delight at all.

For of him, the blessed one, the desire of renunciation, for the joy of the supreme goal, was the cause that he found no delight in them. Then, through the power of the gods that watch over holiness, suddenly a deep sleep fell upon them, woven of enchantments, and, as it came upon them, they were entranced, and the power of motion left their limbs. And one of them lay there, sleeping, her cheek resting on her tender hand; letting fall her lute, well-loved, and decked with foil of gold, as though in anger; and so it lay, beside her body. And another of them gleamed there, the flute clasped in her hands, the white robe fallen from her breast, as she lay; and her hands were like two lotuses, joined by a straight line of dark-bodied bees, and her breast was like a river, fringed with the white water's foam. And another of them slept there, her two arms tender, like the new buds of the lotus, with bracelets interlinked of gleaming gold, her arms wound round her tabor, as though it were her well-beloved. Others decked with adornments of new gold, and robed in robes of the topaz colour, lay helpless there, in that enchanted sleep, like the branches of the forest tree, that the elephants have broken. And another lay there, leaning on

the lattice, her body resting on her bended arm, and gleamed there, bright with pendant pearls, stooping like the curve of an arch in the palace. So the lotus-face of another, adorned with a necklet of gems, and scented with sandal, was bent forward, and shone like the curve of a lotus-stem in the river, where the birds sport in the water. And others lay, as the enchanted sleep had come upon them, with bosoms pendant, in attitudes of little grace; and they gleamed there, linking each other in the meshes of their arms, the golden circlets heavy upon them. One of them had sunk to sleep, her arms woven round her lute of seven strings; as though it were her well-beloved companion; and she stirred the lute, tremulous in her hands, and her face with its golden earrings gleamed. Another damsel lay there, caressing her drum, that had slipped from the curve of her arm, holding it on her knees, like the head of a lover, wearied with the subtle sweetness of her allurements. Another fair one shone not, even though her eyes were large, and her brows were beautiful: for her eyes were closed like the lotus-blooms, their petals all crushed together, when the sun has set. So another, her hair all falling in loosened tresses, her robe and adornments fallen in disorder, lay there, the jewels of her necklet all dishevelled, prone like a tree uprooted by an elephant. And others, powerless in that trance, no longer kept the bounds of grace, even though they were of well-ordered minds, and endowed with every bodily beauty; for they reclined there, breathing deep and yawning openly, their arms tossed about, as they lay. Others, their gems and garments fallen from them, the folds of their robes all tumbled, without consciousness, with wide eyes staring and unmoved, shone not in beauty, lying there, bereft of will. The veils had fallen from their faces, their bodies were crowded together, their wide-open lips were wet, their garments fallen in disarray. And another, as though wine had overcome her, lay there, her form all changed, and powerless.

And he, the prince, of fascinating beauty, rested there, quite otherwise, full of seemliness and becoming grace, and bore his form like a lake, when the wind not even stirs the lotuses on its waters. And seeing them lying there, their forms all changed, powerless in their young beauty, even though they had every charm of body, and shone in their endowments, the heart of the prince was repelled within him;

“Unholy and unseemly, in this world of men, are the charms of

these enchanting women; and a man becomes impassioned of a woman's beauty, deceived by her fair robes and adornments. If a man should consider the nature of women, thus overcome, and changed by sleep, it is certain that his passion would grow no longer, but he falls into passion, his will overcome by their allurements."

So to him, thus beholding them, the desire of renunciation came suddenly there, in the night. And he straightway perceived that the door was set wide open by the gods. So he went forth, descending from the roof of the palace, his mind turned in repulsion from those fair women, lying there in sleep; and so, all fear laid aside, he crossed the first courtyard of the house, and went forth; and awaking the keeper of his steed, the swift Chhandaka, he thus addressed him:

"Bring hither quickly my steed, Kanthaka, for the desire has come upon me to go forth to seek immortality. And as this happiness is born in my heart today, and as this mission of mine is fixed irrevocably, so I have now a lord, even in the wilderness, and the goal that I have longed for, is surely before my face. For, as these youthful beauties, putting away all shame and sense of reverence, fell into this trance, before my eyes, and as the doors were opened of their own accord, so it is certain that the hour is come for me to go forth after that which no sickness overtakes."

Obedient then to his master's command, even though he saw that this was the matter of the king's decree, as though moved in mind by the will of another, he set his thoughts to the bringing of the swift-going steed. So he led up that most excellent horse to his master with the golden bridle fitted in its mouth, and its back scarce touched by the light-lying bed—the horse endowed with force and excellence and swift speed, and beautiful with long tail, short ears curved back and breast and sides. And he, strong breasted, mounting it, and soothing it with his lotus-hand, quieted it with his voice as sweet as honey, as though he were getting ready to enter the midst of the army:

"Many are the foes that are turned back in the battle, by the king mounted on thee, and, as I am to seek supreme immortality, so acquit thyself, my steed most excellent! For very easy to find, in truth, are companions, when happiness is sought in things of sense, and when wealth is abundant. But hard to find are companions, for a man who

has fallen into misfortune, or who has taken his refuge in the higher law. And they who were my companions in the darkness, in the law, when I take refuge in the law, the truth comes to my heart within me, that they also certainly have their part therein. So understanding this, my search after the law, and knowing that my purpose is set for the weal of the world, do thou, my excellent steed, strive well with thy speed and valour, for thine own welfare, and the world's welfare too."

Thus addressing that best of steeds, as though he were instructing a well-loved companion, he, best of men, longing to go forth to the forest, mounted his white horse, as the sun mounts an autumn cloud lighting up the darkness of the way, and full of beauty.

Then the excellent steed neighed not lest the rest might hear him. And the sound of his neighing restrained and all in silence he set forth, with hurrying and uncertain footsteps. And as he went the gnomes, that are the courtiers of the treasure-god, bending their bodies before him, strewed lotuses in the way, their arms decked with golden bracelets, lotus-like; and with their hands held up the hoofs of him, going timidly. And as the king's son went, the gateways of the city, whose doors were held by heavy bars, such as could not be lightly lifted away, even by elephants, opened before him, noiselessly, of their own accord. So the prince left behind him his father, well-disposed towards him, his child, his beloved people, and his unequalled fortune, firm in mind, and looking not behind him; thus he departed from his father's city. Then viewing the city, with eyes like full-blown lotus-flowers, he sounded the lion note:

"Until I shall have beheld the further shore of birth and death. I shall return no more to Kapilavastu."

Hearing this word of his, the gnomes that wait on the wealth-god rejoiced, and the hosts of the gods, glad at heart, wished him well, in the task he had undertaken. And in their bodies of flame others of the dwellers of the celestials, seeing that what he had undertaken was very hard to accomplish, made a brightness on the midnight path, as when the footsteps of the moon break through the openings of the clouds. And the good steed, swift as the swift steeds of the gods, went forward, as though moved of an inward power, covering many a long league, until the red dawn barred the sky with gold.

II. IN THE FOREST

Thereupon, when the sun had risen, the shining eye of the world, that lord of men, came to the place of the hermitage of Bhrigu's son. And he beheld the deer there resting in quiet trust, and the birds of the air, that had come there to dwell.

And seeing it, his heart grew light, as one who had gained what he sought. He descended from his horse's back, to put an end to their wandering, and to show respect for their devotion, and his own kinship of spirit with them. And dismounting, he stroked his steed, as who should say that all is well; then he spoke to Chandaka, his attendant, full of kindness and with gentle tenderness in his eyes:

“Good friend, as thou hast followed this sun-swift steed of mine, thou hast shown thy love toward me, and thine own strength and speed. For though my thoughts are wholly full of other things, yet thou hast held me in thy heart. For thy love for thy master is not less than thy power to serve him. For there are those that love not, though they have the power to serve; and there are those, full of love, who yet avail nothing. But one who is full of love, with power to serve as well—such a one as thee—is hard to find, through all the world. Therefore my heart is gladdened by this most excellent deed of thine; for thy love for me is manifest, even though thou seest that I have turned my face back from all rewards. For many a man will set his face towards one who may reward him, but even one's own kin will become as strangers to him who has fallen in fortune. A son is held dear, that the family may not fail from the land; a father is served because he is the giver of food; the world is kind to us, through hope of favours; there is no unselfishness without its cause. But why need I speak all this to thee? For a word suffices to say that thou hast done what was dear to my heart. Return, therefore, taking my horse with thee.”

Speaking thus, the strong armed hero, wishing to show him gentle courtesy, taking off his princely ornaments, gave them to sorrow-stricken Chandaka. And holding the shining jewel that was set as a lamp in his diadem he stood there speaking words like these, like Mount Mandara, when the sun rests on its peak.

“Taking this jewel, my Chanda, bear it to the King, saluting him with lowly reverence. Speak to him, that his sorrow may cease, while yet he loses not his trust in me. Say that I have come to this forest of holy hermits, to make an end of old age and death; yet not through any lust of paradise, nor through lack of heart’s love, nor through resentment. Let him not, therefore, deign to grieve over me, who have set forth on such a quest as this. For even had I remained beside him, our union could never have lasted throughout all time. For separation is as fixed as fate, therefore I have set my heart wholly. For a man must be divided again and again, even from his own kinsmen and friends. Therefore let him not deign to grieve for me, set forth to make an end of grief. One may rightly grieve for those whose hearts are set on desires that must bring grief; but this determination of mine is fixed and sure, as of those who went before me in the path. Nor let him that shall inherit from me grieve, that I have entered on the path; for there are those that, at a man’s surcease, shall inherit his riches, but throughout the whole earth those who shall inherit his part in the law are few, or none. And even should my father say that this going-forth of mine is untimely, let him know that no hour is untimely for the law, since life is unstable as water. Therefore even today I must seek the better part, and thus is my firm determination. For who can hold his faith in life, while death stands there, as our enemy. Speak thus, and other words like these, good friend, to my lord the King; and do thy endeavour that even his memory of me may fade. Thou shalt even tell him all of me that is evil, for love ceases from the sense of evil, and when love ceases, there is no more grief.”

And hearing him speak thus, good Chanda, altogether broken down with grief, made answer to him with palms humbly joined, and his speech was heavy with tears:

“My heart sinks within me, lord, at this mind of thine, that brings such sorrow to thy friends—sinks like an elephant in the morass of some great river. And who would not succumb to sorrow, knowing this fixed purpose of thine—even if his heart were iron; how, then, if it be full of love?

“And how shall it be with my lord’s tender body, worthy to rest delicately in a palace—how shall it be with the hard earth of this

penitential forest, and the coarse fibres of kusha grass that cover it? And truly when I first heard of thy resolve, and brought thy horse, I did it through some power above my own, and fate indeed compelled me to it. And how could I, knowing thy resolve, of my own free will bring back thy horse, Kapilavastu's grief?" Deign not, mighty armed one, to leave thy lord the King, devoted to his son, well-loved, and old—as an unbeliever might desert the holy law. Deign not to leave thy second mother—she who is worn out with caring for thee; my lord, forget her not, as one who, ingrate, forgets a benefit. And thy fair princess with her infant son, with all her virtues, bringing glory to her house, and heartily vowed to her lord, abandon her not, as some craven heart abandons fortune won.

"And even if thy mind is fixed to leave thy kin, to leave thy kingdom, oh, my lord, desert not me, for my goings are before thy feet. I cannot go back again to the city, for my heart is all on fire; I cannot leave thee in the forest, as Sumitra left the son of Raghu's race. For what will the King say, if I return to the city without thee? And what shall I say to the dwellers in thy palace—I who should be a bringer of good tidings? And again thou sayest I should speak ill of thee, in the presence of my lord the King; but what evil can I speak of one who is a very saint for sinlessness? And even if, with heart full of shame, with tongue cleaving to my mouth's roof, I should bring myself to speak that evil—who would credit it? Only he who would speak of the moon's beams as fierce, and who would believe that, spoken—only such a one would speak evil of thee; only such would believe it, spoken. And thou who art ever compassionate, whose heart is ever full of gentle pity—is it well for thee to desert thy friends? Turn back, then, and have pity on me."

And when he heard these words of Chandaka's and saw his utter sorrow, the best of those who speak made answer, self-possessed, and very firm.

"Give up this grieving, Chanda, for thy separation from me; for change is inevitable for those who are possessed of bodies, in their various births. And even if, through natural love, I should not leave my kin to seek for freedom, Death will certainly tear us asunder from each other, helpless to resist. And she who bore me, full of bitter thirst and

pain, where am I, in regard to her, my mother, who suffered for me fruitlessly? For as birds come together to a tree to roost, and separate again in the morn, not less certain is it that the coining together of all beings must end in separation. And as clouds, meeting together, drift away again, so I deem the meetings and partings of living men to be also. And as all this world is subject to separation, how then may we say that we possess a union that is but a dream. For as even trees lose the inborn greenness of their leaves, how should there not be separation of those who are already divided from each other. Since this is so, give over grieving, my good friend, and go; or if love altogether overcomes thee, then go, and again return. Say to the people of Kapilavastu, who are full of loyalty to me, that they shall cease from their love of me, and that they shall hearken to my firm determination. 'Either he will come again quickly, having made an end of age and death, or, failing of his aim, and all hope, he shall go to his destruction.'"

Hearing him speak thus, the best of steeds, Kanthaka, licked the prince's feet with his tongue, and let hot tears fall. And the prince stroked him with his gentle hand, bearing the swastika mark in the palm, with the circle in its midst; and stroking him, spoke to him as to a friend.

"Shed no more tears, my Kanthaka, for thou art already known for a noble steed; for what thou hast now done will quickly bear its fruit."

Then firmly taking the keen sword, set with gems, from the hand of Chandaka, and drawing from its scabbard the blade decked with inlaid gold, as who should draw a serpent from his lair, raising it, he cut off his diadem and his long hair, dark as the petal of the blue lotus; he cast it, with its muslin folds undone, to the empty air, as a swan going forth on a lake; and, behold, the celestial dwellers plucked it up, longing to pay it reverence, with great honour. And the hosts of heaven-dwellers worshipped it, ascending thus to the sky, with signal worship.

And putting off that robe of his, bright with all adornments, and the kingly splendour from his head, and seeing his muslin headdress floating away, like a golden swan, that sage desired a forest garment. Thereupon, a hunter of wild beasts in form, one of the heaven-

dwellers of perfect purity appeared there, close at hand, wearing a garment of dull red, and the Shakya prince addressed him thus:

“Auspicious is this dull red robe of thine, like the robe of a devotee: but thy injurious bow becomes thee not. Therefore, good friend, if thou settest no special treasure by it, give this garment to me, and take thou mine.”

And the hunter spoke:

“O thou fulfiller of desires, this garment has fulfilled my desires, since giving them confidence through it, I have slain the deer; but if it has any worth for thee, who art like a king of the gods, accept it from me, and give me that white robe of thine.”

With much delight, then, he took the forest garment, and put off his own white linen robe, and the hunter, taking to him his divine form again, ascended to the celestials, bearing the white robe with him.

Thereupon the prince, and the groom also, fell into a great wonder, as he departed thus; and they quickly showed reverence to him who had worn the forest garment. Then dismissing the tear-stained Chanda, he of the mighty heart, whose glory was hid in the dull red robe of the hunter, went forth thither, where the hermitage was, like a mighty mountain, wrapped in the red clouds of evening.

And as his master, spurning his splendid kingdom, went forth to the forest of penances, in a faded robe, Chandaka tossed his arms in the air, and, weeping bitterly, threw himself on the ground. And looking after him, he again cried out aloud, wrapping his arms about the good steed Kanthaka. And hopelessly lamenting again and again, his body went to the city, but his heart remained behind.

And awhile he was lost in thought, and awhile he cried aloud; and again he stumbled in the pathway, and again he fell. And so going and tormented by the might of his love, he did many strange things as he went his way.

Thus dismissing wet-eyed, weeping Chanda, and entering the forest according to his desire, with his purpose gained, his splendour set aside, he entered the hermitage like the home of perfection. The prince, walking, like the lion, king over the beasts of the forest, entered the dwelling of the deer, himself gentle as a deer. And though he had cast away his splendour, he yet held the eyes of all by the

splendour of his beauty.

And those who had come in chariots, with their wives, stopped their steeds in delight and watched him, in form like the king of the gods, their heads bent lowly towards him in reverence. And the men of priestly birth who had gone forth for fuel, coming with the kindling wood, or flowers, or the sacred kusha grass in their hands, even though they had gone through many disciplines, and had learned to rule their thoughts, were overcome with the desire to look at him, and did not go on to their dwellings.

And the peacocks cried out shrilly in their joy, as if they had seen a dark-blue rain cloud coming. And leaving the luscious grass, the deer stood there large-eyed, their heads turned towards him, and those who kept the deer. And seeing the kingly descendant of the children of the sun, flaming there like the sun uprisen, the cows, though they had been milked already, so great was their delight, gave milk again as a holy oblation.

“This is one of the eight Gods of the breath, or haply of the twin physicians of the celestials”; thus resounded the voices of the saints, full of wonderment. For he shone like the form of the king of the gods, like a second refuge of the moving and unmoving world, and lit up the whole forest, as though the sun had come there for his good pleasure.

Thereupon saluted and greeted with all courtesy by those dwellers in the hermitage, he saluted them in return, according to the gentle law, his voice like the voice of a water-bearing cloud in the season of the rains. And accompanied by those pious folk who were full of longing for paradise, he, who longed for freedom only, went onward into the hermitage, to behold their various penances. And he, noble-hearted, beheld there the varied forms of penances of those who were fulfilling penances in that forest of penances. And to one of those men of penances, who was walking beside him, desiring to know how the matter stood, he spoke these words:

“This is the first time that I come to this hermitage, and therefore I know not the rule of the law. Therefore let thy worthiness deign to declare to me what your fixed purpose is, and to what end?”

Thereupon the practiser of penances made answer to that bull of the Shakyas, a very bull in valour; telling him the whole matter step

by step, and the way of penances, and the fruit of the way. How some lived on wild food, coming from the river, and leaves and water, and fruit and roots; how this was the life of the saints, and how some of them lived apart, and others ceased from penances. How others live like the birds of the air, on the grain they pick up; and others like the deer, on the green herbs of the earth. And how others, as if turned into ant hills, live on air, with the snakes. How others live on what they wring forth effortfully from the rocks, and others on grain that their own teeth have ground. And some, after cooking for others, eat of the remnants themselves, if any be left. Others, with hair knotted and wet with water, twice offer the sacred fire, with chanted hymns. Some dwell plunged in the water, like fish, till the tortoises scratch their bodies.

And, by such penances as these that fill their time, they seek the heavenly world; and by yet others, the world of mortal men. By a painful way they seek happiness; for pain, they say, is the root of the law.

Hearing this story told, and the word of the man of penances, that son of the King of men was not greatly delighted with them, even though he knew not yet the perfect truth; he spoke, therefore, this thought that had come into his heart:

“Many a penance here is hard enough and painful enough, yet heaven is set as the reward of penance. Yet heaven and all the worlds are doomed to change; of little worth, in sooth, is the toil of all these hermitages. And they who, abandoning fortune and friends and wealth, perform this penitential law for the sake of heaven, they indeed, after all their sacrifices, desire to go to a second penitential forest, and a greater. And he who, led on by desire, seeks for another existence, through penances and torturing of his body, he, indeed, altogether failing to understand the turning circle of birth, grievously follows after grief. All men fear death for ever, yet they effortfully strive for a new life; when that new life is come, death follows certain with it; and sunk there verily, they are slaves to fear. Some enter upon pains for this world's sake, and some for the sake of heaven undergo much toil. In the search for happiness, this world of men is pitiful, indeed, in its hopes, fails of its end, and falls into helplessness. Not indeed is that effort to be despised, which, giving up the less, follows after the better;

wise men should strive strongly for that which, done once, is not to do again.

“But if pain of the body is virtue in the world, then bodily happiness is vice. Yet by virtue they hope to gain this happiness in another world; therefore vice is the fruit of virtue.

“Since the body moves, or ceases to move, through the power of the mind, the right way is to control the mind, for without thought, the body is like a log of wood.

“If holiness is to be gained by purity of food, then the deer also attain to holiness. And the wealthy are therefore wealthy through fortune’s fault, since such are the fruits of wealth.

“And if, in sorrow, attachment to it is a cause of holiness, why should there not be the same attachment to joy? If the rule is that there should be no attachment in happiness, should there not also be unattachment in pain?

“And there are those who go to holy shrines to bathe in the waters and wash away their sins; yet their satisfaction of heart is indeed empty, for water cannot wash away sin.

“That water is holy where the righteous dwell; therefore righteousness is the true place of pilgrimage, and water without doubt is only water.”

Thus he spoke, with wisdom and eloquence, until the Sun went down; and then he entered the wood, whose trees were stained with the smoke of sacrifices, though the penances were now ceased. And the evening oblation was offered on the kindled fire, by the men of piety, after they had anointed themselves.

III.

And certain nights he remained there, bright as the lord of night, observing well their penances. Then considering the penances as vain, and leaving them, he set forth from the region of that place of penances. Then the folk of the hermitage set forth after him, their thoughts gone out to the splendour of his beauty; they went forth as the great masters do, following the departing law, when the land is overrun by baser men.

And he beheld them, astir with their hair bound up in top-knots, as

is the wont of devotees, and clothed in the bark of trees; and meditating on their penances, he stood there, hard by a great, wide-spreading forest tree. And all the men of the hermitage, coming up, gathered around that most excellent of men, and stood there, near him. And their elder, paying all courtesy and honour, spake thus to him with voice modulated as in the holy chant:

“When thou earnest, this hermitage became as though filled and completed; but if thou goest, it will be empty indeed. Therefore graciously refuse to leave it, lingering like the well-loved life in the body of one who longs to live. For close by is Mount Shailas, of the Himalay, where dwell masters of priestly birth, masters of royal birth, and masters of birth divine; and from their nearness, the penances of our devotees are multiplied. And there are holy refuges around us, that are very stairways to the doors of heaven. And there dwell masters divine and mighty masters, whose spirits are at one with the law, who are full of the spirit. And moreover this northern country is most fit for worship, since the law dwells here in its excellence. For it is not fitting for one who is awakened, to take even one step hence, toward the south.

“But if, in this wood of penance, thou hast beheld any remiss in holy rites, or falling short of the law, or failed from purity, and if therefore thou hast set thy mind to depart, then tell it, that thy dwelling-place may be made according to thy desire. For those who dwell here earnestly desire such a one as thee, for companion in their penances, since thou hast such a wealth of holiness. For to dwell with thee, who art like the king of the gods, will surely bring us a sunrise of godlike wisdom.”

Then he, who was the chiefest in wisdom, thus addressed by the chief of the men of the hermitage, and standing in the midst of the devotees—he who had promised to make an end of birth and death, spoke thus his hidden thought: Through these kindly affectionate thoughts of righteous men, fulfillers of the Law, and saints, desiring to show me hospitality, as to one of themselves, a great love and friendship is born in me; I am, as it were, washed clean altogether by these loving words, that find their way to my heart. My passion has faded altogether away, though I have but newly sought the law; and it

grieves me that I must leave you, after ye have thus dealt with me, giving me shelter, and showing me such strong affection; it grieves me, as though I had to leave my kinsmen, and men of my own blood.

“But this law of yours makes for heaven, while my longing desire is for the ceasing of birth and death. And I do not desire to dwell in this wood, for that the law of ceasing is apart from the activities of these penances. Yet it is from no lack of love, nor from any haughtiness towards others, that I go forth hence, from the forest; for ye all are like the mighty masters, standing firm in the law that has come down from the days of old.”

Hearing the prince's word, very kindly, of firm purpose, very gentle, and luminous, and full of dignity, the men of the hermitage honoured him with signal honour. And a certain man among them, who had passed through the rites of second birth, who was smeared with ashes, of great fervour, his locks bound in a topknot, his dress made of the bark of trees, fiery-eyed, keen-nosed, and holding a water-pot in his hand, spoke to him this word:

“Sage, this resolve of thine is noble, in that, being still young, thou hast seen the evil of life. For, judging between heaven and liberation, he whose mind is set on liberation is truly wise. For it is through passion that they seek the way to heaven, through penances, and sacrifices, and religious rites; but fighting passion as the chiefest foe, they who follow peace seek the way to freedom.

“Then if thy mind be set as thou hast said, let my lord go without delay to the refuge among the Vindhya mountains; for there dwells the Saint Aradas, who has gained the intuition of the better way of freedom from desire. From him shalt thou hear the way of truth, and shalt even enter on it, if so be thy will. But as I see, this thought of thine will enter his mind also, stirring it with a great commotion. For beholding thy face, with nose well-formed, as of a well-born steed; with large, long eyes; full red lower lip; teeth keen and white—this mouth of thine, and thy red tongue will drink up the ocean of the knowable, altogether. And that matchless profundity of thine, and thy brightness, and all thy well-marked gifts, will gain for thee a place as teacher of the world, such as was held by the masters, in the ages that are gone.”

So the King's son made answer once more to the sages assembled there, and took leave of them, in gentle courtesy. And the men of the hermitage returned again to the forest of penances.

Meanwhile Chhanda, the guardian of the prince's steed, very despondent that his master had renounced all to dwell in the forest, strove greatly, along the way, to contain his grief, yet his tears fell, and ceased not. And the way that he had gone at the command of the prince, in a single night, with the self-same steed, he now retraced slowly, thinking all the while of his master's loss—the self-same way, in eight full days. And yet the horse went swiftly, but there was no fire in him, and his heart was heavy; and for all that he was decked with bright adornments, he was as though shorn of his glory, when his prince was gone.

And turning his face back towards the wood of penances, he neighed pitifully, again and again; and though hunger was heavy on him, he tasted neither grass nor water as of old, along the way, nor found any pleasure in them. So they two made their way towards the city of Kapilavastu, robbed now of that mighty-souled well-wisher of the world; slowly they came towards the city, as though it were empty, like the sky robbed of the lord of day.

And the self-same garden of the palace, even though it shone with lotuses, and was adorned with fair waters and trees laden with flowers, was yet no fairer than the wilderness, for the glory was gone from the grass. And hindered, as it were, by the people of the city wandering in their way, with miserable minds, the fire gone out of them, their eyes all worn with tears, they two slowly entered the town, downcast and covered with dust. And seeing them, worn, and going onward in bodily weariness, because they had left the bull of the Shakya clan behind, the townspeople shed tears in the path, as when of old the chariot of Rama came back empty. And they spoke thus to Chhanda, full of grief, and shedding many tears:

“Where is the King's son, who should make great the glory of his race, stolen away by thee?”—thus asking, they followed him.

Thereupon he answered them in their love:

“I abandoned not the son of the lord of men; for weeping I was thrust aside by him, in the unpeopled wood, and his householder's

robe as well.”

Hearing this word of his, the people went away, saying: “Hard, in truth, is this decision;” nor kept they the grief-born drops within their eyes, and blaming within themselves their own greed of wealth. “So,” said they, “let us too enter the forest whither has gone the prince’s might; for we love not life without him, as the soul loves not the body, whose vigour is departed. This fair city without him, is a wilderness; and the wilderness, where he dwells, is a city. The city shines no more for us, now he is gone, as the sky shines not, when the rain-clouds bind it up in storms.”

And the women, gathering round the latticed windows, cried out that the prince had come back again; but when they saw the riderless horse, they clung to the windows, weeping.

And at the time of the sacrifice, the lord of the people prayed beside the altar of the gods, making vows for the recovery of his son, his heart heavy with great grief. And there he performed whatever rites were deemed of efficacy. And there Chhanda, his eyes overflowing with bitter tears, taking the horse, entered the palace, downcast and full of grief—the palace that was stricken as though its lord had been captured by the foe. And he went towards the King’s apartments, searching for him with eyes full of tears. And the good steed Kanthaka neighed with a heavy neigh, as though telling the news of evil to the people.

Thereupon the birds, that dwelt among the houses, and the swift, strong steeds, that were near, sent forth a cry, echoing to the horse’s cry, woe begone at the departure of the prince. And the people, deceived into too great exultation, hurrying towards the inner dwelling of the lord of the people, thought, from the neighing of the horse, that the prince had come again. And from that exultation, they fainted into grief, their eyes longing to behold the King’s son once more. And the women came forth from the houses that sheltered them, as the lightning flashes forth from an autumn cloud. Their garments drooping, their robes and vestures stained with dust, their faces pale, their eyes heavy with weeping. They were faint and colourless, and without lustre, like the stars, at dawning, when the red day comes.

Their feet were stripped of the anklets of red gold; they wore no

bracelets; their earrings were laid aside. Their well-rounded waists were decked with no bright girdles; their breasts were as though robbed of the pearl-chains that had adorned them. Thus they look forth at Chhanda and the steed, at Chhanda, desolate, his eyes all worn with tears; and their faces were pale, and they cried aloud, like kine lowing in the forest, when the leader of the herd is gone. Then full of lamentation, the monarch's chiefest spouse, majestic Gautami, who had lost her child, as a buffalo loses its calf, clasping her hands together, fell, like a gold-stemmed silk-cotton tree, with shivering leaves.

Yet others, their beauty dimmed, their arms and bodies chilled, robbed of all feeling by their grief, neither cried, nor wept, nor sighed, unconscious, standing like statues. Yet others, heavy-laden at the loss of their lord, sprinkled their breasts, no longer adorned with sandal, with the bright drops that fell from their eyes, as the mountain is sprinkled with opals. Their faces gleamed so with bright tears, that the palace shone with the gleaming of them, like a lake, at a time of the beginning of the rains, when every red lotus flower is bright with water drops. And with their fair-fingered hands, no longer hidden under their adornments, their heads covered in grief, they beat their breasts, with those lotus hands of theirs, as the climbing plants of the forest beat their stems, with branches moving in the wind. And striking thus their breasts with their fair hands, they were like streams when the lotuses that deck them are driven hither and thither by the storm-wind of the forest. And the blows that their hands inflicted on their breasts, their breasts inflicted equally on their soft hands. So their gentle hands and breasts pitilessly wounded each other in their pain.

Then indeed Yashodhara, her eyes red with anger, with bitter sobbing and desolation, her bosom torn with sighs, her tears springing up from unfathomable grief, spoke thus:

“Where is my beloved gone, O Chhanda, leaving me thus in the night time, asleep and powerless to hold him? My heart is as vexed by thy coming back thus with the prince's steed, as it was when all three went away. This act of thine was ignoble, unloving, unfriendly, O base one; how then canst thou return today with lamentations? Cease from these tears, for thine heart must be glad, nor do thy tears consort well

with such an act as thine. For through thy means—who art his friend, his follower, his good companion and helper, his well wisher—is the prince gone forth to return no more. Rejoice, for thou hast done thy work well! Truly a man's keen enemy is better than a friend, dull, ignorant and awkward. At thy hands, who hast called thyself a friend, and through thy folly, has our house suffered dire eclipse. And these women here, how greatly are they to be pitied, that their bright adornments are set aside, the sockets of their eyes all red with weeping, as though widowed, and all their glory lost, though their lord stands firm as the earth or the Himalayan mountain. And the palaces in their rows seem to utter lamentation, their dovecotes like arms thrown up, while the doves moan incessantly; losing him, they have lost all that could console them.

“And Kanthaka, did not even he desire my destruction, since he has carried off my jewel, while the people slept, like some thief of gold? Kanthaka, brave steed that could withstand the fierce onslaught of arrows, much more a whip lash—how could fear of the whip, then, compel him to rob me of my heart and happiness? Now base and ignoble, he fills the palace with his mournful neighings; but while he bore away my beloved, this evil steed was dumb. If he had neighed so that the people were awakened, or the noise of his hoofs, or the sound of his jaws had alarmed them, then this heavy grief had not fallen upon me.”

Hearing the lamentations of the princess, her words choked by tears and sorrow, Chhanda made answer thus, his voice broken with tears, his head bent, his hands clasped in supplication:

“Nay, princess, lay not the blame on Kanthaka, nor put forth thy anger against me!—for we are indeed free from blame—for that god amongst men departed like a god. For though I knew well the word of the King, I was as though compelled by a higher power, and so brought the swift steed to him quickly, and followed him unwearied on the way. And the good steed too, as he went, struck not the ground even with the edges of his hoofs, as though some bore him up, and fate kept close his jaws, so that he made no sound. And when the prince would leave the city, the gate flew open, of its own accord, and the dark night was lit up, as by the sun; so we can know of a surety that

this was fate. And even after the king had set thousands of watchful guards in palace and city, deep sleep fell on them at that very hour, so we may know of a surety that this was fate. And when such a robe as they should wear, who dwell in hermitages, came down for him out of heaven, and the muslin head dress, that he cast away, was carried up instead, so we may know of a surety, that this was fate. Think not then, princess, that we two are guilty, in his departure, for we acted not freely, but as though compelled to follow a god.”

And when the women heard this wondrous tale of how their prince went forth, their grief changed to marvelling; but when they thought of him as dwelling in the forest, they broke out into lamentation again. And the queen mother Gautami, her eyes sorrow-filled, grief-torn like an eagle whose young are lost, was stricken with weakness, and cried out, weeping, thus:

“Those locks of his, beautiful, soft, dark, and firm-rooted, that a royal diadem should encircle, are not cast on the ground. Can a hero of mighty arms, of lion stride, his eye like a bull's, his voice like a drum or a storm-cloud—can such a one become a forest-dweller? This land, indeed, is unworthy of this high doer of noble deeds, for he has left it; for the people's worthiness brings forth the King. And how can those soft feet of his, the toes well joined, the ankles hidden, soft as a blue lotus, a circle marked on either sole, how can they tread the stony forest ground? And his body, befitting well a palace, with its costly robes, sandal, and perfumes, how can that fair form withstand, in the forest, the force of frost and heat and rain? He who was gifted in birth, in virtue, and power, and force, and learning, in youth and beauty—he who gave ever, nor asked again—how can he now beg alms from others? He who, resting on a bright couch of gold, heard through the night the symphony of sweet music, how will he now rest on the bare earth, with but a cloth to guard him?”

And the women, hearing this sorrowful lamentation, linking their arms together, let their tears flow afresh, as the climbing plants, shaken by the wind, distil honey from their blossoms. Then Yashodhara fell to the earth, like a swan robbed of her mate, and, given over altogether to sorrow, spoke thus, her voice choked with sobs: .

“If he desires now to follow a life of holiness, leaving me his

consort, as a widow, what holiness is that, in which his spouse is left behind? Has he not heard of the great kings of old, his own forefathers, Mahasudarsha and others, how they went to the forest, taking their wives, too, that he thus seeks holiness, abandoning me? Can he not see that husband and wife are together consecrated in the sacrifice, that the Vedic rites purify both, that both are to reap the same holy fruit—that he robs me of my part in his holy work? Surely it must be that this devotee of holiness, thinking that I was set against him in my heart, has fearlessly left me sorrowing, hoping thus to win the heavenly beauties of the gods. Yet what foolish thought is this of mine? For these women here have every beauty's charm—yet through them he has gone to the forest, leaving behind his kingdom and my love. I long not so greatly for the joy of heaven, nor is that a hard task even for common men, who are resolved; but this one thing I desire—that my beloved may not leave me here, or in the other world. But if I am not worthy to look on the face of my lord, shall our child Rahula never rest on his father's knee? Cruel, indeed, is that hero's heart for all his gentle beauty; for who with a heart could leave a prattling child, who would win the love even of an enemy? But my heart, too, must be hard as his, hard as stone or iron, that it breaks not now, when my lord has gone to the forest, shorn and orphaned of his royal glory, instead of the happiness that should be his lot.”

So the princess, weak and wailing, wept and thought and wept again; and though of nature queen-like, yet now she forgot her pride and felt no shame. And seeing Yashodhara thus distraught with sorrow, and hearing her wild grief, as she cast herself on the earth, all her attendants wept too, their faces gleaming like rain-beaten lotuses.

The Buddha's Life

Theosophical Forum, February, 1903

We first heard of Buddhism, it may almost be said, through the works of Brian Houghton Hodgson, and his explorations in the libraries of Nepal. Before him, there was emptiness, void; total ignorance of a religion which has never had an equal for widespread sway, and which has subjugated races among the wildest and most ignorant of the world; not less than it has won a place among peoples for ages in possession of a high traditional culture. Yet, even after the researches of that patriarch among Indian students, Buddhism won almost no popular interest in Western lands; and all the labours of the now numerous band of Pali scholars, with their steady output of texts, translations, and commentaries, has done almost nothing to make Buddhism a subject of popular knowledge. It was reserved for Sir Edwin Arnold, and the *Light of Asia*, to gain a popular hearing for what is certainly one of the most noteworthy works of the human mind, and to draw the eyes of the Western world to one of the sublimest and most heroic figures of historic times. And it is impossible to say that Sir Edwin's success was not amply earned. It is true that his critics have ascribed to him rather a superficial and versatile talent than a true poetic gift; it is true that he has at times turned his ready pen to work which his admirers would rather have seen rejected; it is true that he has lent his skill to other faiths, as eloquently as to Buddhism; and, finally, it is true that he himself deliberately attempted to neutralise and undo the great success of his life, by writing, confessedly with a sectarian purpose, a later work, the

Light of the World. But, in spite of all this, the *Light of Asia* remains the popular presentation of Buddha and Buddhism, as assuredly as it is the high-water mark of Sir Edwin Arnold's achievement in verse; and, with no intention of disparaging this brilliant and versatile writer, it must be said that the chief element of its success is faithfulness to the character and ideals of the Indian Prince, rather than to any special poetical inspiration or high verse-weaving skill, that this unquestionable success was due.

This real fidelity to the original thought and feeling, not less than to the original tradition of Prince Siddhartha, the Buddha, is brought home very forcibly if we compare the *Light of Asia* with a very remarkable work recently added to the literature of Buddhism, by an editor whose wonderful refinement of knowledge seems to have checked, rather than aided, his work as a productive scholar. Professor Cowell, in publishing a text of Ashva Ghosha's *Buddha Charita*, and, later, a translation of the same, has done a work the true importance of which he gives us no clue to in his very modest and very scholarly introduction. For, in the *Buddha Charita*, we have, to begin with, an almost contemporary work with which we may compare the *Light of Asia*, and ascertain how far this, the only presentation of Buddhism which the world in general has found itself able to accept, is a faithful and true rendering, in harmony with the incidents, colour, and spirit of the original. In making a series of comparisons, I shall assume that your readers are familiar with the *Light of Asia*, and shall, therefore, quote only from the old Sanskrit life, which is probably to be ascribed to a period some two millenniums ago, that is, about 500 years after the events it records.

Sir Edwin Arnold has very well and faithfully preserved the rich, Oriental colour of the original—which is, if Professor Cowell be correct, the first model of that school whose greatest light was Kalidasa, and whose enamelled luxuriance the world has never seen equalled. But it seems to me, at the same time, that the original is deeper, more philosophical, and more elevated in tone than the modern adaptation. Take, for instance, the passage where are described the thoughts that led up to Buddha's resolution to leave his kingdom in search of wisdom:

“He beheld the fruitful earth, being ploughed, while the path of the share divided the soil like the waves of the sea; and he saw also how, when the grassy sods were cut and thrown aside by the plough, numberless lives of minute creatures were scattered and slain. Viewing this, he greatly grieved, as for the death of his own kin.

“Watching the men who were ploughing also, and seeing them parched and stained by the sun and the wind and the dust, and seeing the draught oxen galled by the burden of the yoke, he, noblest of men, was full of pity. Thereupon, dismounted from his horse's back, he wandered slowly away, penetrated by grief, thinking on the birth and the passing away of the world. ‘Pitiful is it, indeed,’ he said, and sadness oppressed him. Desiring therefore loneliness, he sent back his friends and sat down in a solitary place, at the root of a rose-apple tree heavily laden with luscious leaves; and he rested there on the earth, carpeted with grass and flowers, and enamelled as with precious stones.”

This passage shows at once the rich colour of Ashva Ghosha's poem, and its deep, philosophic thought; for it would have been quite possible to make the motive of Siddhartha's renunciation spring from some scene of melodrama, of repulsion from some signal spectacle of sorrow or of wrong: a tragic indictment against fate, such as Shakespeare has embodied in a splendid sonnet. But, with great wisdom, Ashva Ghosha has found his motive in a scene of quiet rural life, dull and uninteresting; the ploughing of the lowly husbandmen whose lives go down into the night, hardly more noted than “the numberless lives of minute creatures scattered and slain” by the shares of their own ploughs. The true philosopher needs no tragic or melodramatic event to impress on him the mystery of life, and the narrow bonds of limitation that hem in the destiny of man. Like a true lover of Nature, he finds the spiritual quality everywhere, on the simplest tuft of grass, or sand-heap, or broken stone, and does not need to seek it in waterfalls, and mountains and storms. The philosopher sees the contrast between spirit and circumstance as much in the stoop of a ploughman or the laboured tread of his oxen, as in the passion of Othello or the wild tragedy of King Lear.

Another passage records an incident that Sir Edwin Arnold has omitted altogether: Siddhartha's declaration of his intention to the King, his father:

“O Sovereign of the people, grant me this request! I would set forth a pilgrim, seeking for liberation; for certain is the dissolution of mankind here below.’ The King, hearing these words, shivered like a tree struck by an elephant. And clasping his sons hands like lotuses, he spoke to him, his voice choked with tears:

‘Put away from thee, beloved, this mind of thine, for the time is not ripe for thee to enter on the pilgrimage of the law. In youth, when the mind is unstable, it is a fault to enter on the path. For the heart of a young man is infirm in keeping vows, and his appetite is eager for the things of sense. It is fitter for me to give my Kingdom up to thee, and seek the good law instead of thee. For it would be great lawlessness in thee to turn thy back on me. Therefore put thy vow aside, and return to thy household life. After thou hast lived the life of a man, thou wilt find truer delight in the forest life’.

Hearing this word of the King's, the Prince made answer, in a voice modulated and low:

‘If thou wilt become my surety in four things, O King, then will I not seek the forest, and renunciation: That this life of mine shall not wane to death; that sickness shall never steal upon my health; that old age shall not mar the glory of my youth; that misfortune shall not overtake my prosperity.’”

Here again we find the same profound note; it is not the special and striking tragedies of life, its melodramas and startling calamities, that have filled Siddhartha with a sense of its meanness, but rather the common way that all must tread, that all have trodden so long as to have accepted it as the inevitable. It is from this universal fate that the Rajput Prince set forth to seek for liberation.

The Buddha's Former Births

Theosophical Quarterly, April, 1910

Among the great religions of the world, none has been so greatly misunderstood in our day as the teaching of Gautama Buddha, the sage who was born in Northern India five and twenty centuries ago.

In the face of the clearest evidence in his sermons, Buddha has been called a materialist and nihilist, and his magnificent wisdom has been distorted into a teaching of inevitable death.

But a reaction has begun, and splendid work in restoring a true understanding of this great spiritual system has been accomplished, notably by the author of *The Creed of Buddha*.

To aid in the restoration of the Buddha's teaching, we hope, from time to time, to publish translations from the books which contain it. The first of these, concerning that life in which he first formed the high hope of attaining to Buddhahood, is here begun. It is taken from the Introduction to the Jataka, a work certainly not less than twenty-two centuries old.

THUS THE MASTER SPOKE:

Four countless ages and a myriad years ago, there was a city by name Amara, "the Immortal," fair to behold, delighting the heart, ringing with the tenfold din of city life, with rich store of food and drink.

There were heard elephants and horses, the rattle of drums, conch-trumpets, chariots, and the voices of victuallers, crying: "Come! eat and drink!"

The town possessed wealth of every kind, all sorts of work were carried on there, the sevenfold treasures of jewels were there; the streets were full of varied folk; it was an abode of those who wrought righteousness, like a blest city of heavenly powers.

In that city Amara, dwelt a Brahman, by name Sumedha, “the Wise”; he possessed many millions, stored wealth and granaries.

He was a student, had mastered the holy verses, learning the Three Vedas well, and was perfect in divination, history and the duties of his birth.

That Brahman Sumedha was I.

Once on a time, entering an inner chamber, I sat and meditated thus:

“A sorrow truly is ceaseless rebirth; painful is the parting from the body. I, who am bound to birth and wasting age and sickness, am determined to cross to the ageless immortal shore of freedom from this life.

“Putting aside this vesture of decay with all its seeds of death, I shall go forward without regret, without desire.

“There is the Path, for the Path must be; on that Path I shall go forward to freedom from this life.

“If there be sorrow, then there must be joy. If there be this life, there must be freedom from this life.

“If there be heat, there is also grateful cold. So if there be the threefold fire, we should seek Nirvana, the quenching of that fire.

“If there be sin, there must be holiness. If there be birth into this world, then we may seek for freedom from that birth.

“If a man should fall in the mire and should behold a lake full of pure water, and yet should not go to the lake to wash, are we to blame the lake?

“So, since there is the lake Immortal, cleansing from sorrow and sin, if one go not to that lake to wash, the fault belongs not to the lake Immortal.

“If one hemmed in on all sides by his foes, seeing a path of escape, yet takes it not, the fault lies not in the path.

“So, since there is the Path, for him hemmed in by sorrows, if one

tread not that Way, the fault is not in the Way.

“If a man be full of sickness, and there be one at hand who heals, if he seek not the physician for his sickness, this is not the healer’s fault.

“Thus, indeed, if one be sore and grievously oppressed with the sickness of sorrow, and yet seek not the Guide, the fault is not the Teacher’s.

“Like as a man, who had been tied by the throat to a dead corpse, casting it off, would go rejoicing, free, lord of himself;

“So, putting off this muddy vesture of decay, would I go forward, without regret, without desire.

“As men or women, casting rubbish on the heap, go forth without regret, without desire;

“So, indeed, laying aside this muddy vesture of decay, shall I go forward, without regret, without desire.

“As master-mariners leave a rotten bark, shattered and leaking, and go without regret, without desire;

“So shall I put aside this wasting vesture of decay, as sailors leave the riven ship, and go on, forward.

“As a man carrying merchandise, who found himself among thieves, fearing to lose his treasure, would escape;

“So shall I quit this vesture, chiefest of thieves, and flee from it, fearing to lose salvation.”

Thus meditating, and thereupon bestowing on those who had wealth and those who had none my unnumbered millions, I set forth to the snow-covered Himalayas.

Hard by the snow-peaks is a hill, the Mount of Holiness; there I built me a refuge, a hermitage of boughs and leaves.

I measured out a walk for myself there, free from five hindrances, and with eight good gifts; and there I sought illumination’s power.

There I laid aside the vesture with nine faults, and donned the raiment of bark, with twelve good qualities.

Again I left my hermitage of boughs, for it possessed eight faults, and betook me to the shelter of a tree, for such a shelter has ten virtues.

Nor did I longer live on grain that had been sown and reaped, eating only wild fruit, that has unnumbered virtues.

Then wholly concentrated, whether I sat, or stood, or walked, after a space of seven days I gained the power of illumination.

When I had thus gained divine power, and made myself master of the Law, the Master Dipankara came, "the Light-bringer," leader of the world.

When he was conceived, when he was born, when he became a Buddha, when he taught the Law, so deep was I in meditation, that I beheld not the four mighty signs.

To the regions of the border country they invited him, who had come as his Predecessors came; and all with hearts full of gladness prepared the way for his coming.

At that very time, I had come forth from my hermitage, and in rustling robe of bark was passing through the air.

Seeing there the people full of joy and delight and well-pleased, descending from the air I asked the men who were there:

"This great multitude of the people is full of joy and delight and well-pleased; for whom, then, is the path being prepared, whose is this way? for whose coming?"

To my question they made answer: "A Buddha unexcelled in the world, Dipankara by name, a Master is born to lead the world; for him they are preparing the way, and this is the path for his coming."

"Buddha!" When I heard it, joy was born in me. Saying, "Buddha, Buddha," I uttered my heart's delight.

Thus standing I meditated, joyful, my heart full of delight: "Here shall I sow the seeds. May this moment not pass away!"

"If ye are preparing the path for the Buddha, make a place for me also, for I too would prepare his path, and open the way for his coming."

Then they gave me a place also, a part of the path to clear; and I prepared the path, thinking, "Buddha, Buddha!"

While my part was not yet cleared, Dipankara, mighty Saint, the Master, with two score myriad saints free from all sin and stain, who had attained six-fold illumination, came by that way.

Then rose to greet him, with the multitudinous sound of drums, beings human and divine; rejoicing, they welcomed him.

Beings divine and human there beheld each other; both, with palms reverently joined, went toward him who had come as his Predecessors came.

Beings divine, making divine harmony, human beings with human melody, went forward rejoicing toward him who had come as his Predecessors came.

Beings divine, gathered there in the ether of the sky, scattered about him blossoms of paradise and heavenly lotuses and red coral flowers.

Men, standing on the earth, strewed before him flowers of the forest, fragrant, beautiful.

Then letting my hair flow loose, and spreading on the still uncleansed path my cloak of bark and my robe of skins, I cast myself prone on the ground before him, saying:

“Let the Buddha with his disciples go forward, stepping on me; if I can keep him from the mire, it will be to me a blessing.”

As I lay prone there on the earth, this was my meditation: “If I wish it, I can today make an end of all my sorrows.

“Yet what shall it profit me, if all unknown I master the wise Law? Let me rather gain all wisdom, and become a Buddha to save beings human and divine.

“What shall it profit me, alone, resolute to ford the river of death and birth? Rather attaining all wisdom let me lead others across, beings human and divine.

“By this determination, I, a man, firm in heart, shall attain all wisdom, and shall carry over with me many beings.

“Cutting through the river of death and birth, scattering the threefold powers of this life, entering the ship of the Law, I shall carry over with me beings human and divine.”

Dipankara, knower of all worlds, receiver of offerings, standing near my head prone on the earth, spoke this word:

“Behold this man full of devotion, his hair flowing loose, as he makes this hard sacrifice; measureless ages hence, he shall be the Buddha of the world.

“He, coming as his Predecessors came before him, shall set forth from the pleasant city of Kapila, when he has fought the great fight,

and accomplished the supremely difficult work.

“He, coming as his Predecessors came, shall sit at the root of the Ajapala tree, receiving there an offering of rice, and going thence to the stream Neranjara.

“After he has received the offering of rice on the bank of the Neranjara, he the Conqueror shall go by the well-prepared path to the root of the Bodhi tree.

“There, bowing lowly down before the throne of wisdom, he, excellent and glorious, shall attain illumination at the root of the sacred fig tree.

“The name of the mother who shall bear him shall be Maya; his father, Suddhodana by name, he himself shall be Gautama.

“The chiefest of his disciples shall be Kolita and Upatissa, cleansed from sin, with lust gone from them, with hearts at peace, full of concentration.

“Ananda shall wait on him, the Victor, amongst the women who are his disciples, Khema and Upalavanna shall be chief;

“They shall be cleansed from sin, their passions gone, of quiet heart, well concentrated. The sacred fig tree shall be the tree of wisdom for that worshipful one.”

Hearing this word of that incomparable mighty Master, beings, human and divine, cried out in delight: “In this man are the seeds of Buddhahood.”

Beings human and divine in ten thousand worlds applauded, clamorous, full of joyful laughter, making obeisance with joined palms.

“If we fail to master the teaching of this present Lord of the world, we may yet, in times to come, stand before the face of that other teacher.

“As men who, seeking to cross a river, fail to pass the higher ford, yet pass the great river, going through a lower ford;

“So verily we all, if we fall short of this present Master, may yet, in times to come, stand before the face of that other.”

Dipankara, knower of all worlds, receiver of offerings, after he had thus praised what I had done, raised his right foot to depart.

All the Master's children, his disciples, paid me reverence; men, serpents, seraphs bowed down to me and departed.

When that Master of the world with his congregation had passed from my sight, I, joyful, with joyful heart, rose from the earth.

Happy was I with happiness, glad, and of cheerful heart. Altogether filled with joy, I sat down there to meditate.

Sitting there in meditation, these thoughts arose within my heart: "I have already gained power in contemplation; I have reached the further shore of illumination.

"In a thousand worlds, there is none such as I ; unequalled in the power of the Law, I have gained this perfect joy."

When they beheld me thus seated meditating, the dwellers in ten thousand worlds sent up a great shout: "Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"The signs that were seen in days gone by, when those who should be Buddhas sat in meditation, these same signs are present today.

"Bitter cold passes away, sharp heat ceases. These signs are seen today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"The elements of ten thousand worlds are filled with quietness and peace. These signs are seen today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"The storm winds cease, the torrents are stilled. These signs are seen today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"The blossoms of the land and the waters all burst into bloom. They all blossom today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"All vines and trees are laden with fruit. They so bear fruit today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"The jewels of earth and sky sparkle in their brightness. These jewels gleam today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"The melody of mortals, the harmony of beings divine resound. Both sound forth clear today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"Many-hued flowers are strewn across the sky. These signs are present today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"The mighty ocean makes obeisance, ten thousand worlds bow down. So they pay reverence today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

"Ten thousand fires die out in hell. So do the fires sink today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“The sun shines spotless; all the stars come forth. So do they shine today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Even though there be no rain, the earth is clothed with greenness. So is the earth clothed with greenness today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“The hosts of the stars shine forth throughout the mansions of the night. The moon stands in the Balance. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“The creatures that dwell in dens and lairs depart. So have they left their lairs today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“There is no grief among beings, all are filled with contentment. So are they content today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“All sicknesses are healed, and hunger is satisfied. Thus does it pass today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Lust loses its power, sin and delusion cease. Thus have they ceased today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Fear cannot linger then. And today, fear is gone. By this sign we know. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Dust flies not abroad at such a time. So is it today. By this sign we know. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Unpleasant odours flee away; divine fragrance comes. Such fragrance breathes today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“All divine powers become manifest, save only those of the formless world. They all are manifest today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Whatever hells there be, become manifest. They are all manifest today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Solid walls and doors and rocks are no longer a barrier. They have today become as transparent ether. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Being born and dying cease at such a time. Thus it is today. Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.

“Do thou therefore quit thee valorously; linger not, but go forward. This we know well: Surely thou shalt be a Buddha.”

When I had heard the words of the Buddha of that time, and of the dwellers in ten thousand worlds, rejoicing and glad of heart, I meditated thus:

“The words of a Buddha are not doubtful; the words of a Master

are not vain. In a Buddha there is no falseness. Surely I shall be a Buddha.

“As surely as a clod thrown in the air falls back upon the earth, so is the word of the most holy Buddhas sure and everlasting.

“As surely as death is the constant portion of mortals, so is the word of the holy Buddhas sure and everlasting.

“As when the night has waned, the rising of the sun is sure, so is the word of the holy Buddhas sure and everlasting.

“As certain as the roaring of a lion that has come forth from his lair, so is the word of the holy Buddhas sure and everlasting.

“As it is certain that she who is with child must bring forth, so is the word of the holy Buddhas sure and everlasting.

“Let me therefore search and seek out the law of the making of the Buddha, upward, downward, toward the ten points of space, so far as the elements of law extend.”

Buddha's Cosmogogenesis

Oriental Department
Theosophical Forum, September, 1898

When Mr. Sinnett's work "Esoteric Buddhism" was given to the world, some fourteen years ago. Mr. Rhys Davids achieved some celebrity by the epigram that it was "neither esoteric, nor Buddhism." The epigram was a clever one, but, like many an epigram, its substantial truth was not so certain. For whoever has read Mr. Sinnett's brilliant and epoch making work cannot fail to see that the heart and kernel of it is the twin teaching of Karma and Reincarnation, then first presented to the world in a vivid and convincing way. And not even Mr. Rhys Davids will deny that this twin doctrine is the very foundation of Buddha's teaching, and that without it his doctrine becomes meaningless.

If we accept Buddha's own teaching, that every man is rewarded according to his works, one wonders for what shortcomings "committed in a former birth," it befell the Buddha, "Saviour of the world and teacher of Nirvana and the Law," to find in the west such an unimaginative band of interpreters, whose mental cast compels them to see, in his doctrines, only what fits their own philosophical preconceptions, and who have, consequently, made of him a nineteenth century agnostic, a kind of Comtist, by anticipation. One even finds, among the hardest of his prophets, a certain group who make him out a sheer materialist—that he was an atheist is one of their commonplaces—and who boldly assert that he never taught reincarnation at all. And that is that kind of preconception, which

gives rise to epigrams about certain ideas being “neither esoteric, nor Buddhism.” Now, it may be worth while to cite two passages among thousands to show that Buddha *did* teach the doctrine of reincarnation, and taught substantially as Mr. Sinnett describes it in his epigrammatically condemned book.

Our quotations come from the *Visuddhi Magga*:

In order to call to mind former states of existence, a priest should try and consider in retrograde order. all that he did for a whole day and night likewise.

“ in this retrograde order must he consider what he did the day before, the day before that, up to the fifth day, tenth day, half month, month, year; and having, in the self same manner, considered the previous ten, twenty years and so on, up to the time of his conception in this existence, he must then consider the name and form present at the moment of his death in the previous existence. A clever man is able to penetrate beyond conception at the first trial, and to take as his object of thought the name and form present at the moment of his death. But whereas the name and form of the previous existence utterly ceased and another one came into being, therefore that point of time is like thick darkness and difficult to be made out by the mind of a stupid man. But even such a one should not despair, and say: ‘I shall never be able to penetrate beyond conception, and take as my object of thought the name and form present at the moment of my death in the last existence,’ but he should again and again enter upon the trance that leads to the High Powers, and each time he rises from it he should again consider that point of time.”

The other quotation gives further instructions:

“His alert attention having become possessed of this knowledge, he can call to mind many former states of existence, to wit: one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred thousand births, many destructions of a world-cycle, many renovations of a world-cycle, many destructions and many

renovations of a world-cycle; 'I lived in such a place, had such a name, was of such a family, of such a caste, had such a maintenance, experienced such happiness and such miseries, had such a length of life. Then I passed from that existence and was reborn in such a place, there also I had such a name, was of such a family, of such a caste, had such a maintenance, experienced such happiness and such miseries, had such a length of life. Then I passed from that existence and was reborn in this existence.' Thus he can call to mind many former states of existence and can specifically characterize them."

Thus the *Visuddhi Magga*, an eminently Buddhist work, not only teaches the doctrine of reincarnation, but even goes so far as to give a receipt how these various incarnations are to be remembered even by "a stupid man." The process looks easy enough and depends on the association of ideas and on forming the habit of going backwards over the events of one's present life, beginning with a period of twenty four hours and gradually working back "to the moment of conception," then stepping across the chasm to the moment of the preceding death.

The passage "a clever priest is able, etc., etc." is remarkable in the extreme and very suggestive. And the word of encouragement to the "stupid man" is followed by a parable, well worth mentioning.

As a man who blunts his axe, in cutting down a bit tree, does not despair, but goes to the smith and gets it sharpened, and then back again to the tree; and this he repeats, if need be, many times, moreover, what was once cut need not be cut again, so is it with the process for recalling up the memory of past births.

Now, if words have any meaning at all, this surely means that Buddha taught a doctrine of reincarnation, very much as Mr. Sinnett does in his book, "Esoteric Buddhism," this doctrine being, in fact, the heart of the book. And no one will deny, that it was through Mr. Sinnett's book that the idea of reincarnation was first made thinkable and even credible to the western world.

But if we go beyond this one doctrine shall we find anything like Mr. Sinnett's ideas—or the ideas of Mr. Sinnett's book—in the teachings of Buddha? And, more particularly, shall we find any such large conception of the evolutionary processes, as, for instance, in the

theories of Laplace and Darwin?

In answer to these questions, I wish to describe a passage of great interest in the *Visuddhi Magga*. But it may not be out of place to say at the outset, that, in doing this, I have no specific intention of defending Mr. Sinnett's book, or any desire to prove that it contains the only original and genuine Buddhism. I use "Esoteric Buddhism" only as an illustration of a conception of Buddha radically opposed to that at present in vogue among his Western interpreters, who make him out to have been hardly more than a pessimistic moralizer of a somewhat aggravating type, in spite of the tradition of his singularly winning personality.

It is true that the *Visuddhi Magga* does not come to us as a part of the teaching directly recorded in the very words of Buddha, but I think there is no valid reason for doubting that it nevertheless contains and embodies a genuine tradition of Buddha's doctrine. The immediate author, Buddha Ghosa, continually refers to teachings of Buddha, which support his more ample treatment of the subject and implies that he is simply putting on record a doctrine handed down by tradition.

Thus, the passage, which we have quoted as to the numbers of past births to be remembered, is almost if not quite identical with a passage in the *Akhankehya Sutta*. And if we are to accept the Buddhist belief as to the Suttas, the latter does not contain the very words of Buddha.

Now, in the *Visuddhi Magga*, the phrase "many destructions and many renovations of a world cycle" naturally leads up to the questions: what is a world-cycle, and how is it destroyed, and, more especially, how is it renewed? And the answer to the last of these questions opens the way for a description of cosmic evolution, which is analogous to the nebular hypothesis of Laplace and is followed by certain geological theories of great interest. The more so as they are set forth with one or two remarkable illustrations.

We shall begin with the description of a new cosmic period, after the night of the gods, night during which "the upper regions of space have become one with those below, and wholly dark."

"Now, after the lapse of another long period, a great cloud arises. And first it rains with a very fine rain, and then the rain

pours down in streams which gradually increase from the thickness of a water lily stalk to that of a staff, of a club, of the trunk of a palmyra tree. And when this cloud has filled every burnt place throughout a hundred thousand times ten million worlds, it disappears. And then a wind arises, below and on the sides of the water, and rolls it into one mass, which is round like a drop on the leaf of a lotus.”

Is it not evident, that in this fine cosmic rain we have something very like the cosmic dust, the “nebulous matter” of the theory of Laplace? And have we not in the wind which rolls the mist into a sphere, something not unlike the “rotary motion” which is so necessary for Laplace’s theory, but for which he had offered as little adequate explanation, as does the Indian speculator, who simply states that his wind *arose*?

To continue the text:

“After the water has thus been massed together by the wind, it dwindles away and, by degrees, descends to a lower level. When it has descended to its original level on the surface of the earth, mighty winds arise, and they hold the water helplessly in check, as if in a covered vessel.”

Then comes a passage in the *Visuddhi Magga*, which is strikingly akin to the tradition of the sun bright demi-gods descending to incarnation in order to people the newly formed world.

“Then beings, who have been living in the Heaven of the Radiant Gods, leave that existence, either on account of having completed their term of life, or on account of the exhaustion of their merit, and are reborn here on earth. They shine with their own light and wander through space. Thereupon, as described in the Discourse on the Primitive Ages, they taste that savoury earth, are overcome with desire and fall to eating it ravenously. Then they cease to shine with their own light and find themselves in darkness. When they perceive this darkness, they become afraid. Now after these beings have begun to eat the savoury earth, by degrees some become handsome and some ugly. Then the handsome despise the ugly, and as the result of

this despising, the savouriness of the earth disappears . . . and rice grows up without any need of cultivation . . . Now when these beings eat this material food, the excrements are formed, within them and in order that they may relieve themselves, openings appear in their bodies, and the virility of the man, and the femininity of the woman . . . And being tormented by the reproofs of the wise for their low conduct, they build houses for its concealment. And having begun to dwell in houses, after a while they follow the example of some lazy one among themselves and store up food. From that time on the red granules and the husks envelop the rice grains and wherever a crop has been mown down it does not spring up again. Then these beings come together and groan aloud saying: Alas! Wickedness has sprung up among men, for, surely, formerly we were made of mind . . . Then they institute boundary lines, and one steals another's share. After reviling the offender two or three times, they beat him with their fists, with clods of earth, with sticks." . . .

Thus, according to the *Visuddhi Magga*, the sacred rights of property came to be established. This same ancient book narrates further how another sacred institution of man came into existence, namely that of royalty.

" . . . When this stealing, reproof, lying, and violence had sprung up among them, they came together and said: What is now we elect some one of us, who shall get angry with him who merits anger, reprove him who merits reproof and banish him who merits banishment. And we will give him in return a share of our rice." . . .

And to this day that share of rice is given in support of any man, whose duty it is, either by election of birth, to "get angry with him who merits anger." The very complicated origin, objects and privileges of sovereignty put in a very few words, indeed.

Seriously speaking, in the passage we have quoted above, we have an extremely close parallel to the idea of the "forbidden fruit" and the "fall" in the story of Eden, of Adam and Eve. Readers of the *Puranas* will remember also the closely similar myth of the Kapla trees, and

how their blessings were forfeited by desire.

The resemblance between the cosmic theories of the *Visuddhi Magga* and the Book of Genesis is only the more accentuated by the order, in which, according to both, heavenly lights were created. Says the former "when thus the sun and moon have appeared, the constellations and the stars arise." And here we have the order of events exactly as in Genesis, which states, that, after the greater light had been appointed to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night, "and He made the stars also."

The Buddhist text continues:

" . . . Moreover, on the same day with the sun and the moon, Mount Sineru, the mountains which encircle the world, and the Himalaya Mountains reappear. These all appear simultaneously on the say of the full moon . . . And how? Just as when panica seed and porridge is cooking, suddenly bubbles appear and form little hummocus in some places and leave other places as depressions, while others still are flat; even so the mountains correspond tot he little hummocus, and the oceans to the depressions and the continents to the flat places."

We can not at present follow the seer into his discourse on the original sexless race, which is very close to a pet theory of Darwin's, based on the survival of rudimentary organs. All we can do, is to point to the fact, that, in the few sentences we have been able to quote, we have a world theory closely analogous to the nebular hypothesis of Laplace; also a theory as to the origin of man, the heart of which is the fall of spirit into matter and rebirth, and, besides, the germs of a very interesting geological doctrine in reference to the relation between the formation of mountains and the cooling and hardening of the terrestrial globe.

And the teachings of the Buddhist writer lose nothing either in scientific suggestiveness or in vivid colour, because he has chosen to find a simile of the great cosmic process in a plain bowl of porridge.

Neither do we lose anything because of their manifest likeness of some of the theories found both in Mr. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* and Mme. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*.

The Fruits of Discipleship

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The questions of King Ajatashatru, with the Buddha's answers, make up the Sutta called *The Fruits of Discipleship*. There is a certain likeness between the position of the king and that of the young man who had great possessions, in the history of the Western Master. Ajatashatru, already endowed with power and wealth, longed for spiritual wisdom, a wisdom deeper and better than could be gained from the accepted teachers within his kingdom. So he came to the great Eastern Master seeking enlightenment. The resemblance comes out vividly in the Buddha's comment at the end of the discourse, after Ajatashatru had departed, returning to his palace:

“Deeply stirred was the king, disciples; touched to the heart was the king. If, disciples, the king had not deprived of life his father, righteous, a righteous king, even here and now he would have gained the divine vision, passionless, stainless.”

Because of the barrier of this old crime, committed through the desire for great possessions, Ajatashatru went away, seeking no further light from the Enlightened. Though the path was open before him, he did not set his feet on it, determined to follow it to the end.

It was part of the Buddha's fine courtesy that he did not rebuke the king when Ajatashatru, deeply moved, repented and confessed his sin of parricide, but sent him away with words of sympathetic understanding and consolation, recognizing in him one who earnestly longed for light.

That high, serene courtesy was habitual with Gautama Buddha, a part of his deepest nature; an unvarying graciousness of manner, and also the rarer intellectual courtesy, an attitude of sympathetic tolerance and forbearance toward views the very opposite of his own teaching. The editors of the Suttas have admirably described this mental and moral attitude in the Introduction to another Sutta:

“The Buddha, in conversation with a naked ascetic, explains his position as regards asceticism, so far, that is, as is compatible with his invariable method when discussing a point on which he differs from his interlocutor.

“When speaking on sacrifice to a sacrificial priest, on union with God to an adherent of the current theology, on Brahman claims to superior social rank to a proud Brahman, on mystic insight to a man who trusts in it, on the soul to one who believes in the soul theory, the method followed is always the same. Gautama puts himself as far as possible in the mental position of the questioner. He attacks none of his cherished convictions. He accepts as the starting-point of his own exposition the desirability of the act or condition prized by his opponent. He even adopts the very phraseology of his questioner. And then, partly by putting a new and a higher meaning into the words; partly by an appeal to such ethical conceptions as are common ground between them, he gradually leads his opponent up to his conclusion. This is, of course, always Arhatship; that is the sweetest fruit of the life of a recluse, that is the best sacrifice, that the highest social rank, that the best means of seeing heavenly sights, and a more worthy object. There is both courtesy and dignity in the method employed.”

The Sutta of *The Fruits of Discipleship* begins with one of those vivid, dramatically conceived pictures which so often introduce the discourses of the Buddha, graphically calling up before us a view of the India of his day and the personality and character of those to whom the discourse is addressed.

King Ajatashatru, ruler of Magadha, was seated among his ministers and friends on the upper terrace of his palace. It was the night of the full moon at the beginning of November, when the cold

season had succeeded to the rains, the time when the white water-lily blooms. To his ministers and friends Ajatashatru spoke:

“Delightful is the luminous night; full of charm is the luminous night; fair to look upon is the luminous night; peaceful is the luminous night; auspicious is the luminous night. What ascetic or Brahman may we reverently visit, who, reverently visited, may fill our hearts with peace?”

The ministers, entering into the king’s mood, named, one after the other, six teachers, each the head of an Order, with many followers, famed, revered, who had sought wisdom for many years.

As each was named, the king remained silent. The king’s physician was seated near him. To him Ajatashatru said: “And you, beloved Jivaka, why so silent?”

“Your Majesty, the Master, the Arhat, supremely enlightened, is now resting in our Mango Grove, with a great company of his disciples. This fair fame has gone abroad concerning the Master Gautama, that the Master is an Arhat, supremely enlightened, perfect in wisdom and holiness, happy, with insight into the worlds, guiding men to righteousness, giving the good law to gods and to men, an awakened Buddha. Let Your Majesty reverently visit this Master, for, visiting this Master, he will fill the heart with peace.”

“Then, beloved Jivaka, bid them caparison the riding elephants.”

So the elephants were caparisoned, and, surrounded by torch-bearers, they went forth into the luminous night. The Mango Grove belonged to Jivaka, the king’s physician, and his inviting Gautama to abide there, makes it appear that Jivaka was himself an adherent of the Buddha. It may be noted in passing that it is still the custom to pitch a camp in the deep shade of a mango grove, where the tall, clean stems and thick covering of glossy leaves make an ideal shelter from the almost vertical sun, which is oppressively hot even in November, at the beginning of the cold season, as it is called by comparison with burning May.

Then comes a charming bit of literary art, through which the composer of the Sutta brings out the admirably quiet manners that were distinctive of the Buddha’s Order.

The cortège drew near to the Mango Grove. As they drew near,

there was fear, there was stupor in the heart of King Ajatashatru, so that his flesh crept. Alarmed and excited, he said to Jivaka:

“Are you not tricking me, beloved Jivaka? Are you not laying a trap to deliver me to my enemies? For how could there be so many disciples, and not even the sound of a cough or a sneeze?”

It is worth noting that Ajatashatru, who had ensnared and murdered his father, should in his turn dread a treacherous attack. But the good physician answered:

“Fear not, king! I am not tricking Your Majesty, nor laying a trap to deliver you to your enemies. Go forward, king! Go forward, for there in the pavilion the lamps are burning!”

So Ajatashatru, the king of Magadha, went forward as far as the elephants could go; then alighting, he proceeded on foot and came to the entrance of the pavilion. There he spoke thus to Jivaka the physician:

“Beloved Jivaka, which is the Master?”

“That is the Master, O king! That is the Master, seated at the central pillar, facing the east, in the midst of his disciples!”

As Ajatashatru stood there, looking at the assembly of disciples, still and serene as a quiet lake, he breathed this ardent wish:

“Would that my boy Udayi Bhadra might be endowed with quietude such as these disciples possess!”

“Your thought has gone, O king, where your love is!”

“I love the boy; therefore I would that he were endowed with such quietude as these disciples!”

Then the king, when he had saluted the Master, and with joined palms had saluted the Order, seated himself at one side, and addressed a question to the Master. This is the question which was earlier summarized thus:

“All practical arts and sciences show visible and immediate fruit. Thus the potter makes vessels which are useful to mankind, and the sale of which brings him money. So with the carpenter, the builder and others. Now, I wish to know whether there is in the life of the disciple any visible, tangible and immediate fruit like the fruit obtained by the potter, the carpenter, the builder!”

In the text, no less than twenty-five professions and occupations are enumerated, with the completeness of detail which is so characteristic of the Buddhist Suttas, even beyond the measure of other Oriental writings. Their visible rewards are detailed in the same way: they maintain themselves in happiness, they maintain their mothers and fathers in happiness, they maintain their children and wives in happiness, they maintain their friends and companions in happiness; to ascetics and to Brahmans they give gifts which bring a spiritual reward, which lead to heaven, which bring happiness, which have heaven as their reward. Can the Master make known a like fruit in the case of the disciple, a fruit visible even here?

The Buddha follows his almost invariable custom of answering a question by asking a question:

“Do you acknowledge, O king, that you have addressed this same question to other ascetics and Brahmans?”

“I acknowledge, Sir, that I have addressed this question to other ascetics and Brahmans!”

“Then, O king, if it be not displeasing to you, tell how they answered.”

“It is not displeasing to me, where the Master or those like the Master are concerned!”

This is the introduction to a very full description of the character and teachings of the six ascetics who had been suggested to the king as worthy of a visit on that luminous night. It would be exceedingly interesting, did space permit, to study at some length the views of each one of them. For the present it must suffice to say that they were all in their way sincere. They had all set forth to seek the path of wisdom. They had all strayed from the Path. While some of them were materialists and nihilists with a degree of thoroughness of which we have hardly any conception, they were not materialistic in the modern sense. They were all ascetics. They had renounced the world with its pomps and vanities.

They were not ensnared by the allurements of the senses or the desire of wealth. They were ensnared by the processes of their own minds. Finding a keen delight in elaborate dialectics, they had fixed their whole attention on the workings of the mind machine, and had

become altogether absorbed in its various and endless activities. And, as a result, they had quenched the light of the spirit. Each in his tragic way, they illustrate the mind as the slayer of the real. Since they had fallen back from the light of the spirit into the meshes of the mind, they had failed to escape from the domination of self. As a result, they are argumentative, dogmatic, self-assertive, egotistic.

Once more, the narrator takes advantage of this situation to draw a picture of Ajatashatru's considerateness. Let the king tell it in his own words:

“When I asked each of them concerning the visible fruit of discipleship, he set forth his own teaching. It was as though, asked about a mango, he had described a breadfruit, or asked about a breadfruit, he had described a mango. Then, Sir, I bethought me thus: ‘How should such a one as I think of causing displeasure to any ascetic or Brahman in my dominions?’ So expressing neither approval nor disapproval, neither accepting nor rejecting his teaching, I arose from my seat and departed.” It will be remembered that, when these same teachers were named to the king, as he rested on the terrace of his palace, he exercised the same forbearance, not even telling his ministers that he had already tried them all and found them wanting, but remaining silent.

In quoting the editors of the Suttas regarding the fine courtesy of the Buddha, we passed without comment the phrase: “One who believes in the soul theory.” It is misleading, and therefore the complementary assertion, that the Buddha controverted the soul theory, is equally misleading. The word used is *Atta*, the Pali modulation of *Atma*, but in Pali the meaning is restricted to the personal self, the principle of egotism; *Atta-vada* is not the assertion of the supreme Atma, but self-assertion, self-centred egotism, self-love. What the Buddha taught, just as Sankaracharya later taught it, was that the personal self has no lasting being, no reality. He saw, with vision surpassing that of mortals, that, until the tyranny of self was broken, until this grasping egotism was completely overthrown and annihilated, the disciple could not advance upon the Path; could not safely draw near to the Path. It is the teaching of all Masters, and the most vital. When the author of the *Imitation of Christ* records his

Master as saying:

“If thou knewest perfectly to annihilate thyself, and to empty thyself of all created love, then should I be constrained to flow into thee with great abundance of grace,” he does not for a moment think that this self-annihilation means the final blotting out of consciousness, the end of spiritual life; it is rather the beginning.

The teaching of the Buddha is exactly the same, and with the same end in view. He knew very well that the disciple who had fought the great fight and won the victory, annihilating self, would make his own discoveries, and he was content to await that hour of illumination, rather than risk the carrying forward of the poisonous thought of “self” into a wider world. The Buddha is not controverting “the soul theory,” he is denying the reality of the “self.” But the soul, in his teaching, is not a circumscribed being, changeless throughout eternity; it is not static but dynamic; not an iceberg or a landlocked pool, but a flowing stream that shall become a river, a mighty river moving toward the ocean of Being, and losing there its last limitations.

To come back to the questioning of Ajatashatru; he asks the Buddha, as he had asked the six teachers, whether the Buddha could show him any visible fruit, in this world, of the life of the disciple.

The Buddha again answers with a question, and his answer appeals to a feeling, profound, deeply rooted in the heart of every Oriental: the instinctive reverence for those who have entered the religious life, a feeling only the vestiges of which linger in our western lands, as when Sisters of Charity go confidently into the slums of a city, where even the law goes armed and alert against some treacherous attack.

He asks Ajatashatru to imagine one of his own people, a slave, busy with the king’s work, rising earlier, going to rest later than the king, one faithful in act, pleasant in word, watching the king’s every look. Should such a one, contrasting his slavery with the king’s power and wealth, bethink him that the king was reaping the reward of great merit, and, to win merit for himself, determine to enter the religious life, would the king, hearing that he had donned the yellow robes, wish him to return and become once more a slave?

The king answers that he would greet such a one with reverence, rising to receive him, bidding him be seated, and bestowing on him

such things as a religious may use.

This, the Buddha comments, is a visible fruit of discipleship. It is impossible not to recognize the art, as well as admire the sympathy, with which the great Teacher begins at the point of Ajatashatru's common experience and habitual feeling; impossible not to see also that he is seeking to touch the king's heart, to awaken in him the latent homesickness for discipleship, and to strengthen it until it becomes intolerable. Therefore he goes on to instance another who has entered the path, this time a freeman, a householder. Would the king wish such a one to renounce the path and to return to his village?

The king makes the same reply. On the contrary, he would greet such a one with reverence, rising as before, and giving him gifts. This also is a visible fruit of discipleship. So far, the Buddha has spoken only of the liberation of the religious life and the reverence paid to the religious, things instinctively recognized by Ajatashatru, as by all Orientals.

The Buddha now goes further:

“Suppose, O king, that a Tathagata is born in the world, an Arhat, fully awakened, endowed with wisdom and righteousness, benign, knowing the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide of men, a teacher of bright beings and of mortals, a Buddha, a Master. He of himself thoroughly knows and sees face to face the universe, the world of bright powers, the world of dark powers, the world of the formative divinities, the world of ascetics and of Brahmans, the peoples of the earth, the bright powers and mankind, and declares his knowledge to others. He proclaims the Law, lovely in its beginning, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation, in the spirit and in the letter, he reveals the spiritual life in its fullness, in its purity. This Law a householder hears, or a householder's son, or one born in any other class. Hearing this Law, he gains faith in the Tathagata. Filled with faith in the Tathagata, he considers thus within himself: ‘Hard is the life of the householder, a path of dust and passion; free as air is the life of him who has renounced. Not easy is it for him who is a householder to live the spiritual life in its fullness, in its purity, in its perfection. Let me then be shaven and, donning the yellow robes, let me leave my dwelling and enter the way of renunciation.’ Then in no long time leaving his

portion of wealth, be it small or great, and his circle of relatives, be they few or many, he is shaven and, donning the yellow robes, departs from his dwelling and enters the way of renunciation.”

This brings us naturally to the question whether the literal abandonment of home and family, and of the ordinary means of livelihood, is indispensable, if the life of discipleship is to be complete. A living Aryan Master, who looks up to the Buddha as his supreme Master and Lord, writing to one who was a householder with wife and child depending on him, gives a profound and inspiring answer:

“Does it seem to you a small thing that the past year has been spent only in your ‘family duties’? Nay but what better cause for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of duty? Believe me my ‘pupil,’ the man or woman who is placed by Karma in the midst of small plain duties and sacrifices and loving-kindness, will, through these faithfully fulfilled, rise to the larger measure of Duty, Sacrifice, and Charity to all Humanity; what better paths toward the enlightenment you are striving after than the daily conquest of self, the perseverance in spite of want of visible psychic progress, the bearing of ill-fortune with that serene fortitude which turns it to spiritual advantage, since good and evil are not to be measured by events on the lower or physical plane. . . . Your spiritual progress is far greater than you know or can realize, and you do well to believe that such development is in itself more important than its realization by your physical plane consciousness.”

Yet there are serious difficulties in the path of the aspirant who seeks to combine the life of the householder with the life of the disciple. We have heard a good deal, of late, concerning the presence of carbon monoxide in our cities, and the injury it causes to the trees in the parks. Perhaps there is also a moral carbon monoxide in the inner atmosphere of a city which, while it is not an absolute barrier to the higher degrees of development, makes their attainment much harder. But it is certain that the grossness, the selfishness, the craving for excitement which our cities are full of, are absolute barriers to discipleship and to its fruits. The disciple may be in the world; he cannot be of the world. The Western Master expresses exactly the same truth, when he says:

“The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.”

It would seem, therefore, that the “going forth” of the householder, like the shaven head and the yellow robes, is a symbol, and something more. Whether he dwell in a palace or a hermitage, he who would be a disciple must have renounced all grossness and sordid interests, all selfishness and self-seeking, with the completeness which is typified by the householder’s going forth. He seeks to enter a new order of being, a new world, and he must comply with its conditions. So we come back to the Buddha’s answer to the king:

“Thus he who has gone forth dwells obedient to the rules of the Order, rejoicing in righteousness, seeing danger in the least transgression, accepting and training himself in the precepts, righteous in word and deed, innocent in his livelihood, righteous in conduct, keeping the door of the senses, recollected in consciousness, happy.

“With heart and mind thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, free from stain, supple, active, steadfast, unwavering, he builds up a body of the substance of mind, concentrating heart and mind on the task. From the physical body he builds up another body, a form of the substance of mind, with all its parts and members, not lacking any power.

“It is as though a man were to draw forth a reed from its sheath, clearly seeing that this is the reed, this the sheath; the reed is one, the sheath is other; from the sheath, the reed has been drawn forth.”

The Buddha is here quoting the very words of a famous passage in the *Katha Upanishad*:

“The spiritual man, the inner Self, dwells in the heart of men. Let the disciple draw him forth, firmly, like the reed from the sheath; let him know the spiritual man as the pure, the immortal.”

As the spiritual man, thus born from above, the son of the resurrection, he then enters a new order of life, a new world. The remainder of the Sutta is devoted to an enumeration and description

of the powers and faculties which he inherits, as the proper endowment of this new life. We have only space to outline them, leaving a fuller consideration for a future occasion.

“With heart and mind thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, free from stain, supple, active, steadfast, unwavering, he directs and concentrates heart and mind on the forms of spiritual power. He enjoys spiritual power in its various degrees: being one, he becomes manifold, being manifold, he becomes one; he becomes visible or invisible; he passes unhindered through a wall or a mountain; he descends and ascends through the earth as through water; he walks on the water as if on the earth; seated in meditation, he traverses space, like a winged falcon; he touches moon and sun with his hand; he attains even to the world of Brahma.

“He concentrates heart and mind on the power of divine hearing. With clear divine hearing, surpassing that of mortals, he hears sounds both divine and human, both afar and nigh at hand.

“He concentrates heart and mind on the insight which penetrates the heart. With his own heart penetrating the hearts of other beings, of other men, he understands them. He discerns the hearts and minds of others as clearly as a woman sees her face in a mirror.

“He knows his past births without number, as though a man, going from one village to another, and from that to another, and then returning home, should say, ‘From my own village I came to that other. There I stood in such and such a way, sat thus, spoke thus, was silent thus. Then I came to that other village, stood thus, sat thus, spoke thus, was silent thus. And now from that other village I have come home.’

“With clear divine vision, surpassing that of mortals, he sees beings as they pass from one form of existence and take shape in another; he recognizes the mean and the noble, the well favoured and the ill favoured, the happy and the wretched, passing away according to their deeds; these he sees as clearly as though one should watch men entering and leaving a house, or walking on the street.

“He perceives the truths concerning misery, the origin of misery, the cessation of misery, the path that leads to the cessation of misery, as one, standing by a pool among the mountains, looking down into

the pool, may see the sand and pebbles at the bottom, and the fish in the pool.

“These are the fruits of discipleship.”

When the Master had thus spoken, Ajatashatru, king of Magadha, thus addressed him:

“Excellent, Lord! Excellent, Lord! Just as though one should set up what has been overthrown, or reveal what has been hidden, or show the way to him who has gone astray, or bring light into darkness that men might see, so by the Master has the truth been revealed to me.

“Therefore, I take my refuge in the Master, I take my refuge in the Law, I take my refuge in the Order of disciples. May the Master accept me as a lay disciple, come to him as my refuge, from today so long as life endures. Sin overcame me, Lord, a fool, deluded, beset by evil, in that, for the sake of sovereignty, I deprived of life my father, righteous, a righteous king. May the Master accept this sin confessed, that for all time to come I may have the victory over it!”

“Sin indeed overcame you, O king, as a fool, deluded, beset by evil, that you deprived of life your father, righteous, a righteous king. But as you see your sin and rightly confess it, it is accepted by me. For this is according to the rule of the noble one, that he who sees his sin and rightly confesses it, shall for all time have the victory over it.”

Then said Ajatashatru, king of Magadha, “Now, Lord, we must go. There is much work, much for me to do!”

“Do, O king, as you think fit!”

Then Ajatashatru, delighted and rejoiced by the words of the Master, reverently saluting the Master, went his way.

When the king had departed, the Master said to his disciples:

“Deeply stirred was the king, disciples; touched to the heart was the king. If, disciples, the king had not deprived of life his father, righteous, a righteous king, even here and now he would have gained the divine vision, passionless, stainless.”

When the Master had thus spoken, the disciples were rejoiced and glad of heart.

States of Consciousness

Theosophical Quarterly, October, 1925

One of the Buddhist Suttas is known as the *Potthapada Sutta*, so called in honour of the Brahman to whom the Buddha addressed the teaching it contains, and who was so moved by the wise eloquence of the Master, that he sought and received permission to become a member of the Order.

Potthapada is the softened Pali form of the Sanskrit, Poshtrapada, the name of one of the lunar mansions, the spaces through which the moon moves, day by day, from west to east, across the background of the stars. From this lunar mansion the Brahman took his name.

The *Potthapada Sutta* shares with other Suttas in the same collection certain characteristics. Its spirit is at once reverent and humorous; it reveals an admirable gift for drawing character against a background of Aryan life; it goes forward in the same leisurely way, repeating dissertations and descriptions word for word as they have been given before. Whoever has told children some story that they love, has, no doubt, discovered, that they remember accurately every detail, every phrase, and that they will in no wise tolerate any departure from the authorized version of the story. In exactly the same way, the recorders of these Suttas, and those to whom they were rehearsed, love to have the very same words repeated time after time. For them, iteration, far from being a blemish or a shortcoming, is a charming quality in which they consciously delight. These early followers of the Buddha had the minds of sages and the hearts of children.

Thus resembling the other discourses of the same group, the *Potthapada* surpasses them all, perhaps, in lucidity and earnestness. We get very close to the heart of the Buddha's message, as he desired it to be received and put into practice. For his purpose was altogether practical. Beyond the measure of the other Suttas, this one gives us the living image of the Buddha, wise, pure of heart, earnest, eager to lead men into the path of life, ready to guide them to final victory. His thought and speech are more direct, less qualified and veiled by the need of accommodating them to the mental habit and limitation of those whom he addressed. So we owe a debt of gratitude to the Brahman Potthapada for the clear and honest mind, which made it possible for the great Aryan Master to speak to him so openly, so directly.

For students of Theosophy, the setting of the story is peculiarly attractive. Among the wealthy lay disciples of the Buddha was one Sudatta, to whom had been given the title Anathapindaka, "He who gives food to those who have no wealth." This lay disciple had purchased and presented to the Buddha, for the use of the Order, a tract of land called Jeta Vana, and on this land, dwellings for the Master and his disciples were built. It is worth noting that among the Bharhut sculptures, carved twenty-three centuries ago, there is a bas-relief representing the purchase of Jeta Vana and its presentation to the Buddha, with an inscription identifying the occasion. It appears that, a short distance from the residence of the Order, was a park belonging to Queen Mallika, and, further, that this royal and enlightened lady had caused to be built there a wide hall, set about with Tinduka trees, of which we know only that they bore fruit, and that they are mentioned in the epic poems. This hall, which became so celebrated that it came to be known simply as The Hall, was intended by its queenly founder to be "a place for the discussion of religious views and teachings," without distinction, it would appear, of caste or creed. For this purpose it was in fact habitually used. Here, when our story begins, we find Potthapada and his followers in residence. Tradition says he had been a wealthy Brahman, but he is here given the title of Pilgrim. With him were many of his adherents, to wit, three hundred pilgrims.

The Master Gautama, we are told, had risen early in the morning,

and, wrapping his robe about him and taking his bowl, had set forth toward the neighbouring town of Savatthi to receive an offering of rice. But bethinking him that it was yet very early for the good folk of Savatthi, he determined to go instead to Queen Mallika's park, where was The Hall, set about with Tinduka trees, and destined for the discussion of religious views and teachings. This he therefore did.

Then we get a touch of the reverent humour of the Suttas, and, at the same time, by indirection, a little lesson in the good manners and deportment of the Buddha's Order. For at that very time it happened that Pilgrim Potthapada was seated in The Hall, with many of his adherents, to wit, with three hundred pilgrims. It would seem, however, that they were swerving somewhat from good Queen Mallika's purpose. They were not discussing religious views and teachings. What they were doing the recorder of the Sutta tells us in detail:

“With a roaring, with a shrill and mighty noise, they were relating many kinds of common tales, such, for example, as talk of kings, talk of robbers, talk of ministers, talk of armies, talk of terror, talk of war, talk of food and drink and garments and couches, talk of garlands and perfumes, talk of kinships and cars, of villages and towns and cities and countries, talk of women and men and heroes, talk of the street and of the village well, talk of the dead, all kinds of stories, traditions of the forming of lands and oceans, discussions of being and non-being.” The narrator knows, and his auditors knew, that this is precisely the list of unprofitable themes from which the Pilgrim Gautama and his disciples refrained, as detailed by Gautama himself.

While this animated but unedifying din continued, Pilgrim Potthapada saw the Master Gautama at a distance approaching, and, seeing him, he checked his company:

“Let the gentlemen be less noisy! Let the gentlemen not make noise! Here comes the Pilgrim Gautama. That venerable one is a lover of quietude, one who speaks in praise of quietude. Should he see our company full of quietude, perhaps he would bethink him to join us!”

So the pilgrims became silent. So the Master came to where Pilgrim Potthapada was. And Pilgrim Potthapada thus addressed the Master:

“May the venerable Master come hither! The venerable Master is

welcome. It is a long time since the venerable Master has taken the turn coming hither. Let the venerable Master be seated. Here is a seat made ready.”

So the Master took the seat prepared for him. And Pilgrim Potthapada brought a low seat, and seated himself beside him. Then the Master said: “What was the subject that you were discussing, Potthapada, seated here together? What was the theme that was interrupted?”

“Let the matter rest, venerable Sir, that we were discussing, seated here together. It will be no hard thing for the Master to hear it later. But more than once, in past days, when Pilgrims and Brahmans of differing views had met together and were seated in this hall of discussion, the talk turned to the cessation of consciousness: ‘How comes the cessation of consciousness?’ And some said: ‘Without cause or motive a man’s consciousness arises and ceases. At what time it arises, at that time he is conscious; at what time it ceases, at that time he is unconscious.’ Thus some set forth the cessation of consciousness. Then another said: ‘Not so, Sir, will it be. For consciousness is the man’s self, and that comes and goes. At what time it comes, at that time he is conscious, and at what time it goes, at that time he is unconscious.’ Thus some set forth the cessation of consciousness. Then another said: ‘Not so, Sir, will it be. There are Pilgrims and Brahmans of great power, of great might. They draw in the man’s consciousness and draw it out. At what time they draw it in, at that time he is conscious, and at what time they draw it out, at that time he is unconscious.’ Thus some set forth the cessation of consciousness. Then another said: ‘Not so, Sir, will it be. There are Bright Beings of great power, of great might. They draw in the man’s consciousness and draw it out. At what time they draw it in, at that time he is conscious, and at what time they draw it out, at that time he is unconscious.’ Thus some set forth the cessation of consciousness.

“Then, Sir, the memory of the Master came to me, and I thought: ‘Would that the Master were here! Would that the Blessed One were here, who is so skilled in these principles.’ The Master thoroughly knows the cessation of consciousness. How, Sir, is the cessation of consciousness?”

“As to that, Potthapada, the Pilgrims and Brahmans who say: ‘Without cause or motive a man’s consciousness arises and ceases,’ are wrong at the very beginning. Why? Because a man’s state of consciousness has a cause and a motive. Through discipline one state of consciousness arises, through discipline another state of consciousness ceases.”

Through discipline one state of consciousness arises, through discipline another state of consciousness ceases: a significant sentence. It would be hard to find a weightier, or one that more perfectly reveals and sums up the Buddha’s purpose and message. The Brahmans and seekers after spiritual truth had for ages been considering and discussing the higher states of consciousness, the consciousness of adepts, of Masters, of the Bright Powers in the celestial hierarchy. Through the long course of centuries, these states of consciousness had come to be objective themes of speculation, everyone holding and argumentatively defending a different opinion. The whole matter had become obscure and remote, with the unreality that comes from much discussion. The Buddha lit up the whole dark field of controversy with a single luminous sentence: All states of spiritual consciousness, even those of the Bright Powers and the Masters, can be known because they can be attained; they can all be attained through discipline.

The sentence is as vital now as when Potthapada heard it. It is the answer to all the perplexities of philosophy and religion, the reconciliation in all controversies between religion and science, between materialism and idealism. It is the essence of Theosophy: All states of spiritual consciousness may be attained through discipline. It is the exact equivalent of the Western Master’s saying: Live the life and you will know the doctrine.

So we come back to our Sutta. It is, perhaps, a mark of the Buddha’s eagerness, his ardent desire to press home this saving truth, that he did not wait for Potthapada to ask the inevitable question, but immediately proceeded to formulate it himself:

“Through discipline one state of consciousness arises, through discipline another state of consciousness ceases. And what is discipline? It is this, Potthapada!”

Here we have one of the iterations already spoken of; for it is

precisely the ordered teaching that follows, that forms the heart in this group of Suttas, and is repeated, in exactly the same words and in the same order, in each one of the thirteen Suttas that form the group. They are so many settings, picturesque, dramatic, vivid, for the same central doctrine. Any one of the thirteen thus gives the essence, the vital part, meant to be put into practice, of the whole teaching. They are equally valid—separate or united; each one suffices for the practical needs of the disciple.

A part of this teaching we have already given in an earlier study, from which we may here quote one or two paragraphs, leaving the more complete analysis and study of each section for a future occasion:

“What is discipline? It is this, Potthapada! A Tathagata is born in the world, an Arhat, fully awakened, endowed with wisdom and righteousness, benign, knowing the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide of men, a teacher of bright beings and of mortals, a Buddha, a Master. He of himself thoroughly knows and sees face to face the universe, the world of bright powers, the world of dark powers, the world of the formative divinities, the world of ascetics and Brahmans, peoples of the earth, the bright powers and mankind, and declares his knowledge to others. He proclaims the Law, lovely in its beginning, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation, in the spirit and in the letter, he reveals the spiritual life in its fullness, in its purity. This Law a householder hears, or a householder’s son, or one born in any other class. Hearing the Law, he gains faith in the Tathagata. . . . In no long time leaving his portion of wealth be it small or great, and his circle of relatives, be they few or many, he departs from his dwelling and enters the way of renunciation. . . .

“He who has gone forth dwells obedient to the rules of the Order, rejoicing in righteousness, seeing danger in the least transgression, accepting and training himself in the precepts, righteous in word and deed, innocent in his livelihood, righteous in conduct, keeping the door of the senses, recollected in consciousness, happy.

“How is he righteous in conduct? He perseveres in kindness, honesty, chastity, truthfulness, abstinence, courtesy, quietude, reticence; he is simple in heart, in word, in speech. As a crowned king, victorious, sees no danger, so is the disciple poised and confident.

Through this noble discipline, he attains perfect peace. . . . He rids his heart of the three poisons: anger, greed, delusion; he conquers the five obscurities: envy, passion, sloth, vacillation, unbelief. . . . “

Righteousness and wisdom must go together; they cannot be separated without grave injury to both. The adherents of religion may think that they can follow righteousness and ignore wisdom. The devotees of science may imagine that they can reach wisdom while ignoring righteousness. Both miss the mark. The goal is spiritual consciousness, in ascending degrees, in deepening richness and plenitude. To gain spiritual consciousness, we need both; wisdom and righteousness are the two wings of the soul. So we come back to our *Sutta*:

“When the disciple perceives within himself that the five obscurities are banished, happiness is born within him, when he has gained happiness joy is born within him, when he becomes joyful in mind, his body becomes quiet, when his body is quiet he attains serenity, when he attains serenity, his heart enters into spiritual contemplation. He, rid of evil desires, rid of evil tendencies, enters the first stage of spiritual meditation, marked by the marshalling of thoughts and the forming of judgements, full of joy and serenity, and in that state he abides. His former state, consciousness of evil desires, ceases. While he possesses a state of consciousness born of discernment and the rejection of evil, full of joy and serenity, subtle, real, he is conscious in discernment, joy, serenity, subtle, real. Thus by discipline one state of consciousness arises, by discipline another state of consciousness ceases. This is discipline.

“Then, again, *Potthapada*, transcending the marshalling of thoughts and the forming of judgements, the disciple enters the second stage of spiritual consciousness, marked by the stillness of the inner self, the unification of the intelligence, without the marshalling of thoughts and the forming of judgements, a state born of spiritual contemplation, joyful, serene, and in that state he abides. His former state, a consciousness born of discernment and rejection, joyful, serene, subtle, real, ceases. While he possesses a state of consciousness born of spiritual contemplation, joyful, serene, subtle, real, he is conscious in spiritual contemplation, joy, serenity, subtle, real. Thus by discipline

one state of consciousness arises, by discipline another state of consciousness ceases. This is discipline.

“Then again, Potthapada, the disciple, who has passed beyond the longing for happiness and the conquest of passion, dwells recollected and spiritually conscious, throughout his whole nature he experiences that serenity which the noble Arhats declare, saying: ‘Poised, recollected, he dwells serene,’ thus attaining the third stage of spiritual consciousness, he abides in it. The preceding state of consciousness, born of spiritual contemplation, joyful, serene, subtle, real, ceases. While he possesses a state of consciousness poised, serene, subtle, real, he is conscious in poise, serenity, subtle, real. Thus by discipline one state of consciousness arises, by discipline another state of consciousness ceases. This is discipline.

“Then again, Potthapada, the disciple, by transcending pleasure and by transcending pain, both elation and dejection having ceased like the sun at its setting, enters into the fourth stage of spiritual consciousness, other than sorrow, other than joy, a condition poised, recollected, pure, and there abides. The preceding state of consciousness, poised, serene, subtle, real, ceases. While he possesses a state of consciousness other than sorrow, other than joy, subtle, real, he is conscious beyond sorrow, beyond joy, subtle, real. Thus by discipline one state of consciousness arises, by discipline another state of consciousness ceases. This is discipline.

“Then again, Potthapada, the disciple, by passing beyond all consciousness of form, by the cessation of the consciousness of resistance, by transcending the perception of diversity, with the thought, ‘Infinite is the shining ether,’ enters the infinity of the shining ether and there abides. The preceding state of consciousness of form ceases. While he possesses a state of consciousness resting in the infinity of the shining ether, serene, subtle, real, he is conscious as resting in the infinity of the shining ether, serene, subtle, real. Thus by discipline one state of consciousness arises, by discipline another state of consciousness ceases. This is discipline.

“Then again, Potthapada, the disciple, passing altogether beyond the state of abiding in the infinity of the shining ether, with the thought, ‘Infinite is intelligence,’ enters into the abode of the infinity

of intelligence and there abides. The preceding state of consciousness of the infinity of the shining ether ceases. While he possesses a state of consciousness resting in the infinity of intelligence, subtle, real, he is conscious as abiding in the infinity of intelligence, subtle, real. Thus by discipline one state of consciousness arises, by discipline another state of consciousness ceases. This is discipline.

“Then again, Potthapada, the disciple, passing altogether beyond the state of abiding in the infinity of intelligence, with the thought, ‘Nothing whatsoever exists in manifestation,’ enters into the state in which nothing whatsoever exists in manifestation and there abides. The preceding state of the consciousness of the infinity of intelligence, subtle, real, ceases. While he possesses a state of consciousness in which nothing whatsoever exists in manifestation, subtle, real, he is conscious as in a state in which nothing whatsoever exists in manifestation, subtle, real. Thus by discipline one state of consciousness arises, by discipline another state of consciousness ceases. This is discipline.

“Thus, Potthapada, the disciple, beginning from the point at which he possesses a state of consciousness of his own attaining, goes forward progressively from one to the other, from one to the other, until he attains the summit of consciousness. . . .”

So far, this marvellously luminous and complete description of the seven stages of spiritual consciousness. It will be noted, first, that the Buddha says, of each one of the seven, that it is “subtle, real”; they are not delusive, fanciful conditions, but genuine spiritual realities. Next, it will be noted that, of the seven, the first four are numbered, as the first, second, third and fourth stages of spiritual consciousness, together forming the “four dhyanas”; the three remaining are not numbered. We have thus a lower quaternary and a higher triad.

Considering the first four, we find that they may be grouped into two intellectual stages and two moral stages. First is the intellectual stage characterized by “the marshalling of thoughts and the forming of judgements,” the activity of Manas illumined by Buddhi; Manas marshals the thoughts, while the light of Buddhi forms the judgements. To put it in another way, Manas makes a quantitative analysis; Buddhi makes a qualitative analysis, determining real values.

In the second stage, there is less Manas and more Buddhi. It is a

state of spiritual contemplation, as distinguished from the preceding state of intellectual discernment or discrimination; a consciousness of spiritual reality, profound, joyful, serene, real.

Between the third and the fourth stages there is a similar line of distinction, but it is now moral rather than intellectual. Through the earlier stages of discipline the disciple has conquered all the causes of misery, the three poisons and the five obscurities. Through this conquest, he attains to the joy of victory. On this joy of victory the third of the four numbered stages of spiritual consciousness is based. It is still a consciousness which admits of the idea of duality; in this case, the contrast between the misery left behind and the joy attained.

But in the deeper sense both misery and joy are essential elements of our human life, exactly as being born and dying are equally essential elements in the progressive series of births and rebirths. Misery is, for the great masses, the essential stimulus to evolution; the effort to escape misery is the effort to attain joy. Misery drives, joy draws. They are the two sides of one spiritual power. So, ascending from stage to stage of spiritual consciousness, the disciple comes to the stage at which he enters into that one spiritual power and cognizes it from within, by identifying himself with its essence. He learns that joy and sorrow, misery and happiness, are in essence one. Supreme suffering is supreme happiness. The martyr dies in torment, rejoicing. The pain of the disciple is his joy. So he attains the fourth stage, "other than sorrow, other than joy, a condition poised, recollected, pure."

So we come to the three unnumbered stages of spiritual consciousness, the higher triad of our septenary. We may gain at least some preliminary understanding of them by the use of analogy. It need hardly be said that this is a very different thing from actually entering and experiencing them. Preliminary understanding may be possible for the disciple; direct experience belongs to the Master, or to the disciple during Initiation, when his consciousness is blended with the consciousness of the Master.

Within the limits of preliminary understanding, we can form some idea of what these higher stages of spiritual consciousness mean. The word translated "shining ether" is in Pali, Akasa, in Sanskrit, Akasha, the literal meaning of which is "the shining forth." In one aspect it is

the spiritual principle of Space, which “shines forth” from the unmanifest Eternal. In another aspect, it is the Light of the Logos. With the Light of the Logos, the disciple who has reached this state of spiritual consciousness is blended in a united life, experiencing the universal extension, the radiance, of that Light.

In like manner, the “Infinite Intelligence” of the succeeding stage would seem to be the Logos in its own essential being. Into that being, the consciousness of the disciple enters. He lives as the Logos. He is conscious as the Logos.

Finally, there is the complete merging of the consciousness in the Eternal, in that Nirvana which is Parabrahm.

What has gone before should make it clear that, while these seven states of spiritual consciousness are states of spiritual intelligence, they are not intellectual states. They are not to be gained, or even understood in outline, through any activity of intellect alone. No gymnastic exercise of Manas will disclose their real nature. The Buddha explicitly declares, and this is the whole message and burden of the Sutta, that they are to be gained only through spiritual discipline, through the exercise and mastery of those high virtues and qualities which he has enumerated. In plain truth, that spiritual state which is “other than sorrow, other than joy” requires for its attainment not intellectual acumen but heroism. Without the heroic power to bear the utmost of sorrow, the joy which dwells in the heart of sorrow cannot be won in the victory which reveals sorrow and joy as the two sides of the same experience.

As a great disciple of the Buddha has said: “These subjects are only partly for the understanding. A high faculty belonging to the higher life, must see; and it is truly impossible to force it upon one’s understanding, merely in words. One must see with his spiritual eye, hear with his Dharmakayic ear, feel with the sensations of his spiritual ‘I,’ before he can comprehend this doctrine fully.”

From the same high authority, we may quote a passage which sheds a flood of light on the form of cognition above the marshalling of thoughts and the forming of judgements, and also on the consciousness which is attained through union with the Light of the Logos:

“There comes a moment in the life of an adept, when the hardships he has passed through are a thousandfold rewarded. In order to acquire further knowledge, he has no more to go through a minute and slow process of investigation and comparison of various objects, but is accorded an instantaneous, implicit insight into every first truth. . . . The adept sees and feels and lives in the very essence of all fundamental truths, the Universal Spiritual Essence of Nature.”

Vestures of Consciousness

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It will be remembered that the crowd of pilgrims who, with Pilgrim Pothapada, were in residence in The Hall set about with Tinduka trees in Queen Mallika's park, had been discussing with animated din a wide range of topics, when the Buddha approached, coming from the residence of the Order at Jeta Vana. With a roaring, with a shrill and mighty noise, they had been relating many kinds of common tales, such, for example, as talk of kings, talk of robbers, talk of ministers, talk of armies, talk of terror, talk of war, talk of food and drink and garments and couches, talk of garlands and perfumes, talk of kinships and cars, of villages and towns and cities and countries, talk of women and men and heroes, talk of the street and of the village well, talk of the dead, all kinds of stories, traditions of the forming of lands and oceans, discussions of being and non-being.

But when the Buddha entered The Hall, the disputants were hushed. While Pilgrim Pothapada questioned and the Buddha answered, the pilgrims remained silent; and it is a part of the art of the unnamed author of the Sutta that, without describing or commenting on it, he thus indicates the personal ascendancy, the majesty of the Buddha, the reverence which his presence inspired.

Yet this impressive personal power is not represented as something miraculous and inevitable, the unnatural attribute of a divine personage predestined to victory. On the contrary, Gautama's humanity always shines through; there are passages which show him

suffering not only from discord among his own followers, but from open hostility and attack, and even the bodily violence inflicted by inveterate enemies. Each of these episodes has a profound interest, not only because it is a part of that great Master's history, but also because the underlying motives and impulses are deeply rooted in human nature. And they are related with something of that mellow humour that pervades all these scriptures like sprinkled gold dust.

It was from the dwelling of the Order at Jeta Vana that the Buddha came to The Hall and there met Pilgrim Potthapada. It was while he was in residence at Jeta Vana at a later period that a notable quarrel broke out among some of his disciples. Not far from Jeta Vana, there was another dwelling of the Order, under the superintendence of two advanced disciples; each of them had many less progressed disciples in his care, all of whom had been admitted to the Order.

Of the two, one had deeply studied the theory, the intellectual side of the Buddha's teaching, and instructed his pupils in that, while the other had fixed his thought and efforts on the details of the Buddha's discipline, the ordered way of life he had laid down, the acts enjoined and the acts forbidden, whereby character and will were to be trained. These two instructors perfectly supplemented each other, and should have co-operated in amity and mutual understanding.

Then came an incident, quite trivial in itself, which was magnified from molehill to mountain by the very human proneness to contention, the nearly universal desire to prove oneself in the right. One of the two more advanced disciples, he who was mainly occupied with the more abstract and intellectual side of his Master's teaching, had washed his hands, and, perhaps because his mind was preoccupied with an analysis of the Five Virtues or the Five Precepts, had left the water in the vessel, contrary, it would seem, to the rules of personal order which the Buddha had laid down for his disciples.

His colleague, full of the importance of these details of deportment, and not quite free from the vice of superiority, noted the omission and censured it not only in thought but in word:

“Brother, was it you who left the water?”

“Yes, brother.”

“But do you not know that it is a sin to do so?”

“Indeed I do not.”

“But, brother, it is a sin.”

“Well, then, I will make satisfaction for it.”

“Of course, brother, if you did it unintentionally, through inadvertence, it is no sin.”

Nevertheless, the instructor of discipline said to the disciples in his charge:

“This instructor of the law, though he has committed a sin, does not realize it.”

They straightway went to the pupils of the instructor of the law, saying:

“Your preceptor, though he has committed a sin, does not realize it.”

And these in their turn carried the word to him. Highly incensed, he retorted:

“He said at first it was no sin. Now he says it is a sin. He is a liar.”

His pupils immediately went to the others and said:

“Your teacher is a liar.”

So the quarrel was fomented between them, and even the lay disciples, those who supplied the bodily wants of the pupils, took sides and formed themselves into factions. It is recorded that the women of the Order, and even those who were outside, immediately joined one faction or the other. The spirit of discord reigned.

Tidings of the matter were brought to the Buddha at Jeta Vana. Twice he sent word: “Let them be reconciled!” Twice the reply came back: “Master, they refuse to be reconciled!” The third time, he exclaimed: “The body of the disciples is being rent asunder!” and going thither, he made clear to them the folly and wickedness of dissension.

When they refused to hear him, he departed and went alone to a distant forest, finding for himself a resting place in the heart of the forest under a beautiful tree. There, says the tradition, he was dutifully and reverently waited on by an elderly elephant, who had himself sought refuge in the forest depths from the noise and vexation of the herd. Before withdrawing to that seclusion, he had ruminated thus:

“Here I live, in the midst of the herd, crowded by elephants young and old; they eat the green branches I break down; when I would drink, they roil the water; when I would bathe, they bump against me. It were better to retire and live alone.”

So the two recluses met in the forest depths, and the elephant, benign and serviceable, waited on the Buddha. Breaking a leaf-covered branch, he swept the ground before the Buddha’s refuge; taking the Master’s water-pot, he brought him clean water to drink; by heating stones and rolling them into a rock pool, he prepared warm water for the Master’s ablutions, testing it with his delicate trunk; from forest trees he brought fruit for the Buddha to eat; he fanned him with a palm leaf, swaying it to and fro; he guarded the Master as a sentry, pacing to and fro through the night until sunrise.

Now it is also related that a monkey, watching the elephant from the tree tops, said to himself: “I also will undertake somewhat!” So, finding honeycomb in a tree, he laid it on a banana leaf and brought it to the Buddha. Greatly delighted when the Master accepted the gift, and dancing in ecstasy along the tree tops, he stepped on a rotten branch, fell and broke his neck, and, because he had served the Buddha, was reborn in a celestial mansion.

This is not the only monkey in the scriptures. It is recorded that a youthful disciple, taking offence at a slight rebuke, set fire to his hut of branches and ran away. When he learned it, the Buddha commented:

“This is not the first time he has destroyed a dwelling because of resentment. He did it also in a former birth.

“In the olden days, when Brahmadata reigned at Benares, a crested bird had built a nest in the Himalaya country. One day, while it was raining, a monkey came there, shivering with cold. The crested bird, seeing him, said:

“Monkey, your head and your hands and your feet are like a man’s; how comes it that you have no house?”

“The monkey said:

“Crested bird, my head and my hands and my feet are indeed like a man’s; what they say is man’s highest gift, intelligence, that I lack.”

“The crested bird said:

“He that is unstable, light-minded, disloyal, he who keeps not the

precept, will never attain to happiness. Monkey, exert yourself to the utmost, abandon your past habits, build yourself a hut to shelter you from wind and cold!

“But the monkey was incensed and destroyed the bird’s nest, and the bird slipped out and flew away. That monkey was reborn as the youthful disciple who destroyed the hut of branches.”

To return to the quarrelling disciples. It is related that the people of the neighbouring villages, reverent hearers of the Buddha, but not members of the Order, coming to the residence of the Order to seek the Buddha, were told not only that he had departed, but the reason of his going.

These pious lay folk were indignant, so that they gave no more offerings of food to the quarrelsome disciples, who were thus in danger of starvation. Hunger brought wisdom. They confessed their sins to each other, and, going to the forest, begged the Buddha to forgive them.

The Master made clear to them the enormity of their offence, because, though accepted as disciples by a Buddha, they had resisted his efforts to reconcile them and had disobeyed his commands. When they realized their sin, he forgave them.

But there were graver obstacles than the quarrelling of the disciples. On a certain occasion, an evil-minded woman bribed the citizens of a town near Jeta Vana, and said to them:

“When the ascetic Gautama comes to the town, do you revile and abuse him, and drive him out.”

So, when the Buddha entered the city, they followed after him shouting: “You are a robber, you are a fool, you are a camel, you are an ass, you are a denizen of hell!”

The venerable Ananda said to the Buddha: “Master, they are reviling us; let us go elsewhere.”

“Where shall we go, Ananda?”

“Master, let us go to another city.”

“What if they should revile us there?”

“Master, we shall go to yet another city.”

“Ananda, we shall not so act. Where a tumult arises, there we shall

remain until the tumult ceases. Ananda, I am like an elephant that has entered the battle. Such an elephant should withstand the arrows that come from every side. So it is my duty to endure with patience the words of wicked men.”

Not only reviling but violence met the Buddha as he carried out his work. Once, when he was among the mountains, his inveterate enemy Devadatta hurled a rock down toward him; a fragment, breaking off as the rock rolled downward, struck the Buddha on the foot, causing the blood to flow. He suffered intense pain, say the records, and the disciples carried him to Jivaka’s mango grove, where Jivaka himself ministered to him, applying an astringent to the wound and bandaging it.

These things are recorded, not by enemies seeking to belittle him, but by those who revered and loved him. They show the Buddha not as a miraculous being, immune from human woe, but as a man, yet a man of heroic virtue, wisdom, power, compassion; a Master, not a god. The majesty of his presence, not some supernatural compulsion, hushed the noisy pilgrims in The Hall, as the Buddha answered Pilgrim Potthapada. We may pick up the colloquy again with the Master’s words:

“Thus, Potthapada, the disciple, beginning from the point at which he possesses a state of consciousness of his own attaining, goes forward from one state of consciousness to another, until he attains the summit of consciousness.”

“Does the Master teach one summit of consciousness, or several summits of consciousness?”

“I teach one summit of consciousness, Potthapada, and also several summits of consciousness.”

“But how does the Master teach this?”

“At whatever point he reaches a station, a resting-place, I speak of that as a summit of consciousness. Thus, Potthapada, I teach one summit of consciousness, and also several summits of consciousness.”

“Does the state of consciousness arise first, Master, and afterwards understanding; or does understanding arise first, and afterwards the state of consciousness; or do the state of consciousness and the understanding arise together, neither being earlier or later?”

“The state of consciousness arises first, Potthapada, and afterwards the understanding; the arising of the understanding comes through the arising of the state of consciousness. Thus a man recognizes that through a definite cause understanding has arisen in him. For this reason it can be known that the state of consciousness arises first, and the understanding afterwards; that the arising of the understanding comes through the arising of the state of consciousness.”

“Is the state of consciousness the man’s self, Master, or is the state of consciousness one thing and the self another?”

“To what self do you refer, Potthapada?”

“I have in mind a gross self, Master, having a form, made of the four gross elements, sustained by eating food.”

“If there were a gross self, Potthapada, having a form, made of the four gross elements, sustained by eating food, even so, Potthapada, the state of consciousness will be one thing, and the self another. Even while this gross self, having form, made of the four gross elements, sustained by eating food, remains, one state of consciousness arises in the man, and another state of consciousness ceases. For this reason, Potthapada, it can be known that the state of consciousness is one thing, and the self another.”

“Then I have in mind, Master, a self formed of mental substance, having the shape of the body in all its parts, possessing all the powers of perception and action.”

“If there were a self formed of mental substance, having the shape of the body in all its parts, possessing all the powers of perception and action, even so, Potthapada, the state of consciousness will be one thing, and the self another. Even while this self formed of mental substance, having the shape of the body in all its parts, possessing all the powers of perception and action, remains, one state of consciousness arises in the man, and another state of consciousness ceases. For this reason, Potthapada, it can be known that the state of consciousness is one thing, and the self another.

“Then I have in mind, Master, a formless self, consisting of consciousness.”

“If there were a formless self, consisting of consciousness, even so, Potthapada, the state of consciousness will be one thing, and the self

another. Even while this self, formless, consisting of consciousness, remains, one state of consciousness arises in the man, and another state of consciousness ceases. For this reason, Potthapada, it can be known that the state of consciousness is one thing, and the self another.”

There is a touch of humour in this. Pilgrim Potthapada has the air of putting a purely hypothetical case before the Buddha, of making up his argument as he goes along. He is not really doing this. He is in substance quoting two of the great Upanishads and blending their teaching. From the *Mandukya Upanishad*, he is taking the classification of the three vestures, other than the Supreme Self; the vestures which have been called the body of the man, the body of the disciple, the body of the Master. And from the *Taittiriya Upanishad* he is taking names for two of these vestures, that formed of the substance of mind, and that formed of consciousness; and it is worth noting that, in the Upanishad, these vestures are called “selves,” just as they are in our Sutta.

But this is not the only element of quotation in our dialogue. In his discourse with King Ajatashatru, concerning the Fruits of Discipleship, the Buddha himself has covered much the same ground:

“So the disciple, with heart and imagination concentrated, altogether pure, altogether luminous, without stain, rid of all evil, made pliant, prepared for action, firm, imperturbable, concentrates heart and imagination on the building up of a body formed of mental substance. From this physical body, he builds up creatively another body, possessing form, of mental substance, having the shape of the body in all its parts, possessing all the powers of perception and action.

“It is, O King, just as though a man were to draw forth a reed from its sheath. He would see clearly, ‘This is the sheath, this is the reed; the sheath is one thing, the reed is another; from the sheath the reed has been drawn forth.’ Or it is, O King, just as though a man were to draw a sword from the scabbard. He would see clearly, ‘This is the sword, this is the scabbard; the sword is one thing, the scabbard is another; from the scabbard the sword has been drawn forth.’ Or it is, O King, as though a man were to draw a snake forth from its slough. He would see clearly, ‘This is the snake, this is the slough; the snake is one thing, the slough is another; from the slough the snake has been drawn

forth.” The simile of the reed drawn from the sheath is taken from the *Katha Upanishad*, while the slough of the snake comes from the *Chhandogya Upanishad*. So that, in these two passages, we have a direct return to four of the great Upanishads, conclusive evidence that the teaching of the Buddha regarding the inner bodies as stages in the path of liberation is in the direct line of the great spiritual tradition of ancient India.

In the Buddha's presentation of this teaching of the inner bodies, the vestures, successively more spiritual, above the physical vesture, it is noteworthy that the Master lays the dominant stress not on the vestures themselves, but on the consciousness which they contain and sustain. It is further noteworthy that, in each case, he regards that consciousness as evolving, developing; a higher state of consciousness arising, a lower state of consciousness ceasing; and, finally, this steadily ascending development of consciousness takes place through the effort of the disciple himself, through aspiration, discipline, purification. In the steady ascent toward perfect wisdom and holiness, final immortality and liberation, each vesture, as it is attained, marks a stage, a station on the journey, a temporary resting place until the lessons of that stage are fully learned. It is, therefore, for that stage of the uphill journey, a summit of consciousness, to use the Buddha's phrase; and by analogy we may conceive that, for each vesture, for each stage, there are minor stages, each in its turn a summit of consciousness to be attained by undaunted effort.

We may say, perhaps, without irreverence, that the teaching of the Buddha is eminently sound Theosophical doctrine; that Pilgrim Potthapada had set forth before him, in response to his earnest aspiration, an outline of practical Occultism, as clearly as it could be put into words. Logically, there was nothing for him to do but to set to work forthwith.

It is one of the virtues of these scriptures, comparable in value to their sunny humour, that they are so universal; they illustrate at each point the tendencies that run through all human nature. Thus, the list of unedifying themes that were being debated in The Hall might serve, almost without alteration, for the summary of the news in our daily papers: “stories of kings, robbers, ministers; of kin ships and

cars . . .”—with exactly the same blending of the ridiculous and the sublime: “talk of the village well, traditions of the forming of lands and oceans, discussions of being and non-being.”

So with Pilgrim Potthapada. He had heard, just as we hear, the call to instant spiritual effort and action. But Pilgrim Potthapada, again like ourselves, was not quite ready. He had an argumentative mind, and he almost inevitably continued to argue:

“Master, is the world everlasting? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the world is everlasting; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, is the world not everlasting? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the world is not everlasting; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, is the world finite? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the world is finite; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, is the world infinite? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the world is infinite; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, is the life the body? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the life is the body; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, is the life one thing and the body another thing? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the life is one thing and the body another thing; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, does the Tathagata exist beyond death? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the

Tathagata exists beyond death; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, does the Tathagata not exist beyond death? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the Tathagata does not exist beyond death; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, does the Tathagata both exist and not exist beyond death? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the Tathagata both exists and does not exist beyond death; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Well, then, Master, does the Tathagata neither exist nor not exist after death? Is this the truth, and the opposite of it vanity?”

“I have made no declaration, Potthapada, as to whether the Tathagata neither exists nor exists not beyond death; whether this is the truth, and the opposite of it vanity.”

“Why, Sir, does the Master not make these declarations?”

“Such declaration, Potthapada, does not make for spiritual wealth, does not make for the Law of righteousness, does not make for the principles of discipleship, nor for detachment, nor for purification from lust, nor for quietude of heart, nor for peace, nor for wisdom, nor for illumination, nor for liberation. Therefore I have not made these declarations.”

“Well, then, what has the Master declared?”

“I have declared that this is misery, Potthapada; I have declared that this is the arising of misery; I have declared that this is the cessation of misery; I have declared that this is the conduct which leads to the cessation of misery.”

“Why, Sir, has the Master declared this?”

“Because this makes for spiritual wealth, Potthapada, this makes for the Law of Righteousness, for the principles of discipleship, for detachment, for purification, for quietude of heart, for peace, for wisdom, for illumination, for liberation. Therefore I have declared this.”

“This is so, Master! This is so, Blessed One! And now let the Master do as seems to him good.”

So the Master, rising from his seat, departed.

Meanwhile, the pilgrims in the Hall had kept silence. It even appears that they had listened attentively with their contentious minds. But the explosion came immediately, for, as the chronicler tells us, no sooner had the Buddha departed, than these pilgrims bore down upon Pilgrim Potthapada from all sides with a torrent of biting words:

“So it seems that, whatever the ascetic Gautama says, this Potthapada immediately assents, saying, ‘This is so, Master! This is so, Blessed One!’ But we do not see that the ascetic Gautama has given a clear answer to any one of the ten questions: whether the world is everlasting, or not everlasting, finite, or infinite, whether the life is the body, or not the body, whether the Tathagata exists, or exists not, or both, or neither, beyond death.”

Pilgrim Potthapada made answer: “Neither do I see that the ascetic Gautama has given a clear answer to any one of the ten questions. But the ascetic Gautama makes known a rule of conduct, real, true, fitting, founded on righteousness, guiding to righteousness. How could I fail to approve a rule of conduct, real, true, fitting, founded on righteousness, guiding to righteousness?” So, after two or three days, spent, no doubt, in meditating on what he had heard, Pilgrim Potthapada betook him to where the Buddha was, determined to learn and follow in his steps. With him, says the chronicler, went Chitta, son of the trainer of elephants.

Chitta, son of the trainer of elephants, was no new comer. It is related of him, indeed, that he had seven times sought and obtained admission to the Order, and, being invincibly addicted to argument and the splitting of hairs, that he had seven times departed, each time because of some verbal difference. So, when Potthapada sought out the Buddha, his friend Chitta, son of the trainer of elephants, went with him, smuggled in, as it were, under Pilgrim Potthapada’s wing. He bowed low to the Buddha, and took a seat in silence.

Then the final touch of humour. Chitta could keep silent only for a certain time. When question and answer between the Buddha and Potthapada had gone a certain length, Chitta, son of the trainer of

elephants, was driven by inner compulsion to break into the discussion, and to ask one of his keenly intellectual questions. The Buddha answered him with persuasive graciousness, and forgave him, and Chitta, son of the trainer of elephants, was for the eighth time admitted to the Order, of which he became a humble and worthy member.

Discipline for Disciples

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The rules of conduct which the Buddha enjoined on the members of his Order are embodied, as almost always, in a story; and again, as always, this story is told with the charming iteration which has been likened to the love of children for a favourite tale, told over and over again in exactly the same words; an iteration sanative and soothing to the mind in these hectic days of rush and hurry.

But, in addition to charm, there was a very practical purpose in this verbal sameness; both those who told the stories, disciples spreading the knowledge of their Master's teaching, and those who heard, had the lesson of each discourse engraved on their memories, as by the continual falling of water-drops on stone; thus was the teaching carried abroad and perpetuated.

Since this story is of no great length, it may be worth while to follow all the repetitions, to reveal to our feverish time the mental quietude of an earlier and wiser day, when disciples and laymen had time to hear, mark, learn and inwardly digest. So we come to the story:

“Thus have I heard. Once upon a time the Master was walking on the high road between Rajagaha and Nalanda with a great company of disciples, with five hundred disciples. Suppiya also, the Pilgrim, was walking on the high road between Rajagaha and Nalanda with his pupil, Brahmadata the youth. There indeed Suppiya the Pilgrim speaks dispraise of the Buddha, speaks dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks dispraise of the Order; and again Suppiya the

Pilgrim's pupil, Brahmadata the youth, speaks praise of the Buddha, speaks praise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks praise of the Order. Thus these two, teacher and pupil, flatly contradicting each other, held close to the Master and to the company of disciples.

“And so the Master halted at the king's rest-house at Ambalattika to pass one night there, with the company of disciples. Suppiya also, the Pilgrim, halted at the king's rest-house at Ambalattika to pass one night there, with his pupil Brahmadata the youth. There also, indeed, Suppiya the Pilgrim in many a phrase speaks dispraise of the Buddha, speaks dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks dispraise of the Order, and again Suppiya the Pilgrim's pupil, Brahmadata the youth, speaks praise of the Buddha, speaks praise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks praise of the Order. Thus these two, teacher and pupil, flatly contradicting each other, held close to the Master and to the company of disciples.

“And so, what time night ended and dawn came, many of the disciples assembled together within the circle of the hall, and as they were seated together this manner of talk arose: ‘Wonderful, brethren, admirable, brethren, is this, that by the Master, the sage, the seer, the Arhat, the supreme and perfect Buddha, the differing character of beings should be so clearly discerned. For this Suppiya the Pilgrim in many a phrase speaks dispraise of the Buddha, speaks dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks dispraise of the Order, and again Suppiya the Pilgrim's pupil, Brahmadata the youth, speaks praise of the Buddha, speaks praise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks praise of the Order. Thus these two, teacher and pupil, flatly contradicting each other, hold close to the Master and to the company of disciples.’

“And so the Master, seeing the manner of talk of these disciples, drew near to the circle of the hall, and having drawn near, seated himself on the seat prepared for him. And being seated, the Master addressed the disciples: ‘In what talk, disciples, are you engaged, seated together, and what discourse is set forth among you?’ Thus addressed, the disciples said to the Master: ‘Here, Sire, what time the night ended and the dawn came, we were assembled together within the circle of the hall, and as we were seated together, this manner of talk arose: “Wonderful, brethren, admirable, brethren, is this, that by the Master,

the sage, the seer, the Arhat, the supreme and perfect Buddha, the differing character of beings should be so clearly discerned. For this Suppiya the Pilgrim in many a phrase speaks dispraise of the Buddha, speaks dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks dispraise of the Order, and again Suppiya the Pilgrim's pupil, Brahmadata the youth, speaks praise of the Buddha, speaks praise of the Law of Righteousness, speaks praise of the Order. Thus these two, teacher and pupil, flatly contradicting each other, hold close to the Master and the company of disciples." This was the discourse set forth among us when the Master came.'

"If other men, disciples, should speak dispraise of me, or should speak dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, or should speak dispraise of the Order, there should not be anger and indignation and wrath of heart among you. For if, disciples, others should speak dispraise of me, or should speak dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, or should speak dispraise of the Order, if you should thereupon be angry and beside yourselves, this would be a barrier to you. If other men, disciples, should speak dispraise of me, or should speak dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, or should speak dispraise of the Order, and you should be angry and beside yourselves, could you know whether it had been well spoken or ill spoken?'

"Not so, Sire!

"If other men, disciples, should speak dispraise of me, or should speak dispraise of the Law of Righteousness, or should speak dispraise of the Order, then what is not so should by you be unravelled as being not so, saying, "For such reasons this is not so, this is not the truth, this is not among us, this is not found among us."

"Or if other men, disciples, should speak praise of me, or should speak praise of the Law of Righteousness, or should speak praise of the Order, there should not be joy, and rejoicing and exultation of heart among you. For if, disciples, other men should speak praise of me, or should speak praise of the Law of Righteousness, or should speak praise of the Order, and there should be joy and rejoicing and exultation among you, this would be a barrier to you. If other men, disciples, should speak praise of me, or should speak praise of the Law of Righteousness, or should speak praise of the Order, then what is so

should by you be acknowledged as being so, saying: “This is so, this is the truth, this is among us, this is found among us.”

““Things of minor import, disciples, concerned with this lower world, matters of outward conduct would a man of the world speak of, speaking praise of the Tathagata. And what, disciples, are these things of minor import, concerned with this lower world, matters of outward conduct that a man of the world would speak of, speaking praise of the Tathagata?”

““Abstaining from the taking of life, the ascetic Gautama refrains from taking life, he has laid the mace aside, he has laid weapons aside, he is gentle, pitiful, he lives with compassionate kindness for every being that has life”; thus, disciples, would speak the man of the world, speaking praise of the Tathagata.

““Abstaining from taking what is not given, the ascetic Gautama refrains from taking what is not given, accepting what is given, awaiting what is given, he lives with honest and pure heart”; thus, disciples, would speak the man of the world, speaking praise of the Tathagata.

““Abstaining from unchastity, the ascetic Gautama follows chastity, he lives a holy life, not entering into marriage, not following the way of the world”; thus, disciples, would speak the man of the world, speaking praise of the Tathagata.

““Abstaining from malicious speech, the ascetic Gautama refrains from malicious speech; having heard here, he does not repeat there, to cause enmity against these; or having heard there, he does not repeat here, to cause enmity against those; he lives, binding together the divided, confirming the united, a lover of harmony, rejoicing in harmony, speaking words that make for harmony”; thus, disciples, would speak the man of the world, speaking praise of the Tathagata.

““Abstaining from harsh speech, the ascetic Gautama refrains from harsh speech. Whatever words are innocent, pleasant to the ear, kind, going to the heart, urbane, grateful to mankind, delighting mankind, such words does he speak”; thus, disciples, would speak the man of the world, speaking praise of the Tathagata.

““Abstaining from idle talk, the ascetic Gautama refrains from idle talk. His words are timely, his words are true, he speaks to the point,

he speaks of righteousness, he speaks of discipline, he speaks words to be treasured, fitly illustrated, ordered, effective"; thus, disciples, would speak the man of the world, speaking praise of the Tathagata."

These are admirable qualities, full of sweetness and light; why then does the Buddha speak of them as things of minor import, concerned with this lower world, matters of outward conduct?

The answer is given a little later in the story, where the Buddha says: "There are, disciples, other things, profound, hard to see, hard to realize in consciousness, bringing peace, excellent, not to be attained by argument, subtle, to be known only by the wise; which the Tathagata proclaims, having himself realized them and seen them face to face; they who would rightly praise the Tathagata in accordance with reality, would speak of these." These larger matters include not only the whole range of scientific, philosophic and religious thought, but also all the higher states of spiritual consciousness, with their insight and their powers, up to, and including, Nirvana. In comparison with these greater themes, the rules of conduct are minor matters, concerned with the outer world. A good and pious man might possess them all without being in any real sense a disciple, an Occultist; but a candidate for discipleship must possess them all before he can become in any real sense a disciple, before he can make any real progress in Occultism.

For the disciple, these qualities and virtues are indispensable. They are equally a part of the life of the Master. The Buddha practised each and all of them himself before he enjoined them on the disciples of his Order, and he and his Arhats continued to practise them. For they are enjoined on all disciples of the Order. In a later episode exactly the same list of virtues is repeated, with the single difference that the disciple, instead of the ascetic Gautama, is described as practicing them.

In the third rule, the word translated "chastity" is "Brahmacharya"; it means chastity in the fullest sense: chastity in thought, chastity in word, chastity in act. But it means more, and this larger meaning gives us a clue to the law, the principle involved. For, literally translated, the word means "service of the Eternal," or "walking in the way of the Eternal." It implies a completeness of devotion, a singleness

of heart and mind and act, that exclusive service which is an indispensable condition of any real advance in Occultism.

The Master Christ has set forth the same principle in a passage which is the foundation and justification of all monastic orders, even though many of their members may not understand its full import:

“The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

This profound saying is in no sense a condemnation of marriage, which may be, and should be, a sacrament, instinct with sacrifice and mutual service, offering each day spiritual lessons that must be learned before the higher way is entered. And the Master Christ has laid down an ideal for wedded life, closing with the words: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

But when it is a question of those who shall be accounted worthy of that world, then the higher law, the higher way of life, supersedes the lower; man is passing from the life and growth and activities of the natural body to the life and growth and activities of the spiritual body, in which he is destined to attain conscious immortality. The development of the spiritual body, following the birth from above, is set forth by Paul, writing to the Master's followers at Corinth; it is taught in the same terms, but in more complete detail, by the Buddha, closely following and incorporating the far older teaching of the Upanishads. These passages have already been quoted and need only be referred to here. The point is that this new way, this entry into a higher world, calls for every atom of force and effort that the man possesses. He cannot follow two ways at the same time.

The Buddha not only enjoined celibacy and chastity on the members of his Order, those whom he selected because with spiritual eye he discerned that they were “worthy of that world”; he even intervened, almost in the midst of the ceremony, to prevent the marriage of one whom he wished to enroll in his Order.

The whole story is related with that rich and gracious humour that is so characteristic of the Buddhist records, in virtue of which

Siddhartha the Compassionate should be recognized not only as an Avatar of Holiness, but as the Avatar of Humour also. The persons of the story are close kin of his; the bridegroom in prospect is his cousin Prince Nanda, a son of the sister of Queen Maya, Prince Siddhartha's mother. And the prospective bride is the Buddha's younger sister, a lovely princess, who bore the name, Beauty of the Land, so fair that she was in love with her own beauty. And the dramatic events of the story took place at a time when the Buddha was on a visit to his royal father, King Suddhodana, at the ancient city of Kapila.

When the ceremonies in preparation for the marriage of Prince Nanda were in progress, the Master entered the house, as though seeking an offering of food, in conformity with the rule that he received only what was freely given. He placed his bowl in the hands of Prince Nanda and wished him good fortune. Then rising from his seat, he departed without taking his bowl from the hands of the Prince. From reverence for the Tathagata, Prince Nanda did not dare to say: "Reverend Sir, take your bowl," but thought within himself, "He will take the bowl at the head of the stairs." But even when the Master reached the head of the stairs, he did not take the bowl. Prince Nanda thought: "He will take the bowl at the foot of the stairs." But even there the Master did not take the bowl. Prince Nanda thought: "He will take the bowl in the palace court." But even there the Master did not take the bowl. Prince Nanda greatly desired to return to his bride, and followed the Master much against his will. But so great was his reverence for the Master that he did not dare to say: "Take the bowl," but continued to follow the Master, thinking to himself: "He will take the bowl here! He will take the bowl there! He will take the bowl there!"

Meanwhile, they brought word to the bride, Beauty of the Land, saying:

"Lady, the Master has taken Prince Nanda away with him; it is his purpose to take him from you!" Then Beauty of the Land, with tears streaming down her face and with hair unkempt, ran swiftly after Prince Nanda and said to him: "Noble sir, I pray you to come back." Her words shook the heart of Nanda; but the Master, still without taking the bowl, led him to the abode of the Order and said to him,

“Nanda, dost thou desire to become a disciple?” So great was Prince Nanda’s reverence for the Buddha that he refrained from saying, “I do not wish to become a disciple,” and said instead, “Yes, I wish to become a disciple.” Then the Master said: “Admit Nanda as a disciple.”

Meanwhile Anathapindaka, the princely giver, had built a great abode for the Master and the Order of disciples, and the Buddha went thither and took up his residence. While the Buddha was residing there, we are told that the disciple Nanda became discontented, and began to relate his sorrows to the other disciples, saying: “Brethren, I am dissatisfied. I am now living the life of a disciple, but I cannot bear to live the life of a disciple any longer. I intend to abandon the higher precepts and return to the lower life, the life of a layman.”

The Master, hearing of this, sent for Nanda and said to him: “Nanda, it is said that you spoke thus to a company of disciples: ‘Brethren, I am dissatisfied. I am now living the life of a disciple, but I cannot bear to live the life of a disciple any longer. I intend to abandon the higher precepts and return to the lower life, the life of a layman.’ Is this true?” “It is true, Master.” “But, Nanda, why are you dissatisfied with the life of a disciple? Why cannot you bear to live the life of a disciple? Why do you wish to abandon the higher precepts and return to the lower life, the life of a layman?” “Master, when I left my home, my noble bride, Beauty of the Land, with tears streaming down her face and with hair unkempt, parting from me, said: ‘Noble sir, I pray you to come back.’ Master, it is because I constantly remember her that I am dissatisfied with the life of a disciple, that I cannot bear to live the life of a disciple any longer, that I intend to abandon the higher precepts and return to the lower life, the life of a layman.” The episode which follows is even more surprising than the story itself.

It is related that the Master, exerting his spiritual power, induced a vision in the consciousness of Prince Nanda, carrying him in imagination to one of the celestial worlds. As they were proceeding thither, the Buddha showed Nanda a burnt field where a monkey that had been singed in the fire sat disconsolate on a stump. In the celestial world, the Buddha showed Nanda a group of rosy-footed nymphs, attendants of King Indra, and asked him this question: “Nanda, which

do you consider more beautiful, your bride, Beauty of the Land, or these rosy-footed nymphs?”

Somewhat unchivalrously, as it seems, Nanda made reply that, in measure as the lady was more beautiful than the singed, disconsolate monkey, so the rosy-footed nymphs were more beautiful than the lady.

Thereupon, the Buddha promised Nanda that, if he remained steadfast in the life of a disciple, he would receive as a reward the rosy-footed nymphs. The vision was at an end, and the Buddha and Nanda returned to the consciousness of the outer world.

We are not told who revealed this astonishing incident, but the recorder informs us that it was not long before there was common talk among the disciples to this effect: “It appears that it is in the hope of winning rosy-footed nymphs that the disciple Nanda is living the life of a disciple; it appears that the Master has promised him that he shall receive as a reward the rosy-footed nymphs.”

Thereupon, his fellow-disciples treated Nanda as a hireling, one bought with a bribe, saying to him: “It appears that the disciple Nanda is a hireling; it appears that the disciple Nanda is bought with a bribe. It appears that he is living the life of a disciple in the hope of winning rosy-footed nymphs; it appears that the Master has promised him that he shall receive the rosy-footed nymphs as a reward.”

But the disciple Nanda paid no heed to them, even though they called him a hireling, one bought with a bribe. Dwelling in solitude, withdrawn from the world, mindful, ardent, resolute, in no long time he attained the supreme illumination seeking which they leave the worldly life for the life of the disciple. Thus illumined, he knew that his bondage to rebirth was ended, that he had attained the goal, that he should return no more. Thus Nanda attained to Arhatship.

And the Buddha, fully illumined, knew that Nanda had attained to the supreme illumination, that he had attained to Arhatship. As the Buddha perceived this, Nanda himself approached the Master, saying: “Master, I release the Master from the promise that I should receive as a reward the rosy-footed nymphs.” And the Buddha replied: “Nanda, with my consciousness I grasped your consciousness, and saw that you had attained to liberation, that you had attained to illumination. When your heart was released from desire, at that same time I was

released from my promise.”

As was their wont, the disciples discussed the matter, saying:

“Brethren, the Buddhas are wonderful! The disciple Nanda became dissatisfied with the life of a disciple because of Beauty of the Land; the Master, by the lure of the rosy-footed nymphs, won Nanda to complete obedience.” The Master, approaching, asked: “Disciples, what is the manner of your talk as you sit here together?” And when they told him, the Master said: “Disciples, this is not the first time that Nanda has been won to obedience by the lure of the other sex; this also happened in a former birth.” Thereupon, the Master related the following birth-story:

Once upon a time, when Brahmadata was king in Benares, there dwelt at Benares a merchant named Kappata. Now Kappata had a donkey which was wont to carry loads of pottery for him, and each day he journeyed seven miles. On a certain day Kappata loaded his donkey with a load of earthen pots, and went with him as far as Takkasila. And while he vended his wares, he allowed the donkey to run loose. As the donkey wandered along a bank beside a watercourse, he beheld a lady donkey and straightway went to converse with her. When she had greeted him, she said: “Whence come you?” “From Benares.” “Why have you come?” “I have come on business.” “How large was your load?” “A large load of earthen pots.” “How many miles did you travel, carrying so large a load?” “Seven miles.” “In the places to which you journey, is there anyone to rub your weary feet and back?” “There is no one.” “If that be so, your life is indeed a hard one.”

As the fruit of her words, dissatisfaction arose within the heart of the donkey. When the merchant had sold his wares, returning to the donkey, he said: “Come, let us set forth.” “Go yourself; I shall remain here.”

Time and again with gentle words the merchant sought to persuade him; but when, for all his persuasion, the donkey would not be moved, the merchant fell to using harsh words, saying: “I will make a goad with a long spike; I will tear your body to shreds. Know this, donkey!”

But the donkey replied: “You say you will make a goad with a long

spike. Very good! Then I will set my forefeet firm and, kicking with my hind feet, I will knock your teeth out. Know this, merchant!"

When the merchant heard this, he meditated, questioning within himself what might be the cause. As he looked this way and that, the eyes of the merchant fell on the lady donkey. "Ho!" said he, "without doubt it was she who incited him. Therefore, let me say to him: 'I will bestow on you a mate like that.'" So the merchant said to the donkey: "A four-footed mate, possessing all the marks of beauty, with a face like mother-of-pearl. will I bestow on you. Know this, donkey!"

Hearing this, the heart of the donkey rejoiced, and he replied: "A four-footed mate, possessing all the marks of beauty, will you bestow on me. If that be so, merchant, while until now I have travelled seven miles a day, henceforth I will travel fourteen miles a day."

"Good!" said Kappata, "let us proceed." Taking the donkey, he led him back to the cart.

Not many days passed when the donkey said to the merchant: "Did you not promise me a mate?" The merchant answered, "I did so promise, and I will keep my word. I will provide for you a mate. But I will provide food only for you. It may not be enough for you and your mate; that is for you to settle. Nor, should offspring be born to you, will there be more food. Whether it will suffice for you all, is for you to settle."

When the merchant spoke thus, desire died in the heart of the donkey.

In conclusion, the Master said: "In that birth, the lady donkey was Beauty of the Land; the male donkey was Nanda; I myself was the merchant. Thus in a former birth was Nanda won to obedience by the lure of the other sex."

There remains the fate of the lady, Beauty of the Land. It should be understood that, though bereft of her bridegroom, she did not suffer hardship or privation in other ways. A princess in the palace of a wealthy father, all her needs and wishes, save only her wish for Nanda, were supplied; nor does it appear that she suffered any discredit or unkindness because of the interrupted marriage.

So she appears to have lived in comparative content while, one after another, the members of her family gave their spiritual allegiance to

the Buddha and became members of the Order. So, for sheer loneliness and without any genuine vocation, Beauty of the Land decided that she too would join the Order, to be nearer to her kin. The recorder makes quite clear that, though a member of the Order, she was still as much in love with her own beauty as in bygone days; she even shunned her mighty brother because she feared that he might speak disparagingly of her charms.

Finally, however, she became curious to hear him, and drew near, hoping that the Buddha might not recognize her. But his divine vision immediately made the whole situation clear, and, to cure her of self-love, he created the form of a heavenly nymph, of celestial beauty far surpassing the beauty of mortal women, so that even Beauty of the Land confessed to herself that she was far outshone. Then the Buddha caused the phantom nymph to pass through the years in a few minutes, until she was afflicted with painful wrinkles and white hair, toothless and bent like a crooked stick; finally fate overcame her, and cruel death, and Beauty of the Land knew her own charms would likewise wither and die. So, realizing the impermanence of the impermanent, and confirmed in the right way by the Buddha, the lady reached enlightenment. The story is told at length in Burlingame's translation of the *Dhammapada* Commentary, from which we have condensed it.

The moral is exactly the same as that which Paul conveyed, writing to the disciples at Colosse: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . . Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth . . . seeing that ye have put off the old man, and have put on the new . . ." Or, as he wrote in more universal terms to the disciples at Corinth: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Details of Discipline

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We have considered some of the rules which the Buddha laid down for his followers. We may here remind ourselves that the Buddha's purpose must have been, not the founding of a religion to include all men and women, but the establishment of an Order of disciples concentrating every energy on the great task of Liberation; or, as we should say, the organization of a body of students of practical Occultism. It is quite clear that a celibate Order, whose members kept aloof from all worldly occupations and were dependent on food freely offered, could not be, and was never intended to be universal.

The rules which we have considered, and which the Buddha declared that he himself obeyed, are these: Abstaining from taking life, from taking what is not given, from unchastity, from malicious and harsh speech, from idle words. They are the elements of righteousness for all human beings; they are essential to the disciple, but, standing alone, they do not constitute discipleship, though they may prepare the way for discipleship.

These injunctions are followed by a series of rules, analysed, numbered and grouped with that perfect sense of method and order which runs through all the Buddha's teaching, showing that the Buddha, had he so desired, might have been a master of mathematics. It may be noted, in passing, that a highly developed mathematical sense runs through all the Buddhist Scriptures; for example, in several of these, including *The Lotus of the Good Law*, a numeral occurs which

is represented by a unit followed by seventy-seven ciphers. In comparison with numbers such as this, our modern millions of light-years and incredible velocities within the atom are not so overwhelming.

Following this admirable method of analysis and counting, the Buddha drew up lists of the things from which the members of his Order were bidden to abstain. They form an extraordinary collection, including many things that are seemingly innocent, together with much that is manifestly wrong. Incidentally, these forbidden occupations give us an unexpectedly vivid and detailed picture of life in the valley of the Ganges twenty-five hundred years ago; and the recital is touched with the sense of humour, often inclining to fine irony, that is so characteristic of the Buddha; it plays about these small and often trivial details, lighting them with a sparkle of mirth, in addition to their high value for edification.

We are told first that the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from causing injury to seeds and plants. This would seem to have a double purpose; first, to impress on members of his Order the spiritual oneness of all living things, each of which in its place and rank is following the infinite path toward perfection. A new light is even now being shed on this unity of life by the marvellous experiments carried out in India, by one of the Buddha's fellow-countrymen, who is revealing the almost human sensitiveness and consciousness of plants. But beneath the surface meaning of the injunction there is, in all likelihood, a deeper application, the lesson of mercy that is contained in the words: "A bruised reed shall he not break."

The second rule is that the member of the Order shall be content with one meal a day, not eating after the fixed time, not eating in the evening. While this rule may not be applicable in its strict form to our conditions, it is not difficult to surmise the reason: that the physical mind may be clear and lucid, sensitive to receive and record whatever illumination may be brought back in the morning from the other side of sleep.

Once more, the member of the Order is forbidden to be a spectator at worldly spectacles, dancing, singing and music. Here again, there is the immediate meaning: the disciple who would use the inner eye and

ear must make his aura limpid and keep it pure, not cluttered with garish images and strident resonances; but there is the deeper meaning: for the disciple, life and the world must be more than a spectacle of music and singing and dancing. Garlands, scents, rich unguents and luxurious couches are then forbidden, for they extend the appeal to the outer senses and the pampering of the bodily vesture.

Then follows a list of gifts which the Buddha refused to accept, and which members of his Order were also debarred from receiving. These forbidden gifts begin with gold and silver, slaves, elephants, cattle and horses. It is worth noting that this list is almost identical with the sacramental formula of the great Upanishads. Thus the Lord of Death bids Nachiketas "choose sons and grandsons of a hundred years and much cattle and elephants and gold and horses"; the formula which symbolizes the trials and temptations through which the candidate must pass before Initiation. It is also clear that these things, together with gifts of land and uncooked grain, likewise forbidden, represent "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches" which would distract the mind of the disciple from his inner, spiritual task.

An injunction against obvious evil follows: false scales, giving brass for gold, all crookedness and fraud, every form of violence, and murder.

Then the refrain changes, with a certain ironic touch; in forbidding divers practices the Buddha prefaces his injunction by saying that, whereas some ascetics and Brahmans, who feast on food provided by the faithful, follow after certain practices and occupations, he and his disciples leave them severely alone. This part of the Sutta is called the Middle Treatise on Conduct, and it picks up again and expands what has already been given in the Short Treatise on Conduct, from which we have been quoting. Thus we have again non-injury to seedlings and growing plants, and a sumptuary edict forbidding stores of foods, drinks, clothing, carriages, bedding, perfumes, relishes. Then comes what is almost a sporting page for the sixth century before our era. Some ascetics and Brahmans were, it appears, addicted to visiting shows, that is to say, exhibitions of dancers, the singing of songs, instrumental music, spectacles, recitations, cymbal music, bardic chanting, music produced with hollow jars, fairy pantomimes, the

feats of acrobats, combats of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, rams, cocks, and quails, bouts at quarter-staff, boxing, wrestling, sham-fights, roll-calls, manoeuvres, reviews; but the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from visiting such shows.

Then again, some ascetics and Brahmans, who lived on food provided by the faithful, were addicted to games and recreations, that is to say, games on boards with eight, or with ten, rows of squares; the same games played by forming images of such boards in the mind; hopping over diagrams drawn on the ground, so that one steps only where one ought to step; removing the pieces of men from a heap with one's nail, or putting them into a heap, in each case without shaking it, so that he who shakes the heap loses the game; throwing dice; hitting a short stick with a long one; dipping the hand in red dye, striking the wet hand on the ground or on a wall, calling out, "What shall it be?" and showing the form asked for, such as an elephant or a horse; ball-games; blowing through a toy pipe made of a leaf; ploughing with toy ploughs; turning somersaults, or turning on the trapeze; playing with toy windmills made of palm leaves; playing with toy measures made of palm leaves, or with toy carts or toy bows; guessing at letters traced in the air, or on the player's back; mimicry of another's defects; but the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from these things.

Or, again, some ascetics and Brahmans, who lived on food provided by the faithful, were addicted to luxurious sofas, divans with carved legs, fleecy coverlets, patchwork quilts, soft blankets, embroidered coverlets, quilts padded with cotton, coverlets embroidered with animals, rugs with fur on both sides, rugs with fur on one side, coverlets embroidered with gems, silken coverlets, large carpets, elephant, horse and chariot rugs, rugs of antelope skin, carpets under awnings, sofas with red pillows at either end; but the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from these things.

Then follow the ways in which some ascetics and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, used certain means of adorning and beautifying themselves, that is to say, scented powders rubbed on the body, while bathing and shampooing, massaging the muscles as wrestlers are wont, using mirrors, collyrium for the eye-lashes,

garlands, red colouring for the lips, unguents for the lips, armlets, necklaces, staves, drug-cases, swords, parasols, embroidered slippers, diadems, jewels, yak-tail fans, white robes with long fringes; but the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained also from these.

Then comes a list that has already been translated. For we are told that some Brahmans and ascetics, living on food provided by the faithful, were addicted to unprofitable talk, that is to say, talk of kings, robbers, ministers of state, talk of armies, talk of terror, talk of war, talk of food and drink, of garments and couches, talk of garlands and perfumes, talk of kinships and cars, of villages and towns and cities and countries, talk of women and men and heroes, talk of the street and of the village well, talk of the dead, all kinds of stories, traditions of the forming of lands and oceans, discussions of being and non-being; but the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from such unprofitable talk.

It further appears that, besides wasting their time in unfruitful gossip, some Brahmans and ascetics were given to using contentious phrases, that is to say, phrases such as these:

Thou knowest not this law and discipline, but I know this law and discipline.

How shouldst thou understand this law and discipline? Thou followest after lying views, while I follow true views. Authority is on my side; there is no authority on thy side.

What should be said first, thou hast said last; what should be said last, thou hast said first.

What thou hast so long pondered has been completely upset.

Endeavour to state thy case clearly. Untwist thyself if thou canst.

But the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from such contentious phrases.

Yet other Brahmans and ascetics were wont to serve as messengers and ambassadors, that is to say, messengers for kings, for kings' ministers, for Kshatriyas, Brahmans, lords, princes, who bade them "Come hither! Go thither! Take this! Bring that hither!" But the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from such carrying of messages.

And there were Brahmans and ascetics, living on food provided by

the faithful, who were addicted to crooked arts, reciters of incantations, fortune-tellers, exorcists, with covetous hearts seeking gain; but the ascetic Gautama and his disciples refrained from such crooked dealings.

So far, the Middle Treatise on Conduct. It is immediately followed by the Long Treatise on Conduct, which is largely devoted to a detailed description of the crooked arts by which some ascetics and Brahmans established and maintained their power over ignorant and superstitious people. Into these details of the occult arts we need not at present enter. What has already been recorded will suffice to make clear, first, that the general occupations of mankind have not greatly changed in two and a half millenniums, and, secondly, that the grounds on which disciples should refrain from these things are exactly the same today as they were when the Buddha taught in the king's rest-house at Ambalattika, where there was a young mango tree in the gateway. The inspiring principle in accordance with which they refrain is summed up in the words: "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Those who are on that journey may not loiter on the way.

We may turn, therefore, to another side of the problem, to the passages in which the Buddha warns his disciples against faults and errors of another kind into which some ascetics and Brahmans, men of spirituality and devotion, were prone to fall: faults of the intellect, rather than of the will.

There are, said the Buddha to his disciples, some ascetics and Brahmans, who devote themselves to working out theories regarding the ultimate beginnings of things, working out speculative views regarding the ultimate beginnings of things, and who then declare views of diverse kinds, on the basis of eighteen different arguments.

We shall not at present follow the Buddha into all the immensely interesting and, as he illumines them with humour, exceedingly entertaining developments of these eighteen systems of reasoning. They cover the whole range of philosophical speculation, as it was

before his day, and in all its developments up to our own day, from extreme idealism to the most concrete materialism and absolute nihilism. But we may take a few of these systems, and translate or summarize what the Buddha has to say of them.

There is first the school of thinkers who declare that the world and the soul are not only everlasting, but that they are eternally unchangeable, a solid world, and a defined, limited personality, destined to endure for ever and ever.

There were some Brahmans and ascetics who, practicing fervent aspiration, practicing strong effort, practicing constant application, practicing vigilant diligence, practicing unswerving attention, attained to concentration of consciousness of such a nature that, with concentrated mind and will, they attained to memory of their former dwelling-places, their former births; that is to say, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, and so on, up to a hundred thousand births, and were able to say: "In that place I had that name, was of such a family, of such a class, of such a livelihood, experienced such and such pains and pleasures, lived such a span of years. Then, leaving that life, I was born in such a place."

It will be noted that the Buddha neither questions the spiritual method by which this knowledge of former births is to be attained, nor the reality of the knowledge thus gained. On the contrary, he claims this knowledge for himself, and promises it to his disciples. That memory will be as complete, that knowledge will be as clear, as though a man were to go from his own village to another village, and were then to go from that village to another village, and then went back again to his own village. Then he would know: "I went from my own village to that village, stood in such a place, sat thus, spoke thus, was silent thus; thence I went to the second village, stood in such a place, sat thus, spoke thus, was silent thus; thence I came back again to my own village."

It was neither the method nor the reality of the knowledge gained, that the Buddha questioned, but the conclusion which these ascetics and Brahmans, thus remembering their past births, drew from that knowledge: the firm conviction that the world and the reincarnating

personality remain unchanged from everlasting to everlasting, a limited and static self, circling round an inert and changeless world.

Whether it be possible to know so much and yet know no more, we are not quite in a position to say; but it is certain that, in the Western world, with which we are more familiar, many ascetics and students of spiritual things, men of the highest sanctity and devotion, have during centuries held, and perhaps still hold, the complementary doctrine: that a defined and limited self win· persist throughout all eternity, in conditions whether of pleasure or of pain, in a world which shall be unchanging for all eternity.

In direct contradiction of these stationary views, the Buddha was an uncompromising evolutionist, always teaching the evolution of the worlds, teaching the evolution of the soul from glory to glory; but the essential point is, he did not teach his disciples to study evolution; he taught them to evolve.

So there were these philosophers who, because of the experience that has been described, made this declaration: "For ever unchanging is the self, for ever unchanging is the world, sterile, barren, fixed as a rock, stolid as a stone pillar, and these beings continue the circle of reincarnation, they die, they are born again, unchanging for ever."

The next two sections simply carry the matter further along the same line. But they are interesting to us, because they add the concept of world-periods, of the alternating evolution and involution of the manifested world, through an endless succession of appearances and disappearances. Yet, in the view of those whom the Buddha is criticizing, even these vast periods, up to forty world-periods, contain no hope of change, of widening life, proceeding ever toward infinite liberation; for, as before, they say: "For ever unchanging is the self, for ever unchanging is the world, sterile, barren, fixed as a rock, stolid as a stone pillar, and these beings continue the circle of reincarnation, they die, they are born again, unchanging for ever."

Besides these two hopelessly hide-bound concepts, of the fixed, unchanging self and the fixed, unchanging world, there is a third, equally fixed and limited, to which the Buddha now comes. Those who hold this conviction of the stereotyped, eternally limited self, are prone to affix the seal of that narrowly circumscribed personality on

the eternal and infinite majesty of the Logos. An angry and passionate people will make the image of an angry and passionate tribal God; they are not less idolaters, merely because this image is in their minds, while they abstain from molten and graven images. Or a warlike and pleasure-loving people, sensitive and self-indulgent, will mould in thought one God or many, warlike, sensitive, self-indulgent.

The Buddha meets this constricted view of the Eternal in a way that is as humorous as it is original. He does not say "man never knows how anthropomorphic he is"; he does not say "man makes God in his own image"; his approach is finer and more subtle.

There are, he tells his disciples, some Brahmans and ascetics who hold that the universe is in part unchanging, in part subject to change, that the self and the world are in part unchanging, in part subject to change. On what basis, for what reason do these Brahmans and ascetics hold that the universe is in part unchanging, in part subject to change, that the self and the world are in part unchanging, in part subject to change?

There comes a time when, through the operation of certain causes, at the expiration of a vast period, this manifested world, through the process of involution, returns to the unmanifested state. When the world is thus subject to involution, beings for the most part are indrawn into the realm of the Radiant. There they are of the substance of mind, they taste delight, they are self-luminous, they traverse the ethereal spaces, they dwell in beauty; thus for a vast period they abide.

Then there comes a time when, through the operation of certain causes, at the expiration of a vast period, this world once more becomes manifested. When this world is once more evolved, the pagoda of Brahma appears, but it is empty. Then one or another of these beings, whether because he has completed his life-span in the Radiant realm, or because the energy of his spiritual merit has been exhausted, falls from the realm of the Radiant, and is born in the empty pagoda of Brahma. There he is of the substance of mind, he tastes delight, he is self-luminous, he traverses the ethereal spaces, he dwells in beauty; thus for a vast period of time he abides.

When he has dwelt there for an immeasurable period in loneliness, dissatisfaction, with fear and trembling, he comes to say: "Alas! would

that other beings might come hither!” And so other beings, whether because they have completed their life-span in the realm of the Radiant, or because the energy of their spiritual merit has been exhausted, fall from the realm of the Radiant, and are born in the pagoda of Brahma, bringing companionship to that first being. There they also are of the substance of mind, they taste delight, they are self-luminous, they traverse the ethereal spaces, they dwell in beauty; thus for a vast period of time they abide.

Then in the mind of that being who was first to be born there, this thought arises: “I am Brahma, mighty Brahma, surpassing, unsurpassed, all-seeing, all-ruling, creator, maker of all, most excellent, ordainer, holy, Father of what has been and what shall be. By me these beings have been created. Wherefore? Because in my mind this thought first arose: ‘Alas! would that other beings might come hither!’ This was my will, my resolve, and these beings arrived.”

In the minds also of those beings who were born there later, this thought arises: “This is Lord Brahma, mighty Brahma, surpassing, unsurpassed, all-seeing, all-ruling, creator, maker of all, most excellent, ordainer, holy, Father of what has been and what shall be. By this Lord Brahma have we been created. Wherefore? Because, as we see, He was here in the beginning, and we were born afterwards.”

So it would befall that that being who was first born there would be longer-lived, more glorious and more potent than the others. And the beings who were born there later would be shorter-lived, less beautiful, less potent than He. Then it might happen that one or another of those later beings, falling from that place, should be born in this world. And, having been born in this world, he might go forth from the household life to the houseless life of an ascetic. Having gone forth from the household life to the houseless life, and practicing fervent aspiration, practicing strong effort, practicing constant application, practicing vigilant diligence, practicing unswerving attention, he might attain to concentration of consciousness of such a nature that, with concentrated mind and will, he should call to mind that immediately preceding state of being, but should call to mind no other before it. Then in his mind this thought would arise: “That Lord Brahma, mighty Brahma, surpassing, unsurpassed, all-seeing, all-ruling, creator,

maker of all, ordainer, holy, Father of what has been and what shall be, Lord Brahma by whom we were created, He, indeed, is everlasting, steadfast, unchanging, without shadow of turning, and so will He be throughout the ages. But we, who have been created by that Lord Brahma, are not eternal, not steadfast, short-lived, perishable; thus have we come to this world.”

As regards the whole series of injunctions, we should do well to make a practice of looking always beneath the surface meaning for a deeper meaning, and, even more, of looking through the far-away Oriental circumstance to the point at our own lives where exactly the same forces are at work in slightly differing guise. Thus, it is exceedingly diverting to contemplate, as the Buddha bids us, the spectacle of stately Brahmans clad in long white robes with trailing fringes, playing hop-scotch or tipcat, disporting themselves with tiny cars or little windmills made of palm leaves. Let us smile, and then let us ask ourselves in what ways we are given to playing with toy windmills. When an Eastern Master wrote, not so many years ago, to a Western student of ripe years, “Why should we play with Jack-in-the-box?” he had not in mind the literal toy.

Equally entertaining is the way in which the Buddha describes yet another mental attitude to his disciples. There are, he says, some Brahmans and ascetics who do not discern clearly what is right and what is wrong. In their minds this thought arises: “I, of a truth, do not clearly know what is right; I do not clearly know what is wrong. But thus not clearly knowing what is right, not clearly knowing what is wrong, I might declare one thing to be right, and another thing to be wrong; but there are Brahmans and ascetics, learned, skilful, who in words have attained such address as those archers who, shooting an arrow, can split a hair, and thus in controversy split asunder the views of others; these men might interrogate me, might closely question me, might join issue with me. And, should they thus closely question me, interrogate me, join issue with me, I might not be able to meet the issue. And, if I could not meet the issue, this would be to me a cause of sorrow. And this sorrow might be a barrier to me.” Thus, through fear of being questioned, through desire to avoid being questioned, they will not declare one thing to be right and another thing to be wrong; and so, when a question is asked of them, they resort to wriggling

speech, like the wriggling of slippery fishes, saying: "I do not uphold this view. I do not uphold that view. I do not hold the contrary view. I do not say that it is not so. Nor do I say that it is not not so!" Thus, verily, do some Brahmans and ascetics wriggle like little fish.

The conclusion of the whole matter is, that, while some Brahmans and ascetics exhaust their moral energy in foolish or wicked occupations, and yet other Brahmans and ascetics exhaust their intellectual energy in hammering out hard and fast views regarding things infinite and ultimate, the disciples of the Buddha are bidden to pass these things by; to apply all the energies of heart and mind to the spirit and the details of that discipline whereby a lower state of consciousness may be made to cease, while a higher state of consciousness may be made to take its place; so that, step by step, they may ascend in consciousness to the fair summits of wisdom, where they shall have a truer prospect of ultimate things. Discipline, not speculation, is the way.

Among the Celestials

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We have been told that Prince Siddhartha, son of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya, born in the ancient city of Kapila, was initiated into the archaic Wisdom by the great Teachers of the Snowy Mountains; that he ran so well as to outstrip his predecessors, attaining to a height of spiritual illumination and power rarely reached even by the greatest Masters; and that he determined, so far as was possible within the limits of pledged silence, to reveal the path of immortality to all who were willing to enter it, without regard to boundaries of race or restrictions of birth. So there were, among his immediate disciples, men and women of all castes, or of none; and his Arhats, in later generations, obeying the same principle of spiritual generosity, carried his teaching of the Path to nations outside India, to the East and West and North and South, thus establishing a universal brotherhood of seekers of the Light.

If Siddhartha the Compassionate, attaining to full illumination and recognized as the Buddha, held the steadfast purpose to let the light from the back of the heavens shine into all receptive hearts, we should expect to find in his teachings some unveiling, perhaps, of the hidden life of Masters, members of the great Lodge of Immortals; an unveiling which yet leaves a veil, so that the heedless and light-minded will pass it by, discerning nothing, or seeing the surface only; so that those alone who hold the clue of immortal aspiration will find the way to the hidden meaning.

Perhaps we are justified in thinking that, in one or more of the Suttas recording the Buddha's teaching, there is such an unveiling, which nevertheless retains a veil; the realities are put on record, yet in a form that may be taken for a parable, or a fairy story with a conventional moral.

These Suttas would appear to belong to a period rather late in the Buddha's public life, after he had been teaching through a long series of years, sowing the seeds of knowledge with a generous hand, up and down the broad central valley of the Ganges among many tribes, in many cities; a period so prolonged that a number of those who had heard and loved and followed him had already completed their earthly pilgrimage and had entered realms unseen by the eyes of men.

And it would seem that the Buddha, seeking to kindle the faith and fervour of his younger followers, and to bring to them a firmer realization of spiritual law and spiritual realms, had fallen into the habit of describing to them the attainment of one or another of his disciples, relating that such and such a level of spiritual light and life had been won by them, that they had entered one or another of the ascending spiritual worlds, and that destiny would thereafter open to them certain further opportunities.

At such a time, then, toward the close of his outward mission, the Master was dwelling at Nadika, where there was a hall built of brick, surrounded by many dwellings for his disciples; he had been telling his disciples, concerning those who had already completed their span of life and had gone forth to the higher worlds, that such a one had ascended to one world, such a one had ascended to another world; he had spoken of followers of his, among the people of Kasi and Kosala, of the Kurus and Panchalas and many others in the valley of the Ganges. He had spoken also of the people of Nadika, saying that more than fifty of them had broken the fetters of the lower nature, and, going forth from this world, had been reborn without parents in one of the spiritual worlds; more than ninety, of lesser attainment, had broken three of the fetters of the lower nature, wearing through the veils of passion and sin and delusion, so that at their first return to this world they would make an end of misery; more than five hundred had entered the river that flows to the ocean of immortality. And those of

Nadika who heard this declaration of the Master rejoiced, with joy and gladness born in their hearts.

The noble Ananda also heard, and, hearing, pondered within his heart, thinking that there were also many disciples, followers of the Master, belonging to the land of Magadha; disciples who had followed the Buddha for many years, full of joy and faith in the Master, full of joy and faith in the Law of Righteousness, full of joy and faith in the Order, disciples who had completed their span of life and had gone forth to higher worlds; and that concerning these people of Magadha the Master had made no declaration. Yet such a declaration would bring peace to the hearts of many in Magadha, so that they would go forward rejoicing, in the good way. There was also Seniya Bimbisara, ruler of Magadha, righteous, a righteous king, beloved alike of Brahmans and householders, of the townsfolk and of all the people who united in speaking his praises; he had fulfilled his span of years and had gone forth, leaving a fair renown behind him. King Bimbisara also had been full of faith and joy in the Buddha, full of faith and joy in the Law of Righteousness, full of faith and joy in the Order. Yet concerning this righteous king the Master had made no declaration, though such a declaration would bring peace to the hearts of many in Magadha, so that they would go forward rejoicing, in the good way. Was it not among the people of Magadha that the Master had attained to Buddhahood? But if concerning his followers from among the people of Magadha, who had fulfilled their span of years and had gone forth, the Master made no declaration, the disciples of Magadha would be heavy hearted. How, then, should the Master not make a declaration regarding a matter because of which the disciples of Magadha were heavy hearted?

Thus the noble Ananda pondered with himself in secret; then rising when the night was ending with the coming of the dawn, he went to the dwelling of the Master, and, reverently saluting the Master, he seated himself at a little distance from him. Thus seated near the Master, the noble Ananda spoke to the Master of what was in his heart: the Master had made declarations concerning many disciples belonging to many tribes, disciples who had fulfilled their span of years and had gone forth, saying that one had gone to one spiritual realm and another to another; that those would return no more, that these,

returning once, would make an end of misery; and, hearing this, peace had come to the hearts of many belonging to these tribes, and they had gone forward rejoicing, in the good way. Concerning the people of Nadika also, among whom they were even then dwelling, the Master had made a like declaration, bringing peace to the hearts of many. But with regard to the disciples of Magadha, in whose land the Master had attained to Buddhahood, no declaration had been made, nor had the Master said anything of King Bimbisara, righteous, a righteous king, who had been full of faith and joy in the Buddha, full of faith and joy in the Law of Righteousness, full of faith and joy in the Order, and who, having fulfilled his span of years, had gone forth from this world. Because of this, because the Master had made no declaration, the people of Magadha were heavy of heart. Thus the noble Ananda spoke of the matters he had pondered in secret, and having told these things to the Master face to face, rising from his seat, reverently saluting the Master and keeping his right side turned toward the Master, he departed.

Not long after the departure of the noble Ananda, when the day was coming toward noon, the Master, taking the saffron scarf which he wore across his shoulder, and taking also his mendicant bowl, went forth to the town of Nadika to receive an offering of food. Then, after the noontime meal, returning to his dwelling and washing the dust from his feet, he entered the brick hall and seated himself on the seat that had been prepared for him. Seated thus, he pondered concerning the disciples of the land of Magadha, with his whole consciousness intent upon the matter, determining within himself to seek and perceive the way they had taken, and what was their condition in the great beyond. Seeking thus, the Master perceived the way that had been taken by the disciples of Magadha who had gone forth, and what was their condition in the great beyond. Then, when evening was come, the Master rose from his meditation and, departing from the brick hall, returned to his own dwelling.

At that time the noble Ananda, going to the Master's dwelling, reverently saluting him, seated himself at a little distance from him. Beholding the Master, the noble Ananda said:

“Master, thy appearance is serene and joyful! The face of my Master

shines, as it were, in the serenity of all his powers! Today the Master's heart is full of peace!"

"Regarding what thou saidest to me, Ananda, concerning the disciples of the land of Magadha, after I had gone to Nadika to receive food, and had returned, I entered the brick hall and, seating myself, intended my whole consciousness upon the matter, determined to seek and perceive the way that these disciples had taken, and what was their condition in the great beyond. Seeking thus, I perceived the way that they had taken, and what their condition was in the great beyond."

The Buddha then entered upon the relation already alluded to, as being, perhaps, a revelation of the Lodge of Masters, in the form of a parable, or even a fairy story. The Buddha continued thus to Ananda:

"Thereupon, Ananda, a denizen of the spiritual world caused these words to be heard by me, while remaining invisible: 'Leader-of-men am I, Master! Leader-of-men am I, Welcome One!' Hast thou, Ananda, up to this time heard such a name as this, Leader-of-men?"

"I have not hitherto heard, Sire, such a name as Leader-of-men; nevertheless, hearing it, I marvel, so that my hair stands on end. And I think, Sire, that no lesser denizen of the spiritual world could bear such a name as this, Leader-of-men!"

"Immediately, Ananda, after he had caused these words to be heard, this denizen of the spiritual world, assuming a material form, became visible before me, face to face, and spoke thus: 'Bimbasara am I, Master! Bimbasara am I, Welcome One! This is the seventh time now that I have been born into the presence of the Maharaja Vessavana. Going forth from life, ceasing to be a ruler of men, I am a ruler of those who are more than men, in the divine realm. Seven and seven lives do I know, fourteen lives, my dwellings in times gone by. Long time already do I know that I have passed beyond the state of bondage; I shall return to birth but once again.'

"Wonderful indeed, marvellous indeed, is this saying of the noble Leader-of-men: 'Long time already do I know that I have passed beyond the state of bondage,' sayest thou; 'I shall return to birth but once again,' sayest thou. What is the cause of this excellent attainment?"

"None other than the teaching of the Master! None other than the

teaching of the Welcome One! From what time I came to the Master, becoming his disciple, from that time have I known that I have passed beyond the state of bondage, and that I shall return to birth but once again. And now, Sire, I have been sent by the Maharaja Vessavana to the Maharaja Virulhaka on a certain matter, and passing on my way I saw the Master seated in the brick hall, pondering over the disciples of the land of Magadha, intending his whole consciousness upon the matter, determined to know what way these disciples had taken, and what was their condition in the great beyond. It so befell, Sire, that in the assembly of the Maharaja Vessavana I had heard and learned this very thing, face to face. Therefore, I bethought me that I would show and declare this matter to the Master. Seeing the question in the Master's mind, and knowing the answer, for these two reasons I have come to show the matter to the Master! In days past, Sire, in days that are past, at the time of the sacred festival, all the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three were assembled in the Hall of Righteousness and were seated together; mighty was the divine assembly when they were all assembled together, with the Four Maharajas seated in the four directions. In the East was the Maharaja Dhatarattha, seated facing the West, before the Radiant Ones. In the South was the Maharaja Virulhaka, seated facing the North, before the Radiant Ones. In the West was the Maharaja Virupakka, seated facing the East, before the Radiant Ones. In the North was the Maharaja Vessavana, seated facing the South, before the Radiant Ones. When, Sire, all the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three were assembled in the Hall of Righteousness, and were seated, mighty was the divine assembly; the Four Maharajas were seated in the four directions, and we were seated behind them. And those Radiant Ones, Sire, who had served in the service of the Eternal under the Master, they who had come but recently to the Thirty-three, outshone the other Radiant Ones in beauty and in glory. Because of this, indeed, the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three rejoiced and exulted and were glad in heart, saying: "The ranks of the Divine are filled, the ranks of the powers of Evil are diminished!"

"Thereupon, Sire, Indra, Chief of the Radiant Ones, beholding the great rejoicing of the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, joyfully uttered these sentences:

""The Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three with their Chief rejoice,

paying homage to the Tathagata and to the righteousness of the Law of Righteousness. Beholding new Radiant Ones, rich in beauty and in glory, who have come hither after serving in the service of the Eternal under the Welcome One, these outshine the others in their beauty and their glory, disciples of him who is Mighty in Wisdom, come among us. Seeing this, the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three with their Chief rejoice, paying homage to the Tathagata and the righteousness of the Law of Righteousness.”

“Thereupon, Sire, the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, rejoicing with still greater joy, exulted and were glad in heart, saying: “The ranks of the Divine are filled, the ranks of the powers of Evil are diminished.””

We may pause for a moment to consider the meaning of the Thirty-three. It would seem that each of the Four Maharajas, representing the four manifested spiritual rays, presides over seven degrees of Radiant Ones, so that we have four times seven, with the Four Maharajas and Indra, the Chief, added, making in all thirty-three. The significance of Sanatkumara, in the passages which follow, is suggested in one of the great Upanishads. He who was Bimbasara thus continues:

“So, Sire, when the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, assembled in the Hall of Righteousness, had fully considered the purpose for which they had assembled and had taken counsel concerning it, when the Four Maharajas had duly recorded what had been considered and decided, when the Four Maharajas had completed the record, they remained each in his own place.

“As they remained thus, Sire, radiant, serene in heart, there was born in the northern region a splendour of light, a bright shining became manifest surpassing even the radiant glory of the Radiant Ones. Thereupon Indra, the Chief of the Radiant Ones announced, “Venerable ones, according as these signs reveal, when this splendour of light is born and the bright shining is manifested, Brahma will be manifested, for these are the precedent signs for the manifestation of Brahma, the birth of the splendour and the shining of the light.”

“The Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, seated each on his seat, spoke thus, “We shall know the splendour and what will proceed from

it, we shall see face to face!” The Four Maharajas also, each seated on his seat, spoke thus, “We shall know the splendour and what will proceed from it, we shall see face to face!” Hearing this, the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three concentrated, full of serenity, responded, “We shall know the splendour and what will proceed from it, we shall see face to face!”

“When, Sire, Brahma Sanatkumara makes himself manifest to the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, he fashions for himself a visible, objective form, because the form of Brahma, as he is in his proper being, cannot be perceived by the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three through the pathway of the eyes. When Brahma Sanatkumara makes himself manifest to the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three he outshines the other Radiant Ones in beauty and in glory. As a statue of gold outshines a human body even so, verily, when Brahma Sanatkumara becomes manifest to the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, does he outshine the other Radiant Ones in beauty and in glory. When Brahma Sanatkumara makes himself manifest to the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, no one of the Radiant Ones speaks in his presence, nor does any rise from his seat, nor does any offer a seat. All remain silent, with palms pressed together in reverent adoration, thinking thus within themselves, “Whomsoever of the Radiant Ones Brahma Sanatkumara shall wish, he will seat himself beside him.” When Brahma Sanatkumara thus seats himself beside any one of the Radiant Ones, that Radiant One receives a glorious accession of illumination, he receives a glorious accession of joy. As when a warrior King is anointed and invested with sovereignty, he receives a glorious accession of illumination, he receives a glorious accession of joy, even so, when Brahma Sanatkumara seats himself beside any one of the Radiant Ones that Radiant One receives a glorious accession of illumination, he receives a glorious accession of joy.

“So, Sire, Brahma Sanatkumara, having fashioned for himself a visible objective form, becoming as a Luminous Youth adorned with a fivefold crest, made himself manifest to the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three Rising in the air, he remained seated in the mid-region of space. As, Sire, a mighty man might seat himself upon a bench, or on a seat upon the earth, even so, verily Brahma Sanatkumara, rising in the air, remained seated in the mid-region of space. Beholding the

assembly of the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, he addressed to them these sentences:

““The Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three rejoice together with their Chief, making obeisance to the Tathagata and to the righteousness of the Law of Righteousness, beholding new Radiant Ones, rich in beauty, rich in glory, who have served in the service of the Eternal under the Welcome One, and have come hither. They outshine the other Radiant Ones in beauty and in glory and in power, coming hither, disciples of him who is Perfect in Wisdom. Beholding this, the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three rejoice with their Chief, making obeisance to the Tathagata and to the righteousness of the Law of Righteousness.”

“Thus, Sire, did Brahma Sanatkumara speak. As Brahma Sanatkumara spoke thus, his voice had eight qualities: it was clearly enounced, easily understood, in tone delightful, well heard, limpid, concentrated, deep, resounding. While Brahma Sanatkumara addressed the assembly, his voice did not go outside the assembly. Of whatever voice there are these eight qualities, that voice is called a Brahma-voice.

“Then Brahma Sanatkumara, fashioning for himself thirty-three forms such as are the forms of the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, seating himself on the several seats beside each one of the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, spoke thus:

““What think the worthy Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three? So ardently does the Master desire the welfare of mankind, the happiness of mankind, with heart of compassion for the whole world, seeking the fulfilment, the welfare, the happiness of Radiant Ones and men. For they who have taken refuge in the Buddha, who have taken refuge in the Law of Righteousness, who have taken refuge in the Order, they, verily, separated from the body, after death, are born into the company of the Radiant Ones of the sixth and highest realm of Devaloka, or into the company of the Radiant Ones of the fifth realm of Devaloka, or into the company of the Radiant Ones of the fourth realm of Devaloka, or into the company of the Radiant Ones of the third realm of Devaloka, or into the company of the Radiant Ones of the second realm of Devaloka, or into the company of the Radiant Ones of the

first realm of Devaloka, while they who attain to a body of lesser excellence, they indeed, put on bodies like those of the heavenly musicians.”

“To this purpose, Sire, spoke Brahma Sanatkumara. While Brahma Sanatkumara spoke to this purpose, each of the Radiant Ones thought: “He who is seated beside me, he alone, verily is speaking!”

“Thereafter, Sire, Brahma Sanatkumara gathered himself together into a single form, and, having gathered himself together into a single form, and seating himself beside Indra, the Chief, thus addressed the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three:

““What think the worthy Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three? Has not the Master, he who knows, he who sees, the Arhat fully illuminated, well declared and made known the four bases of spiritual power, for the attainment of spiritual power, for the development of spiritual power, for the expansion of spiritual power? What are these four bases? The first basis is ardent desire and aspiration attaining to excellence through concentration and effort; the second is manly courage attaining to excellence through concentration and effort; the third is right imagination attaining to excellence through concentration and effort; the fourth is right insight attaining to excellence through concentration and effort. These four bases of spiritual power have been made known by the Master, he who knows, he who sees, the Arhat fully illuminated, for the attainment of spiritual power, for the development of spiritual power, for the expansion of spiritual power. Whoever, in the times that are past, among those who strive, seekers of the Eternal, have attained in any measure to spiritual power, all these have attained through increasing and abounding in these four bases. Whoever, in the times that are not yet come, among those who strive, seekers of the Eternal, shall attain in any measure to spiritual power, all these shall attain through increasing and abounding in these four bases. Whoever at the present time, among those who strive, seekers of the Eternal, are attaining in any measure to spiritual power, they are attaining through increasing and abounding in these four bases. Do the worthy Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three behold this transcendent form and power of mine?”

““Verily so, Brahma!”

““I also have attained this transcendent form and power through increasing and abounding in these four bases.””

Perhaps it would be best to leave this strange and magnificent story without commentary, for intuition to seek its hidden meaning. Yet it may be helpful to bring together certain parallels from The Secret Doctrine.

The fifth Section of Stanza V records that “Fohat takes five strides, and builds a winged wheel at each corner of the square for the Four Holy Ones and their Armies.” Commenting on this, the author tells us that, from a cosmic point of view, Fohat taking “Five Strides” refers here to the five upper planes of Consciousness and Being, the sixth and the seventh (counting downwards) being the astral and the terrestrial, or the two lower planes. These seven would seem to correspond to the six degrees or planes of Devaloka, above the plane of the celestial musicians, making seven in all as recounted by Sanatkumara. The author goes on to explain the Four Winged Wheels at each corner for the Four Holy Ones and their Hosts, telling us that these are the Four Maharajas, or great Kings, of the Dhyān Chohans, the Devas (or Radiant Ones) who preside each over one of the four cardinal points. They are the Regents who rule over the Cosmical Forces of North, South, East and West, Forces having each a distinct Occult property. These Beings are also connected with Karma, as the latter needs physical and material agents to carry out its decrees. This would seem to be the reason why the Buddha, or he who was King Bimbisara, his informant, depicts the Four Maharajas as Recorders, putting on record the decisions of the assembly of the Radiant Ones in the Hall of Righteousness, at the time of the holy festival.

Again, we may find a parallel for the mysterious and majestic Sanatkumara, the brooding Divinity above the assembled Radiant Ones, in a later passage of The Secret Doctrine, in the Commentary on the seventh Section of Stanza VI. There we are told of a Wondrous Being, called the “Initiator,” and after him a group of semi-divine and semi-human Beings. We are further told that the Being referred to is the Tree from which, in subsequent ages, all the great historically known Sages and Hierophants have branched forth. As objective man, he is the mysterious (to the profane—the ever invisible, yet ever

present) Personage, about whom legends are rife in the East, especially among the Occultists and the students of the Sacred Science. It is he who changes form, yet remains ever the same. And it is he, again, who holds spiritual sway over the initiated Adepts throughout the whole world. He is the “Nameless One” who has so many names and yet whose names and whose very nature are unknown. He is the “Initiator,” called the “Great Sacrifice.” For, sitting at the Threshold of Light, he looks into it from within the Circle of Darkness, which he will not cross; nor will he quit his post till the last Day of this Life-Cycle.

“Why does the Solitary Watcher remain at his self-chosen post? Why does he sit by the Fountain of Primeval Wisdom, of which he drinks no longer, for he has naught to learn which he does not know—aye, neither on this Earth, nor in its Heaven? Because the lonely, sore-footed Pilgrims, on their journey back to their Home, are never sure, to the last moment, of not losing their way, in this limitless desert of Illusion and Matter called Earth-Life. Because he would fain show the way to that region of freedom and light, from which he is a voluntary exile himself, to every prisoner who has succeeded in liberating himself from the bonds of flesh and illusion. Because, in short, he has sacrificed himself for the sake of Mankind, though but a few elect may profit by the Great Sacrifice. It is under the direct, silent guidance of this Maha-Guru that all other less divine Teachers and Instructors of Mankind became, from the first awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early Humanity.”

One passage more from *The Secret Doctrine*, which we may compare with the dosing words of the great Sanatkumara: “The Doctrine teaches that, in order to become a divine, fully conscious God—aye, even the highest—the Spiritual Primeval Intelligences must pass through the human stage.” Or, as Sanatkumara says: “I also have attained this transcendent form and power through increasing and abounding in these four bases.” We might well consider how far the four bases are available for ourselves.

A Visit to the Buddha

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Something has been said of the relation of Siddhartha the Compassionate to the Masters, according to the Suttas and more modern witnesses. A living Aryan Master speaks of the Buddha as “our great Patron,” and tells his correspondent that “when our great Buddha, the Patron of all the Adepts, reached first Nirvana on earth, he became a Planetary Spirit,” adding that from the Planetary Spirits and from the Buddha the Masters of Wisdom learn of the mysteries beyond the cosmic veil.

There would seem to be an echo of this august relation between the Buddha and the Masters in one of the Suttas, which is called the Sutta of the questions of Sakka. Sakka is the Pali form of the Sanskrit, Shakra, a title bestowed in the hymns of the Rig Veda upon Indra, the Lord of the Vedic divinities. The name is derived from a root meaning “be able, can,” and its significance is, “He who has power.”

In the Buddhist Suttas, Sakka or Shakra is the title of the Ruler of “the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three,” this number being made up of four groups, each containing seven degrees, with one of the Four Maharajas at the head of each group, and with the Shakra, the Ruler, as the apex of the pyramidal hierarchy. But it should be borne in mind that Shakra is not the name of one individual, the same throughout all time; Shakra is rather the description of a function, the title of the great Being who, at any given period, is “Ruler of the Radiant Ones.” When one Shakra passes onward to still higher realms, a series of

which are enumerated in the Suttas, his place is filled by a successor.

In the Suttas, many stories are related of one or another Shakra; through their vivid and picturesque texture the real position and character of the great Being shine, recognizable as under a translucent disguise. We are told that, when a righteous man is struggling with adversity, the fact is made known to Shakra by the glowing of his throne, as he dwells in the regions of the Radiant Ones. Thus, when King Dhannashodhaka, striving in vain to gain a knowledge of Truth, had given up his throne and entered the forest to seek a quiet refuge for meditation, through the power of his merit and aspiration the throne of Shakra glowed. Then the Ruler of the Radiant Ones thought, "Spontaneously, without will of mine, this marble throne glows; what may be the cause?" Scanning the whole world with penetrating vision, Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, perceived the Maharaja Dhannashodhaka, who had sought in vain throughout the realm of Jambudvipa, of which India is a part, for an Instructor in the righteous Law.

Thereupon Shakra descended from his throne, took the form of a Rakshasa, an ogre or demon, and, going to meet Dhannashodhaka in the forest, tested his faith and constancy by terrible trials. After the Maharaja had triumphantly withstood all temptations, Shakra once more assumed his radiant form, revealed to the valiant monarch the Truth he sought, and restored him to his kingdom and his throne, where he reigned in righteousness.

In this vivid tale of adventure, it is not difficult to recognize what we have been told concerning the perpetual obligation of Masters to respond to the awakening spirituality in the humblest human heart, to note and cherish each glimmer of light that shines in the darkness of the valley. We can also see a parable of the trials and tests which must be conquered by the aspiring disciple before he may be initiated into the wisdom and power of the Masters. The restoration of the Maharaja to his kingdom is the symbol of this victory and attainment.

There are many stories of similar character regarding Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones. Some of them are interwoven in a very instructive way with a fundamental doctrine of Buddhist cosmogony, the teaching of the Chakravals. Chakravala seems to mean "Wheel of

Power”; it is represented as a circular or disk-shaped world with a Mount Meru in the centre, surrounded by seven concentric circles, with four great continents, the whole being enclosed in a ring of mountains. Chakravals are set together in groups of three, with a triangular space in the centre, which has something of the character of a hell. In addition to the significance of this doctrine as applied to the human principles, it would seem that we have, in the Chakravala, first, a figurative description of our globe divided into climatic zones, with the great land areas grouped about the North Pole; second, of the Solar System, with the concentric orbits of the planets; and, third, a description of the seven spheres of the planetary chain, ranged on the four planes of manifestation. On the basis of the groups of three Chakravals, we may conceive that three such planetary chains form a larger unit. Perhaps this is the solution of the enigma regarding Mercury and Mars and their relation to the Earth; the three planets may be the most material members of three interrelated planetary chains. Finally, the Suttas tell us that throughout the immensity of Space, there are infinite numbers of Chakravals, each with its own sun and moon, and each with its Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones of that world.

Nor is the office of Shakra for our own world held in perpetuity by the same individual. In one of the Jatakas, the story of an earlier birth of him who was to become the Buddha, we are told that the Shakra of that day was a holy ascetic of the Himalaya Mountains. The Shakra of the period when Siddhartha attained to Buddhahood, twenty-five centuries ago, was said to have been in a former birth the Brahman Magha, who attained to the position of Ruler of the Radiant Ones as a reward for his fervour, his holiness and his zeal for doing good. There is also a tradition, in the Buddhist Scriptures, that Siddhartha himself had been, through a series of incarnations, the Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones. If he had risen above even that splendid attainment, it is easily conceivable that he should have become “the Patron of all the Adepts.” It is equally conceivable that the Shakra of his own time, who had been the Brahman Magha, and who had already visited Siddhartha when he attained to Buddhahood, should visit him again some years later, to put to him questions regarding fundamental principles of life. This is the visit

recorded in the Sutta we are considering.

So it is clear that much that is of the utmost value and significance concerning the Radiant Ones, the hierarchy of Masters and their Chief, is present even in the popular Pali Scriptures. Of necessity it is veiled, and, in the present Sutta, this veiling is accomplished with a high degree of literary skill and charm.

Many of the Suttas were originally discourses addressed by the Buddha, not only to the congregation of his disciples, but also to those who were not disciples, to the inhabitants of the towns and villages he visited, in the endless peregrinations of his long mission. As discourses addressed to audiences, mixed and often casually assembled, it was essential first of all that they should be attractive; unless they held the attention of the listeners, the purpose of the august Teacher would completely fail. Therefore, we nearly always find in them an excellent story, admirably told, with elements of charm, of picturesque vividness, and that fine humour, examples of which have previously been given. The present story has all these qualities in a notable degree, and we can see that they served two purposes: the story element held the attention of the auditors, and it added just that aspect of mirage which concealed the realities from those who were not yet ready for them. So we come to the Sutta.

Once upon a time the Master was living in the Magadha country, in the cavern of Indra's Sal tree, in the Vedyaka mountain, to the north of the Brahman village Ambasanda, which lies to the east of Rajagriha, the chief city of the Magadhas. At that time, a strong desire to see the Master came to Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones. So this thought arose in the mind of Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones: "Where does the Master now dwell, the Arhat, the perfectly illumined one?" Then Shakra beheld the Master dwelling in the Magadha country, in the cavern of Indra's Sal tree, in the Vedyaka mountain, to the north of the Brahman village Ambasanda, which lies to the east of Rajagriha. When he had seen, he addressed the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three:

"Noble ones, the Master is dwelling in the Magadha country, in the cavern of Indra's Sal tree, in the Vedyaka mountain, to the north of the Brahman village Ambasanda, which lies to the east of Rajagriha.

Noble ones, what if we were to betake ourselves thither, to see the Master, the Arhat, perfectly illumined?”

“This would be excellent!” the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three replied to Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones.

So Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, addressed Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister:

“Dear Five-crest, the Master is dwelling in the Magadha country, in the cavern of Indra’s Sal tree, in the Vedyaka Mountain, to the north of the Brahman village Ambasanda, which lies to the east of Rajagriha. Dear Five-crest, what if we were to betake ourselves thither, to see the Master, the Arhat, perfectly illumined?”

“This would be excellent!” Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister, replied to Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, and, taking his lute of yellow Vilva wood, he waited on Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones.

So Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, accompanied by the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, and preceded by Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister, just as a strong man might extend his indrawn arm, or draw in his arm extended, just so, vanishing from the realm of the Thirty-three, appeared in the Magadha country, and stood on the Vedyaka mountain, to the north of the Brahman village Ambasanda, which lies to the east of Rajagriha.

Then the Vedyaka mountain began to glow with a great radiance, and the Brahman village Ambasanda also, because of the presence of the Radiant Ones. So in the villages round about, men said:

“Vedyaka mountain is luminous today, Vedyaka mountain burns with splendour today, Vedyaka mountain glows today. Why does Vedyaka mountain gleam today with a great radiance, and the Brahman village Ambasanda also?” Thus they spoke, their hair standing on end with wonder.

So Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, addressed Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister: “Difficult to approach, dear Five-crest, is the Tathagata, He who came as his Predecessors came, when meditating, altogether concentrated in the joy of meditation. Dear Five-crest, what if you were first to win the favour of the Master, and then, after the favour of the Master has been won by you, I were to draw near, to behold the Master, the Arhat, perfectly illumined?”

“This would be excellent!” Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister replied to Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones. Then, taking his lute of yellow Vilva wood, he drew near to the cavern of Indra’s Sal tree. Thus approaching, he thought, “At this distance the Master will not be too far from me, nor too near, so that he will hear my music.” So Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister, stood at a little distance and began to play on his lute of yellow Vilva wood, and sang these verses, concerning the Buddha, concerning the Law of Righteousness, concerning the Arhats, and concerning love.”

Here we may pause a moment. It would be difficult to find, in the whole range of religious literature, a more charming fancy than this, the expedient of the heavenly troubadour taking his stand at the entrance of the sacred cavern, playing on his lute, and singing a pensive love song, to entice the great Lord Buddha from profound meditation to a conversational mood. We can imagine the auditors in some village listening in delight. The song has its lyric qualities, but we need not translate it all. Five-crest began somewhat thus:

I salute thee, father of the lady Sunshine,
Father of the fair one who inspires my joy! . . .

and, after dwelling on the lady’s charms, and his own love-lorn state, ended thus:

If Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Thirty-three,
Gave me a wish, Sunshine, I’d ask for thee!

One might suppose that even the Buddha, aroused from meditation by a strolling lute-player, might be somewhat irritated. Not at all. The perfectly illumined one showed himself at once a tolerant auditor and a keen musical critic. The Master spoke thus:

“The music of your strings, Five-crest, blends well with the music of your song, so that, Five-crest, neither does the music of the strings overcolour the music of the song, nor the music of the song, the music of the strings. On what occasion, Five-crest, did you compose these verses concerning the Buddha, concerning the Law of Righteousness, concerning the Arhats, concerning love?”

“At the time when the Master was dwelling at Uruvela, on the bank of the river Neranjara, at the foot of the fig-tree which shelters the

shepherds, on the attainment of Buddhahood, at that very time, Sire, I fell in love with Sunshine, daughter of Timbaru, King of the Celestial Choristers. But the lady loved another. When I could by no means win the lady, I drew near to the dwelling of the King of the Celestial Choristers and, taking my lute of yellow Vilva wood, I sang these verses” . . . And Five-crest sang the verses again.

Then this thought came to Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones: “Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister, is on very friendly terms with the Master, and the Master with Five-crest!” So Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, addressed Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister:

“Dear Five-crest, respectfully greet the Master on my behalf, saying, ‘Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, with his ministers, with his attendants, bows his head at the Master’s feet!’”

“Excellent!” replied Five-crest, son of the Celestial Chorister, and, addressing the Master, he said, “Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, with his ministers, with his attendants, bows his head at the Master’s feet!”

“May Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, be happy, Five-crest, with his ministers, with his attendants! For desirous of happiness are Radiant Ones, men, Asuras, Nagas, Celestial Choristers, and whatsoever other beings there are, in their several bodies.”

For thus do Tathagatas greet those in high authority. Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, thus greeted by the Master, entered the cavern of Indra’s Sal tree and, saluting the Master, stood at one side; and the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, entering the cavern of Indra’s Sal tree, saluting the Master, stood at one side.

At that time, verily, in the cavern of Indra’s Sal tree, whatever had been rough became smooth, whatever had been hemmed in became spacious, in the cavern that had been dark as night a radiance glowed, through the radiant presence of the Radiant Ones. So the Master spoke thus to Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones:

“Admirable is this visit of the noble Shakra, wonderful is this visit of the noble Shakra; how has one so beset with duties, with so many tasks to perform, come to visit me?”

“For a long time, Sire, have I desired to come to see the Master, and those of the Thirty-three have also desired this, but I have not

been able to come to see the Master because I was hindered by many things to be done. Once before, when the Master was dwelling at Savitri, I came to see the Master. At that time the Master had entered into one of the meditations, and Sister Bhunjati, a disciple of the Maharaja of the East, was in attendance on the Master, standing with palms pressed together reverently. So, Sire, I said to Bhunjati: ‘Sister, greet the Master for me, saying, “Sire, Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, with his ministers, with his attendants, bows his head at the Master’s feet!”’

“But Bhunjati replied, ‘It is not the time, noble one, to see the Master, for the Master is withdrawn in meditation!’

“Then, Sister, when the Master has arisen from that meditation, greet the Master according to my word, “Sire, Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, with his ministers, with his attendants, bows his head at the Master’s feet!”’ Did the Sister greet the Master for me? Does the Master remember the Sister saying this?”

“The Sister conveyed the greeting to me, Ruler of the Radiant Ones. I remember the Sister saying this. And further, I was aroused from that meditation by the sound of my noble friend’s chariot wheels!”

Then follows a story, embellished with much melodious verse, concerning another lady, Gopika by name, a daughter of the Shakyas among whom Siddhartha was born. This lady, devoted to the Buddha, devoted to the Law of Righteousness, devoted to the Order, “putting aside the heart of a woman, taking the heart of a man, when she put off the body, entered the heavenly world and entered into the presence of the Radiant Ones of the Thirty-three, and was received as a Child of the Radiant Ones,” and became distinguished through effective admonition of certain disciples who, caught in the net of personal desires, fell short of that high attainment. It is interesting to find the title, *Upasika*, given to this lady of the manly heart.

Then, after these picturesque and dramatic preliminaries, we come to the heart of the matter. We are told that this thought arose in the mind of the Buddha: “For many a long day Shakra has maintained purity and holiness. Therefore, whatever question he shall ask me, purposeful and earnest, that question I shall straightway answer.”

Then, having made a radiant space about him, Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, asked the Master this first question:

“Under what yoke of compulsion, Noble One, is it that Radiant Ones, men, Asuras, Nagas, Celestial Choristers, and whatever beings there are, according to their several forms, who would fain be free from wrath, free from violence, free from rivalry, free from malevolence, are nevertheless not so, but are subject to wrath, subject to violence, subject to rivalry, subject to malevolence?”

This is the first question that Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, addressed to the Master. The Master answered the question thus:

“Under compulsion of the yoke of envy and selfishness, verily, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, it is that Radiant Ones, men, Asuras, Nagas, Celestial Choristers, and whatever beings there are, according to their several forms, who would fain be free from wrath, free from violence, free from rivalry, free from malevolence, are nevertheless not so, but are subject to wrath, subject to violence, subject to rivalry, subject to malevolence.”

Thus did the Master answer the question of Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones. Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, gratified and delighted at what had been spoken by the Master, spoke, rejoicing: “This is so, Master! This is so, Welcome One! My uncertainty has passed away, my doubt is gone, hearing the Master’s answer to my question.”

So Shakra, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, gratified and delighted at what had been spoken, asked the Master a second question:

“Envy and selfishness, Noble One, are caused by what, aroused by what, brought to birth by what, evolved by what? In the existence of what are envy and selfishness present, and in the non-existence of what are envy and selfishness not present?”

“Envy and selfishness, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, are caused by the distinction between what is dear and what is not dear, aroused, brought to birth, evolved by the distinction between what is dear and what is not dear; when the distinction between what is dear and what is not dear is present, then envy and selfishness are present; when absent, these are absent.”

“This distinction between what is dear and what is not dear, Noble

One, is caused by what, aroused by what, brought to birth by what, evolved by what? In the existence of what is the distinction between what is dear and what is not dear present, and in the non-existence of what is this distinction absent?"

"The distinction between what is dear and what is not dear, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, is caused by thirsting desire, aroused, brought to birth, evolved by thirsting desire; when thirsting desire is present, then the distinction between what is dear and what is not dear is present; when absent, it is absent."

"What, Noble One, is the cause of thirsting desire, by what is it aroused, brought to birth, evolved? In the existence of what is thirsting desire present, and in the non-existence of what is it absent?"

"Thirsting desire, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, is caused by the mental sense of separateness, aroused, brought to birth, evolved by the mental sense of separateness; when the mental sense of separateness is present, then thirsting desire is present; when absent, it is absent."

"What, Noble One, is the cause of the mental sense of separateness, by what is it aroused, brought to birth, evolved? In the existence of what is the mental sense of separateness present, and in the non-existence of what is it absent?"

"The mental sense of separateness, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, is caused by the dwelling of the intelligence on the consciousness of differentiation, aroused, brought to birth, evolved by the dwelling of the intelligence on the consciousness of differentiation; when this dwelling of the intelligence on the consciousness of differentiation is present, then the mental sense of separateness is present; when absent, it is absent."

So far, so good. It is difficult to know which is most to be admired, the fine courtliness of the whole dialogue, or the logical consistency with which Shakra pursues his quarry from pillar to post. If he had asked the question which comes logically next, namely, "What, Noble One, is the cause of the consciousness of differentiation?" his enquiry would have penetrated beyond the cosmic veil; for, in all descriptions of the manifestation of the cosmos, the tendency to differentiation is taken for granted. It has to be taken for granted, since it is a problem which is insoluble by the intellect, and must so remain. It is, in fact,

the question, Why is there a manifested universe? which is only less insoluble than the further question, Why is there a universe at all?

We may, perhaps, make the whole dialogue simpler by paraphrasing its substance. It is evident that evil action arises when a wrong choice is made; when the individual, in the words of one of the Upanishads, chooses the dearer instead of the better. But this wrong choice can be made only when two objects, the better and the dearer, are distinguished, and when the desire for the dearer is present. This distinction depends on the mental and emotional perception of difference; and this again depends on the fact of differentiation. So we come back to the same starting point, What is the primal cause of differentiation?

It is characteristic of the Buddhist Scriptures, and of the method of the Buddha, that this question is not put, since there is no possible answer to it. Instead, the dialogue takes an eminently practical line; we are told how a wrong choice is to be recognized, and therefore how a right choice is to be made. The Sutta continues:

“By doing what, Noble One, does a disciple make the entry to the right path leading to the cessation of the dwelling of the intelligence on the consciousness of differentiation?”

“I teach, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, that happiness is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed. I also teach that sorrow is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed. I also teach that indifference is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed.

“I teach, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, that happiness is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed. Why do I say this, and for what reason? I may know happiness thus: If, when I follow after this happiness, bad qualities increase and good qualities decrease, then this happiness is not to be followed. I may know happiness thus: If, when I follow after that happiness, bad qualities decrease and good qualities increase, then that happiness is to be followed. And so there is happiness which is accompanied by verbal and mental analysis, and there is happiness which is above verbal and mental analysis; those states of consciousness which have risen above

verbal and mental analysis are the more excellent.

“Thus, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, I teach that happiness is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed, and I teach thus for this reason.

“I also teach, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, that sorrow is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed. Why do I say this, and for what reason? I may know sorrow thus: If, when I follow after this sorrow, bad qualities increase and good qualities decrease, then this sorrow is not to be followed. I may know sorrow thus: If, when I follow after that sorrow, bad qualities decrease and good qualities increase, then that sorrow is to be followed. And so there is sorrow which is accompanied by verbal and mental analysis, and there is sorrow which is above verbal and mental analysis; those states of consciousness which have arisen above verbal and mental analysis are the more excellent.

“Thus, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, I teach that sorrow is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed, and I teach thus for this reason.

“I also teach, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, that indifference is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed. Why do I say this, and for what reason? I may know indifference thus: If, when I follow after this indifference, bad qualities increase and good qualities decrease, then this indifference is not to be followed. I may know indifference thus: If, when I follow after that indifference, bad qualities decrease and good qualities increase, then that indifference is to be followed. And so there is indifference which is accompanied by verbal and mental analysis, and there is indifference which is above verbal and mental analysis; those states of consciousness which have risen above verbal and mental analysis are the more excellent.

“Thus, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, I teach that indifference is of two kinds, that which should be followed, and that which should not be followed, and I teach thus for this reason.

“By proceeding thus, Ruler of the Radiant Ones, does a disciple make the entry to the right path leading to the cessation of the dwelling of the intelligence on the consciousness of differentiation.”

As a simple, lucid and practical guide to right conduct, this would be hard to equal. It may be valuable to illustrate. That happiness which comes from self-indulgence leads to the increase of bad qualities and the decrease of good qualities; therefore it is not to be followed. That happiness which comes from genuine service leads to the decrease of bad qualities and the increase of good qualities. Therefore it is to be followed. That sorrow which desponds, robbing us of hope and courage, is not to be followed. That sorrow of genuine repentance, which leads to purification and reparation, is to be followed. That indifference which is merely stupidity, inertness, is not to be followed. The higher indifference, which is the expression of detachment and impartiality, the “disinterestedness” which Krishna teaches, is to be followed. In each case, that which is to be followed, leads back toward spiritual unity, back toward the One.

It may be said that, in this teaching regarding “the sorrow which is to be followed” we come very close to a teaching that is characteristic of the Master Christ.

One point more. It is to be noted that, in his explanation, the Buddha leaves undefined the most vital words, “happiness,” “sorrow,” “good qualities,” “bad qualities.” This is as it should be, for, as Pascal pointed out, there is no such thing as an absolute definition; all that we can do is to refer the less known to the well known, coming back to something which is recognized by everyone, as, for example, happiness and sorrow. It is curious that our present age takes for granted that we have an innate power to distinguish between truth and what is false; the whole development of Science is based on this assumption. But there is no such general recognition that we can also distinguish between good and bad; yet this is another side of the same spiritual power, the perception of real values, which is inherent in Buddhi, for the reason that Buddhi is the manifestation of the One Reality. This higher intuitive perception has risen above verbal and mental analysis; therefore it is more excellent. This does not mean that verbal and mental analysis may be ignored; they have their right place, but, in the fullness of time, they will be transcended, with the development of intuition. This, once more, is an approach toward the One.

The Chain of Causation

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It is the custom of Orientalists to speak of Buddhism as a religion, and a very beautiful and intuitional book has been written, with the title, *The Religion of Buddha*. But we shall be well advised to bear in mind that the Buddha's purpose was not to announce a world religion, or even to frame a religious system for all the members of a single nation or people, such a system as the Laws of Manu, or the book of Leviticus presents, including, with the Ten Commandments, the details of a complete system of ritual, and of civil and criminal law.

This was not the purpose of the Buddha. Though he taught openly in the villages and the cities, in the palaces of princes as well as in the shadowed solitude of the forests, his aim was not to establish better and more righteous modes of life for villagers and citizens, or even to inspire kings and princes with a more enlightened policy; his real purpose was to gather disciples from the villages and towns and palaces, and to inspire in them the desire to enter on a path which should lead them away, once for all, from the preoccupations of village or city or palace, a path that should lead them to a new world. And, in general, the account of one of the visits of the Buddha to the common haunts of men, whether villagers or princes, is followed by a record of those who, hearing him there, and inspired by his golden words, had gone forth from that worldly life, taking refuge in the Buddha, taking refuge in the Law of Righteousness, taking refuge in the Order. The true purpose of the Buddha was to found an Order of Disciples.

Seeing this clearly, we must remember also that from time immemorial the teaching and training of disciples falls into two parts: that which is imparted outwardly by word to the understanding of the disciple, and that which is imparted inwardly to the disciple's heart and spirit, when the Master communicates his own life and being to the disciple. This inner teaching is intensely individual, fitted to the special needs of that disciple from day to day, and in a sense incommunicable, concerned with states of consciousness, spiritual intuitions and inspiration, which must be experienced before they can be understood by the mind, or which transcend the ordinary reach of the mind altogether. If imparted in words to a disciple who had not gained this spiritual experience, these teachings could not be understood; they might very easily be misunderstood, thus leading to confusion, not to light, but to greater darkness.

Danger would always arise where the disciple had not yet conquered the strong forces of the lower self, for the constant impulse of the lower self is to seize and turn to its own uses whatever it can lay hold on, whether natural forces or thoughts that seem to promise power. In the words of *Sartor Resartus*, "the self in thee needs to be annihilated" before the higher way can be entered, or even clearly seen; the danger is that the lower desires, impulses and egotisms may be transferred to these larger worlds, so that the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Therefore it is that so much of the Buddha's teaching is directed toward an understanding of the lower self, in order that the disciple clearly seeing its nature and menace may resolutely set about the hard task of conquering it. Quite inevitably, this purpose gives to much of the Buddha's recorded teaching a complexion that has been called "nihilistic"; inevitably, because the whole aim is the annihilation of selfishness and evil desires.

In this preliminary task, the Buddha used two chief instruments: practical moral discipline, involving the renunciation of the householder's life, the pledge and practice of chastity in thought, word and act, and a series of rules of conduct, which included an admirable code of good manners; and, second, intellectual analysis, to be applied by the disciple to the lower self and the world of the lower self, in

order that he might overcome the glamour of the lower self and its appetites, and recognize them for the base and unworthy things they are. The disciple was taught to turn the light of his intelligence upon the bundle of desires that make up the lower self, so that these desires might be conquered and the force in them transmuted.

The most famous piece of analytic thinking in the teaching of the Buddha is what is called the Chain of Causation, *Nidana*, which pervades and underlies his whole thought, and which, fortunately for us, is set forth in one of the Suttas with that crystalline clearness that is so distinctive of the Buddha's thinking, as also of that other great Aryan Master, Sankaracharya, The *Maha-Nidana-Suttanta* is indeed so lucid and direct that it may be translated almost without comment or elucidation. It begins:

Thus it has been heard by me.

Once upon a time the Master dwelt among the Kurus, in a township of the Kurus, named Kammassadhamma. And so the noble Ananda, coming to the place where the Master was, making salutation to the Master, sat down by his side. Seated beside him, the noble Ananda said this to the Master: "Marvellous is it, Lord, wonderful is it, Lord, that, whereas this teaching of effects arising from causes is deep, and looks deep, to me it appears absolutely clear and simple!"

"Say not so, Ananda, say not so! Deep, Ananda, is this teaching of effects arising from causes, and it also looks deep. Because, Ananda, mankind is not awake to this law, and does not penetrate it, mankind is tangled like a matted skein, balled up like clotted yarn, or as rushes and grass confused together, and therefore cannot escape from misery, from the evil way, from downfall and recurring death.

"If it be asked, Ananda, 'Is there a definite cause of decay and death?' it should be answered, 'There is!' Then he will say, 'What is the cause of decay and death?' It should be answered, 'Being born is the cause of decay and death.'

"If it be asked, Ananda, 'Is there a definite cause of being born?' it should be answered, 'There is!' Then he will say, 'What is the cause of being born?' It should be answered, 'Differentiated existence is the cause of being born.'

“If it be asked, Ananda, ‘Is there a definite cause of differentiated existence?’ it should be answered, ‘There is!’ Then he will say, ‘What is the cause of differentiated existence?’ It should be answered, ‘Clinging to life is the cause of differentiated existence.’

“If it be asked, Ananda, ‘Is there a definite cause of clinging to life?’ it should be answered, ‘There is!’ Then he will say, ‘What is the cause of clinging to life?’ It should be answered, ‘Thirsting desire is the cause of clinging to life.’

“If it be asked, Ananda, ‘Is there a definite cause of thirsting desire?’ it should be answered, ‘There is!’ Then he will say, ‘What is the cause of thirsting desire?’ It should be answered, ‘Sensation is the cause of thirsting desire.’

“If it be asked, Ananda, ‘Is there a definite cause of sensation?’ it should be answered, ‘There is!’ Then he will say, ‘What is the cause of sensation?’ It should be answered, ‘Contacts of the senses are the cause of sensation.’

“If it should be asked, Ananda, ‘Is there a definite cause of contacts of the senses?’ it should be answered, ‘There is!’ Then he will say, ‘What is the cause of contacts of the senses?’ It should be answered, ‘Objects differentiated according to name and form are the cause of contacts of the senses.’

“If it should be asked, Ananda, ‘Is there a definite cause of objects differentiated according to name and form?’ it should be answered, ‘There is!’ Then he will say, ‘What is the cause of objects differentiated according to name and form?’ It should be answered, ‘Cognition of difference is the cause of objects differentiated according to name and form.’

“If it should be asked, Ananda, ‘Is there a definite cause of cognition of difference?’ it should be answered, ‘There is!’ Then he will say, ‘What is the cause of cognition of difference?’ It should be answered, ‘Differentiation according to name and form is the cause of cognition of difference.’

“Thus, then, Ananda, differentiation according to name and form is the cause of cognition of difference, cognition of difference is the cause of differentiation according to name and form, differentiation according to name and is the cause of contacts of the senses, contacts

of the senses are the cause of sensation, sensation is the cause of thirsting desire, thirsting desire is the cause of clinging to life, clinging to life is the cause of differentiated existence, differentiated existence is the cause of being born, being born is the cause of decay and death, decay and death are the cause from which lamentation, misery, dejection and despair arise. Such is the origin of this whole body of ills.”

We may interrupt our text for a moment here. The problem has been to discover the cause of decay and death, lamentation, misery, dejection and despair: the problem of the Origin of Evil in human life. We have been led back step by step along the Chain of Causation to differentiation according to name and form, and to cognition of difference, each of these two being said to be the cause of the other. This is not really arguing in a circle, as it may seem, because the two in fact arise simultaneously; they are the two sides, subjective and objective, of that primordial differentiation of the Logos, which must remain an unsolved mystery for our human minds. We do not know, we cannot conceivably know, why there is a manifested universe, any more than we can know why there is a universe at all. But it does not at all follow that the Buddha, in thus leading the mind of the noble Ananda back to an insoluble mystery, has for a moment lost sight of his practical goal. The first purpose, conveyed, as always, with delicate and charming humour, was to bring the noble Ananda to realize that the whole problem not only looked deep, but in fact was deep, in spite of his confident assertion that, for his bright intelligence, it was as clear and simple as possible. Socrates later followed much the same method with those who were too assured of their own cleverness.

But the matter really goes deeper. The reason why primordial differentiation took place within the unmanifested Logos may be altogether beyond our ken. But we are quite able to understand that our ingrained habit of identifying our consciousness and feelings with this outward flow toward matter is the cause of many evils, whose pedigree is traced in the Chain of Causation. We are equally able to understand that, by ceasing to set our hearts on these temporal things, we may turn inward toward the Self with reverted vision, and so come

to inherit eternal things. This turning, this conversion, this change of direction from self-identification with the temporal and false to self-identification with the true and the eternal, is what the disciple needs, at the entrance of the way. He has already in hand the practical and moral side of the problem by “leaving the household life” and entering the Buddha’s celibate Order; he is now set to master the intellectual side by analysing the causes that underlie and build up the kind of life he has abandoned, so that he may uproot these causes, lest they drag him back once more to decay and death, lamentation and misery.

The Chain of Causation is not invariably given in exactly the terms of the Sutta we have translated. Sometimes an additional step is added in the middle of the ladder: “Differentiation according to name and form is the cause of the six sense-powers; the six sense-powers are the cause of contacts of the senses,” and so on, with no essential change of meaning. But there is also another version of the upper rungs of the ladder: “Cognition of difference is the cause of differentiation according to name and form; discrete existences are the cause of cognition of difference; Avidya, primordial unwisdom, is the cause of cognition of difference;” Thus we get the full chain of Twelve Nidanas, as it is generally quoted. But, once again, the essence of the matter remains precisely the same. We are led back to the primal differentiation in the Logos. And the practical moral is exactly the same: Kill out the dire heresy of separateness. It is deeply interesting that, in this fuller form of the Chain of Causation, we are led back to Avidya, as in the Upanishads and the Vedanta, which offer as the cure Vidya, true Wisdom, or Brahma Vidya, the Wisdom of the Eternal. So we come back to our Pali text:

“‘Being born is the cause of decay and death,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, is it to be understood that being born is the cause of decay and death. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no being born, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, neither of Devas to Devahood, nor of Seraphs to Seraphhood, nor of Gnomes to Gnomehood, nor of Ghosts to Ghosthood, nor of Men to Manhood, nor of Quadrupeds to Quadrupedhood, nor of Birds to Birdhood, nor of Reptiles to Reptilehood, supposing, Ananda, there

were no being born of these several beings to their several states, no being born at all, on this cessation of being born, could decay and death arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of decay and death, namely, being born.

“‘Differentiated existence is the cause of being born,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood that differentiated existence is the cause of being born. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no differentiated existence, of any sort, of any kind, of anything, in any way, that is to say, existence of desire, existence of form, existence of the formless, no differentiated existence of any kind, on this cessation of differentiated existence, could being born arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of being born, namely differentiated existence.

“‘Clinging to life is the cause of differentiated existence,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood that clinging to life is the cause of differentiated existence. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no clinging to life, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, that to say, clinging to desires, clinging to views, clinging to rituals, clinging to self-assertion, no clinging of any kind, on this cessation of clinging, could differentiated existence arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of differentiated existence, namely, clinging to life.

“‘Thirsting desire is the cause of clinging to life,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood that thirsting desire is the cause of clinging to life. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no thirsting desire, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, that is to say, thirst for forms, thirst for sounds, thirst for scents, thirst for tastes, thirst for sense-contacts, thirst for tendencies, no thirsting desire of any kind, on this cessation of thirsting desire, could

clinging to life arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of clinging to life, namely, thirsting desire.

“‘Sensation is the cause of thirsting desire,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood that sensation is the cause of thirsting desire. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no sensation, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, that is to say, sensation born of visual contacts, sensation born of auditory contacts, sensation born of aromatic contacts, sensation born of gustatory contacts, sensation born of bodily contacts, sensation born of mental contacts, no sensation of any kind, on this cessation of sensation, could thirsting desire arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of thirsting desire, namely, sensation.

“Thus, Ananda, sensation is the cause of thirsting desire, thirsting desire is the cause of pursuit, pursuit is the cause of gaining, gaining is the cause of distinction of values, distinction of values is the cause of passionate longing, passionate longing is the cause of cleaving to possessions, cleaving to possessions is the cause of avarice, avarice is the cause of selfishness, selfishness is the cause of setting guards, setting guards is the cause of uplifting clubs, uplifting weapons, quarrelling, discord, contention, mutual vituperation, lying, back-biting; thus many sinful, evil impulses arise.

“‘Setting guards is the cause of uplifting clubs, uplifting weapons, quarrelling, discord, contention, mutual vituperation, lying, back-biting; thus many sinful, evil impulses arise,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how setting guards is the cause of uplifting clubs, uplifting weapons, quarrelling, discord, contention, mutual vituperation, lying, back-biting, so that many sinful, evil impulses arise. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no setting guards, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no setting guards at all, on this cessation of setting guards, could there be uplifting clubs, uplifting weapons, quarrelling, discord,

contention, mutual vituperation, lying, back-biting, so many sinful, evil impulses arising?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of uplifting clubs, uplifting weapons, quarrelling, discord, contention, mutual vituperation, lying, back-biting, so many sinful, evil impulses arising, namely setting guards.

“‘Selfishness is the cause of setting guards,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how selfishness is the cause of setting guards. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no selfishness, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no selfishness at all, on this cessation of selfishness, could there be any setting guards?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of setting guards, namely, selfishness.

“‘Avarice is the cause of selfishness,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how avarice is the cause of selfishness. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no avarice, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no avarice at all, on this cessation of avarice, could selfishness arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of selfishness, namely avarice.

“‘Cleaving to possessions is the cause of avarice,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how cleaving to possessions is the cause of avarice. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no cleaving to possessions, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no cleaving to possessions at all, on this cessation of cleaving to possessions, could avarice arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of avarice, namely cleaving to possessions.

“‘Passionate longing is the cause of cleaving to possessions,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how

passionate longing is the cause of cleaving to possessions. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no passionate longing, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no passionate longing at all, on this cessation of passionate longing, could cleaving to possessions arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of cleaving to possessions, namely passionate longing.

“‘Distinction of values is the cause of passionate longing,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how distinction of values is the cause of passionate longing. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no distinction of values, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no distinction of values at all, on this cessation of distinction of values, could passionate longing arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of passionate longing, namely, distinction of values.

“‘Gaining is the cause of distinction of values,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how gaining is the cause of distinction of values. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no gaining, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no gaining at all, on this cessation of gaining, could distinction of values arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of distinction of values, namely, gaining.

“‘Pursuit is the cause of gaining,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how pursuit is the cause of gaining. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no pursuit, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no pursuit at all, on this cessation of pursuit; could gaining arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of gaining, namely, pursuit.

“‘Thirsting desire is the cause of pursuit,’ how is this to be

understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how thirsting desire is the cause of gaining. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no thirsting desire, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, no thirsting desire at all, on this cessation of thirsting desire, could pursuit arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of pursuit, namely, thirsting desire.

“Thus, verily, Ananda, these two impulses of thirsting desire, from being two, become one, because of sensation, which is their cause.

“‘Contacts of the senses are the cause of Sensation;’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how contacts of the senses are the cause of sensation. Supposing, Ananda, that there were no contacts of the senses, of any sort, of any kind, of any one, in any way, that is to say, visual contact, auditory contact, aromatic contact, gustatory contact, bodily contact, mental contact, no contact at all, on this cessation of contact, could sensation arise?”

“No, Lord !”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of sensation, namely, contact.

“‘Differentiation according to name and form is the cause of the contacts of the senses;’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how differentiation according to name and form is the cause of the contacts of the senses. If, Ananda, these shapes, distinctive marks, characteristics, peculiarities, through which the whole category of names comes into being—if these shapes, distinctive marks, characteristics, peculiarities did not exist, would there be any application of names in the category of forms?”

“No, Lord!”

“If, Ananda, these shapes, distinctive marks, characteristics, peculiarities, through which the whole category of forms comes into being—if these shapes, distinctive marks, characteristics, peculiarities did not exist, would there be any application of perception in the category of names?”

“No, Lord!”

“If, Ananda, these shapes, distinctive marks; characteristics, peculiarities, give rise both to the category of names and the category of forms, and if these shapes, distinctive marks, characteristics, peculiarities did not exist, could there be either application of names or application of perception?”

“No, Lord!”

“If, Ananda, these shapes, distinctive marks, characteristics, peculiarities, whereby name and form come into being—if these shapes, distinctive marks, characteristics, peculiarities did not exist, could contacts of the senses arise?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of contacts of the senses, namely, differentiation according to name and form.

“‘Cognition of difference is the cause of differentiation according to name and form,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how cognition of difference is the cause of differentiation according to name and form. If cognition of difference, Ananda, did not descend into the womb of the mother, would differentiation according to name and form arise in the womb of the mother?”

“No, Lord!”

“If cognition of difference, Ananda, having entered, should depart, would differentiation according to name and form come to birth in this state of being?”

“No, Lord!”

“If cognition of difference were to become extinct in the young child, whether boy or girl, would differentiation according to name and form attain to growth, development, completeness?”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of differentiation according to name and form, namely, cognition of difference.

“‘Differentiation according to name and form is the cause of cognition of difference,’ how is this to be understood? In this way, Ananda, it is to be understood how differentiation according to name

and form is the cause of cognition of difference. Supposing, Ananda, that cognition of difference were to find no foundation in differentiation according to name and form, could the sequence of being born, decay, death, misery, have come into being?"

"No, Lord!"

"Therefore, Ananda, this is indeed the source, this is the origin, this is the beginning, this is the cause of cognition of difference, namely, differentiation according to name and form.

"Therefore, Ananda, birth, decay, death, dissolution, rebirth will continue, naming, defining, differentiation, manifesting will continue, the wheel will continue to turn for the production of worldly life, so long as differentiation according to name and form, and cognition of difference, continue."

The Ladder of Consciousness

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Many Orientalists of a by-gone day, misled, perhaps, by learned but undiscerning Southern Buddhists, held that Nirvana, the consummation of the Buddha's path, meant annihilation of consciousness, annihilation of being, itself. Robert Childers, whose Pali Dictionary is still the foundation stone of our knowledge of the sacred language of Buddhism, states that view without reservation, and many scholars followed his lead.

This complete failure to understand is due, in a considerable degree, to a misapprehension of the Buddha's purpose, when he declares that "Self, Atta, has no reality," Atta being the Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit, Atma; and to a like misunderstanding of the states of consciousness which the Buddha describes, as leading up to Nirvana. To show that the consciousness of one approaching Buddhahood, and therefore drawing near to Nirvana, far from being negative, is intensely positive, we may quote a native gloss on that part of the Jataka, which describes the conditions under which the aspiration for Buddhahood may be successfully entertained:

"He who, if all within the rim of the world were to become water, would be ready to swim across it with his own arms, and to reach the further shore, he is the one to attain to Buddhahood; or, if all within the rim of the world were a jangle of bamboo, would be ready to break his way through it, and to reach the further side, he is the one to attain to Buddhahood; or, if all within the rim of the world were a floor of

close-set spear points, would be ready to tread them, and to go afoot to the further side, he is the one to attain to Buddhahood; or, if all within the rim of the world were live embers, would be ready to step on them, and so to pass over, he is the one to attain to Buddhahood; then, but not otherwise, will his purpose succeed.”

We owe this fine passage to Henry Clarke Warren, who, more intuitive than the earlier Orientalists, interprets Nirvana as “extinction of desire,” and wisely adds: “I conceive that Nirvana can only be properly understood by a tolerably thorough comprehension of the philosophy of which it is the climax” (*Buddhism in Translations*, p. 284). It is certain that the quality of supreme determination described in the passage quoted could not conceivably be the prelude of extinction; but this quality is entirely in harmony with the Theosophical understanding of a Master, and of that Master of Masters, whom we know as Siddhartha the Compassionate.

It is clear that the Atta of the Pali scriptures is not the Parama-Atma of the great Upanishads, but is the lower self of the false personality; and that the purpose of the Buddha, when he teaches in detail the unreality of Atta, is, to help the disciple, or, perhaps, we may almost say, to compel the disciple, to that abandonment of self, which is the first step on the path of wisdom and attainment. That this abandonment of self leads, not to extinction, but to real being, will become abundantly clear, when we come to the Buddha’s description of the states of consciousness which follow the abandonment of self. This description forms the conclusion of the *Maha-Nidana-Suttanta*, the first part of which has already been translated, under the title, “The Chain of Causation.”

The Buddha begins the work of dissipating the disciple’s belief in the reality of the false self by analysing all the possible forms which that belief can take, and showing that they are untenable:

“In how many ways, Ananda, do they make declarations concerning the self?

“Either maintaining, Ananda, that the self has form and is limited, one declares, ‘My self has form and is limited’; or maintaining, Ananda, that the self has form and is unending, one declares, ‘My self has form and is unending’; or maintaining, Ananda, that the self has

no form and is limited, one declares, 'My self has no form and is limited'; or maintaining, Ananda, that the self has no form and is unending, one declares, 'My self has no form and is unending.'

"In this way, Ananda, he who maintains and declares that the self has form and is limited, either maintains and declares that in this present life the self has form and is limited, or maintains and declares that in a future life the self has form and is limited, or his thought is, 'Since it is not like that, I shall build it over like that.' This being so, Ananda, enough has been said of the thought that the self has form and is limited.

"In the same way, Ananda, he who maintains and declares that the self has form and is unending, either maintains and declares that in this present life the self has form and is unending, or maintains and declares that in a future life the self has form and is unending, or his thought is, 'Since it is not like that, I shall build it over like that.' This being so, Ananda, enough has been said of the thought that the self has form and is unending.

"In the same way, Ananda, he who maintains and declares that the self has no form and is limited, either maintains and declares that in this present life the self has no form and is limited, or maintains and declares that in a future life the self has no form and is limited, or his thought is, 'Since it is not like that, I shall build it over like that.' This being so, Ananda, enough has been said of the thought that the self has no form and is limited.

"In the same way, Ananda, he who maintains and declares that the self has no form and is unending, either maintains and declares that in this present life the self has no form and is unending, or maintains and declares that in a future life the self has no form and is unending, or his thought is, 'Since it is not like that, I shall build it over like that.' This being so, Ananda, enough has been said of the thought that the self has no form and is unending.

"In so many ways, Ananda, do they make declarations concerning the self."

All this may seem to us rather abstract and remote. We are evidently concerned, not with the impulses of selfishness, but with rather tenuous and metaphysical theories of the self. But it must be

remembered that the disciples, for whom this teaching is designed, have already made a practical renunciation of the impulses of desire, leaving the household life for the homeless life, and surrendering all personal possessions; and, further, that other teachings of the Buddha are directly aimed at the impulses of desire. We are here, in fact, concerned with something more abstract, and more deep-rooted: with those thoughts of self, that cherishing of the thought of self, from which the impulses of selfishness may so easily rise again, through the operation of that chain of causation which has already been detailed. We are not now concerned with cutting away the leaves or lopping off the branches of selfishness; our purpose is, to destroy the seeds. Through right thinking, the seeds of wrong thinking are to be annihilated.

One may think of the self, says the Buddha, in a great many ways; but they all come down to this: the self may be thought of either as having form, or as not having form; the self may be thought of either as being limited in time, or as being unending.

Most of us probably think of the self, the imagined personality, as a replica of the body, but a very important replica. When we sign our names, we have, half-consciously, some such picture of the outward, bodily self in mind. So we think of the self as having form. Then again people are divided into those who believe that this self will definitely end at death, and those who believe that this identical self will continue in another world. They hardly stop to inquire which of the almost innumerable selves of a lifetime will thus be perpetuated: the self of childhood, the self of youth, or of maturity. Perhaps they have in view an eclectic self, made up of the best qualities of all three; thus, perhaps, dimly foreshadowing the selective process of Devachan, or Devaloka, as the Pali books call it. But, so far as we are concerned, they think of the self as having form, and as being either limited to the present life, or to be continued in a future life.

But there are those of more abstract bent, who are inclined to think that form belongs to the outer body, but not to the self. These again either believe, or do not believe, in survival. So we have the Buddha's four alternatives, which really cover all possible permutations and combinations of our imaginings of the self. But

there is a further possibility. There are those whose purpose is, to build up a self that shall possess such and such qualities; a purpose that is still self-centred and self-seeking; therefore to be swept aside with the same unflinching vigour. The Buddha's purpose is, to uproot the seed of that subtle kind of selfishness, which "renounces" self in this world with the definite purpose of achieving something for self in a future world; the love of reward, carefully disguised and pushed just over the rim of the horizon. The Buddha is determined to make an end of self-seeking, once for all; to attain to that revulsion from the desire of personal reward, whether in this world, or in another world, which Sankara Acharya describes as the Second Qualification. The vessel of being must be chemically clean, before the water of life is poured into it from above.

The paragraphs which follow in the Pali text remind us that the men of the Buddha's day and land were immeasurably more metaphysical, more argumentative also, than those of our day and generation. On the one hand, there were the class of thinkers, whom the Buddha elsewhere details and describes with delightful humour, who spent their lives in making affirmations concerning life and being, and spinning endless webs of argument in support of these affirmations. On the other hand, there were those equally ingenious and disputatious persons who spent their lives controverting and denying whatever the first class affirmed. The wrangling went on unceasingly. Both were wasting golden hours that should have been given to spiritual living, not to arguments concerning life.

So it comes that, having exhausted the possible combinations of thought on the affirmative side, the Buddha deems it expedient to go at equal length into the possible combinations on the negative side, as follows:

"And, further, Ananda, when no declaration is made concerning the self, in how many ways is no declaration made?" And, answering his own question, the great Master goes over the whole ground again, with the simple addition of a negative at each point. The point seems to be that, if men are plunged in disputatious argument, it does not greatly matter which view they are supporting; it is all waste of time and vanity.

Then we come to something closer to the thinking of our own times. The thought of self, of personality, may be based on feeling and emotion, rather than abstract thinking. Instead of Descartes's "I think, therefore I am," we may have "I feel, therefore I am." The Buddha sets himself to dissipate the emotional cloud, just as he has dissipated the mental cloud, by the simple and effective process of pulling it to pieces, and showing that it has no inherent unity, no essential "selfhood":

"And considering the self, Ananda, in how many ways does one consider the self? As feeling, verily, Ananda, he considers the self. 'My self is feeling,' he says. Or, 'My self is not feeling, my self is devoid of feeling.' Thus, Ananda, one perceives the self. Or he says, 'Neither is my self feeling, nor is it devoid of feeling; my self feels, feeling is one of its activities.' So, Ananda, considering the self, does one consider the self.

"In such a case, Ananda, when anyone says, 'My self is feeling,' one should say to him, 'My dear Sir, there are three kinds of feeling: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and feeling neither painful nor pleasant. As which of these three kinds of feeling do you perceive your self?'

"At the time, Ananda, when one feels pleasant feeling, at that time he does not feel painful feeling, nor feeling that is neither painful nor pleasant, while he is feeling pleasant feeling. At the time, Ananda, when one feels painful feeling, at that time he does not feel pleasant feeling, nor feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful, while he is feeling painful feeling. At the time, Ananda, when one feels feeling that is neither painful nor pleasant, at that time he does not feel pleasant feeling, nor feeling that is painful, while he is feeling neither pleasant nor painful feeling.

"Moreover, Ananda, pleasant feeling is unenduring, it is a composite, proceeding from antecedent causes, tending to dissipate, tending to pass away, tending to revulsion, tending to cease. Further, Ananda, painful feeling is unenduring, it is a composite, proceeding from antecedent causes, tending to dissipate, tending to pass away, tending to revulsion, tending to cease. Further, Ananda, feeling that is neither painful nor pleasant is unenduring, it is a composite,

proceeding from antecedent causes, tending to dissipate, tending to pass away, tending to revulsion, tending to cease.

“If, when one is feeling a pleasant feeling, he thinks, ‘This is my self,’ then, when that pleasant feeling ceases, he thinks, ‘My self has passed away.’ If, when one is feeling a painful feeling, he thinks ‘This is my self,’ then, when that painful feeling ceases, he thinks, ‘My self has passed away.’ If, when one is feeling a feeling that is neither painful nor pleasant, he thinks, ‘This is my self,’ then, when that feeling neither painful nor pleasant ceases, he thinks, ‘My self has passed away.’

“So it is evident that he who thinks, ‘My self is feeling,’ regards as self something that even here, in this present world, is unenduring, subject to pleasure and pain, having a beginning, and passing away. Therefore, Ananda, the view that ‘My self is feeling’ is, for this reason, not to be tolerated.

“Likewise, Ananda, when anyone says, ‘My self is not feeling, my self is devoid of feeling,’ one should say to him, ‘My dear Sir, when there is no feeling at all, can one then say, “I am”?’”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, the view that ‘My self is not feeling, my self is devoid of feeling,’ is, for this reason, not to be tolerated.

“Likewise, Ananda, when anyone says, ‘Neither is my self feeling, nor is it devoid of feeling; my self feels, feeling is one of its activities,’ one should say to him, ‘My dear Sir, supposing that feeling of every sort, in every way, should cease altogether, without leaving a trace, could one then say, “This I am”?’”

“No, Lord!”

“Therefore, Ananda, the view that ‘Neither is my self feeling, nor is it devoid of feeling; my self feels, feeling is one of its activities,’ is, for this reason, not to be tolerated.”

So far, so good. It is to be supposed that, by thoroughly digesting this teaching, by following, again and again, in his own mind, the steps of the Buddha’s analysis of the outer, false personality, the disciple has thoroughly convinced his mind and understanding of the truth that the elements of true selfhood are not present in that personality. The self of the false personality has been utterly dissolved. What happens

then? Is the result blankness and negation? Let us take first the Buddha's answer:

“Then, Ananda, when a disciple no longer considers his self to be feeling, nor to be devoid of feeling, nor says, ‘My self feels, feeling is one of its activities,’ ceasing to consider thus, he no longer clings to anything in the world; no longer clinging, he trembles not; trembling not, he attains to liberation, recognizing that the cause of rebirth has been destroyed, the discipline has been fulfilled, what was to be done has been done, this condition of bondage is ended:

“Then, Ananda, when the heart of that disciple is thus set free, if anyone should say, ‘He maintains that after death the Tathagata is,’ that would be meaningless; or if anyone should say, ‘He maintains that after death the Tathagata is not,’ that would be meaningless; or if anyone should say, ‘He maintains that after death the Tathagata both is and is not,’ that would be meaningless; or if anyone should say, ‘He maintains that after death the Tathagata neither is nor is not,’ that would be meaningless.

“What is the cause of this? So far, Ananda, as there is verbal expression, so far as there is a method of verbal expression, so far as there is explanation, so far as there is a method of explanation, so far as there is declaration, so far as there is a method of declaration, so far as there is reasoning, so far as is the sphere of reasoning, so far as there are rites and ceremonies, so far as rites and ceremonies are performed, the disciple, completely knowing them, is liberated from them; but, that the disciple, completely knowing them, and liberated from them, no longer knows nor sees, to say this would be meaningless.”

The disciple has passed beyond the forms of reasoning. He has realized that “the end of the man who endeavours to live by thought alone is that he dwells in phantasies.” He has found the path, not of reasoning, but of life; “from the hour when he first tastes the reality of living, he forgets more and more his individual self; no longer does he care to defend or feed it. Yet when he is thus indifferent to its welfare the individual self grows more stalwart and robust, like the prairie grass and the trees of untrodden forests. It is a matter of indifference to him whether this is so or not. Only, if it is so, he has a fine instrument ready to his hand. And in due proportion to the completeness of his

indifference to it is the strength and beauty of his personal self.” *Through the Gates of Gold*, from which these two passages are taken, is, perhaps, the best commentary on the part of the Buddha’s teaching that we are considering. The Master goes on to describe the ascending planes or degrees of consciousness:

“Seven, Ananda, are the stages of cognition, and two abodes. Which are the seven?

“There are, Ananda, beings diverse in body, diverse in intelligence, that is to say, men, some of the bright powers, some of those undergoing purification. This is the first stage of cognition.

“There are, Ananda, beings diverse in body, uniform in intelligence, that is to say, bright powers possessing celestial bodies, reborn in the first degree. This is the second stage of cognition.

“There are, Ananda, beings uniform in body, diverse in intelligence, that is to say, the bright powers called the radiant. This is the third stage of cognition.

“There are, Ananda, beings uniform in body, uniform in intelligence, that is to say, the bright powers called the lustrous. This is the fourth stage of cognition.

“There are, Ananda, beings who have altogether passed beyond the cognition of form, who have transcended the cognition of separateness, whose perception no longer dwells on the cognition of diversity, who, with the perception that ‘the radiant ether is infinite,’ have attained to the dwelling place of the infinite radiant ether. This is the fifth stage of cognition.

“There are, Ananda, beings who have altogether transcended the dwelling place of the infinite radiant ether, who, with the perception that ‘perceiving consciousness is infinite,’ have attained to the dwelling place of perceiving consciousness. This is the sixth stage of cognition.

“There are, Ananda, beings who have altogether transcended the dwelling place of perceiving consciousness, who have attained to the perception that ‘Nothing objective exists,’ attaining the dwelling place beyond objective being. This is the seventh stage of cognition.

“Then the abode in which there is no consciousness of separation, and the second abode, where there is neither consciousness nor non-consciousness of separation.”

While we cannot be certain of all the fine shades of meaning and of difference in this description of stages of cognition, it is quite clear that we are concerned with seven ascending stages, beginning with the ordinary consciousness of human life; that the first four of the seven are characterized by the presence of form, while the last three are above form, above that kind of limitation which expresses itself in form; and, further, that there are two more abstract degrees beyond the seven. This is in complete conformity with what we have learned, regarding the seven planes, divided into a lower quaternary and a higher triad, with something higher and more universal beyond.

We may further conjecture that the three stages which immediately follow the stage which includes mankind, while they may include different kinds of ethereal or angelic beings, also represent three degrees through which the disciple passes, when he has risen above the stage of "those who are undergoing purification." This would harmonize well with the description of the second stage, as containing those who have been "reborn in the first degree." So we may consider that the three following stages, the fifth, sixth and seventh, are degrees of development and consciousness in what has been called the causal body, "which is no body, either objective or subjective," as *The Theosophical Glossary* says, adding that it corresponds with Buddhi in conjunction with Manas. This would imply individuality above the limitation of form, and would thus agree with the Buddha's description of these three stages.

As to the seventh stage, above "the dwelling place of perceiving consciousness," we may find a simple explanation in the words of one of the Upanishads: "Where there is duality, there one sees another, one hears another, one knows another; but where all has become Self, Atma, by what and whom would one see, by what and whom would one hear, by what and whom would one know? By what would one know Him, whereby one knows the All? By what would one know the Knower?"

Concerning the two "abodes" which are above this seventh stage, it is hardly profitable to speculate; we are not yet in a position to comprehend Nirvana and Para-Nirvana.

One matter remains to be cleared up. There is the possibility that

the disciple might be allured by one or other of the ascending stages, and might wish to halt there, rather than continue the arduous uphill journey. To this possibility the Buddha turns:

“Then, Ananda, concerning the first stage of cognition, where there are beings diverse in body, diverse in intelligence, that is to say, men, some of the bright powers, some of those undergoing purification—he, Ananda, who understands it, understands its rising, understands its setting, understands its pleasure, understands its danger, understands the way of passing beyond it, is it possible that he should be allured and enthralled by it?”

“No, Lord!”

For each of the seven stages the Buddha passes through the same thoughts, as also for the two abodes, leading us, perhaps, to the supreme renunciation of Nirvana, the great trial and victory of a Master. So, for each stage, for each abode, there is a renunciation, a liberation, leading to something higher, nobler, more divine:

“When, Ananda, a disciple has mastered these eight liberations in their order, has mastered them in reverse order, has mastered them both in order and in reverse order, so that, as he may desire, when he may desire, so long as he may desire, he may enter, or rise above, each one of them, when he is purified of all impurity, when he knows and realizes liberation of heart, liberation of intelligence, in doctrine and discipline, such a disciple, Ananda, is said to be liberated in both ways; and than this liberation, Ananda, no liberation is higher or more excellent.”

Thus spoke the Master. Full of joy, the noble Ananda rejoiced in the Master’s words.

Kshatriya and Brahman

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In the Pali Suttas the teachings of the Buddha are conveyed, not in philosophical abstractions, but in lively narratives with a picturesque background of Indian life with its cities and fields and forests. The characters of those to whom the Buddha addresses his teaching are vividly depicted, each in his proper setting, whether prince or peasant, and always with delightful touches of humour and irony, so characteristic of the Buddha and some of his greatest disciples.

Among these varied characters the Brahmans hold a conspicuous place. In the older Upanishads, the Brahmans, possessors of the magical hymns of the Rig Veda, and ministrants of the system of rites and sacrifices which gradually grew up around these hymns, are shown receiving the teaching of the Greater Mysteries, with the twin doctrines of Liberation and Reincarnation; for the first time from the Kshatriyas, who are also called Rajaputras or Rajputs. In the days of the Mahabharata war, traditionally dated over five thousand years ago, the Brahmans are represented as a very influential class, but not yet in possession of despotic power, not yet held to be sacrosanct and exclusively privileged, as they became during the centuries following that great war. The change in their position since the period of the older Upanishads is striking. It is evident that long centuries, perhaps millenniums, must have passed, much consolidation of Brahmanical power must have taken place, between the days of the older Upanishads, when "the Brahman sat at the feet of the Kshatriya," and the time of the momentous conflict between the Pandus and

Kurus, when the Brahmans had attained to great, but not yet overwhelming power.

Twenty-five centuries after the traditional date of the great war, and therefore twenty-five centuries ago, came the birth and teaching of Prince Siddhartha, known as Gautama Buddha, the Awakened One of the Gautama clan.

The graphic sketches of life in India at that day, which are the setting of his teachings in the Suttas, show at once that the power of the Brahmans, throughout the principalities of Northern India, had passed through a long period of development and concentration since the great war, and had, in some directions at least, reached an advanced stage of degeneration. The Brahmans of the Buddha's day claimed to be sole possessors of the spiritual wisdom, which they had received in the beginning from the Kshatriyas, and, in virtue of this exclusive claim; they exercised a spiritual tyranny which the Buddha, teaching men and women of all classes equally, constantly sought to break down.

From this conflict of ideals and purposes many dramatic incidents arose.

They are faithfully, humorously and often ironically recorded in the Suttas, as for example in the narrative concerning the youthful Brahman Ambattha, who, like his remote predecessor Shvetaketu, was "conceited, vain of his learning and proud."

We are told that, once upon a time, the Master was journeying through the land of the Kosalas, with a great company of disciples, with five hundred disciples, and that he came to a Brahman village, by name Ichanakala. There, indeed, the Master halted, and dwelt with his disciples among the grove of Ichanakala. At that time Pasenadi, king of the Kosalas, had given authority over Ukkatha, a district rich in meadows and wood and water and corn, to the Brahman Pokkharasadi, who heard the news of the Buddha's coming, and of his dwelling with his disciples among the groves of Ichanakala. It had been reported also that the Master was an Arhat, perfectly awakened and illuminated, rich in wisdom and righteousness, a knower of the worlds, unequalled in leading men to the law of righteousness, a teacher of radiant beings and of the sons of men, one who had seen and known

the universe face to face. And the Brahman Pokkharasadi bethought him that it was right to visit such an Arhat.

At that time it happened that the Brahman Pokkharasadi had a disciple, the young man Ambattha, who had learned the sacred verses, who had mastered the three Vedas with their subsidiary studies, one who had made such progress that his teacher could say, "What I know, that thou knowest, and what thou knowest, I know."

So the Brahman Pokkharasadi addressed the young man Ambattha, saying, "Ambattha, beloved, Gautama of the Shakyas has come among the Kosalas, and is dwelling among the groves of Ichanakala; he whom they declare to be a Master, an Arhat, perfectly awakened and illuminated. It is right to visit such an Arhat. Go then, Ambattha, beloved, to the place where Gautama is dwelling, and learn whether Gautama is what report declares or not. Thus we shall know the truth concerning the worthy Gautama."

"How am I to know whether the worthy Gautama is such as report declares or not?"

"There are, Ambattha, beloved, thirty-two distinctive marks of a great man. He who possesses these distinctive marks will either become a universal monarch, ruling the wide world surrounded by the ocean, or, if he make the great renunciation, he will become an Arhat, perfectly awakened and illuminated, a Buddha, unveiling the eyes of the world. I have given thee, Ambattha, beloved, the sacred verses; from me thou hast received the sacred verses."

"So be it!" said the young man Ambattha, obedient to the Brahman Pokkharasadi, and, rising from his seat, and showing reverence to the Brahman Pokkharasadi, he mounted a chariot drawn by mares and, with a number of young men accompanying him, drove to the groves of Ichanakala. Driving to the end of the carriage road, he descended from the chariot and went on foot through the garden.

At that time many of the disciples were walking up and down, taking the air. So the young man Ambattha, coming to where these disciples were, said, "Where may the worthy Gautama dwell? We have come hither to see the worthy Gautama."

So those disciples thought, "This young man Ambattha is of distinguished family, and a disciple of the distinguished Brahman

Pokkharasadi. There is no difficulty in the way of the Master's talking with such well-born youths." They said to the young man Ambattha, "That is his dwelling, Ambattha, where the door is shut; go thither, making little noise, quietly across the veranda, cough discreetly and knock on the bar of the door. The Master will open the door for you."

So the young man Ambattha did as he was bidden, and the Master opened the door, so that the young man Ambattha entered. The other young men who accompanied him also entered, and, exchanging with the Master the salute and the greeting which were befitting, sat down at one side. But the young man Ambattha, walking up and down while the Master was seated, saluted him carelessly and, standing while the Master sat, gave him a careless greeting.

Thereupon the Master said to the young man Ambattha, "Is it in this way, Ambattha, that you carry on a conversation with Brahmans, old and full of years, masters of disciples, as you do now with me, walking about while I am seated, and giving me a careless greeting?"

"No, indeed, Sir Gautama! Walking, Sir Gautama, a Brahman should speak with a Brahman who is walking; standing, Sir Gautama, a Brahman should speak with a Brahman who is standing; seated, Sir Gautama, a Brahman should speak with a Brahman who is seated; resting, Sir Gautama, a Brahman should speak with a Brahman who is resting. But, Sir Gautama, when it is a question of shavelings, ascetic fellows, servile, black men, offspring of the feet of Brahma, why, with such folk one talks as I am talking with you, Sir Gautama!"

"But you must have had some purpose, Ambattha, in coming here; concentrate on your purpose in coming! The young man Ambattha is ill-bred, though he highly esteems good breeding; how else than because he was ill taught?"

Then the young man Ambattha, thus spoken of as ill-bred, was angry and displeased, and, sneering at the Master, and thinking to himself, "The ascetic Sir Gautama has lost his temper!" he spoke thus to the Master, "Coarse, Sir Gautama, is the Shakya tribe! Rough, Sir Gautama, is the Shakya tribe! Harsh, Sir Gautama, is the Shakya tribe! Violent, Sir Gautama, is the Shakya tribe! Servile, of servile nature, they do not honour Brahmans, they do not venerate Brahmans, they do not esteem Brahmans, they do not make obeisance to Brahmans,

they do not pay due deference to Brahmans. This is unseemly, Sir Gautama, this is improper!" Thus did the young man Ambattha lay the epithet of servile upon the Shakyas for the first time.

"In what, Ambattha, have the Shakyas offended you?"

"On a certain occasion, Sir Gautama, I had to go to Kapilavastu on business for my master, the Brahman Pokkharasadi. I entered the Shakya meeting hall. There were many of the Shakyas there, and young men of the Shakyas, sitting on high seats. They nudged each other and laughed, and I think they were laughing at me. And no one offered me a seat. This, Sir Gautama, was unseemly, this was improper, that these servile Shakyas should not honour, venerate, esteem, salute and pay due deference to Brahmans." Thus did the young man Ambattha lay the epithet of servile upon the Shakyas for the second time.

"A quail, Ambattha, even though a little bird, may in its own nest say what it pleases. These Shakyas, Ambattha, were in their own Kapilavastu. You should not take offence at a little thing like that."

"There are the four colours, Sir Gautama, Kshatriyas, Brahmans, Vaishyas, Shudras. Of these four colours, Sir Gautama, the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are nothing but the servants of the Brahmans. Therefore, Sir Gautama, it is not seemly, it is not proper, that these servile Shakyas should not honour, venerate, esteem, salute and pay due deference to Brahmans." Thus did the young man Ambattha lay the epithet of servile on the Shakyas for the third time.

Then the Master thought, "This young man Ambattha comes down heavily upon the Shakyas with his epithet of servile. Let me ask him about his own family." So that Master said to the young man Ambattha, "Of what family are you, Ambattha?"

"I, Sir Gautama, am of the Kanha family!" (That is, the "Black" family.) "Verily so, Ambattha, but should one call to mind your ancient name and family on the mother's and father's side, it would be seen that the Shakyas are sons of your masters, and that you are descended from a slave girl. For the Shakyas point to King Okkaka as their great father. And King Okkaka, Ambattha, had a slave girl, Disa by name, who gave birth to a little black. As soon as he was born, the little black said, 'Wash me, mamma, bathe me, mamma, so shall I be

profitable to you!’ Just as at the present time, Ambattha, people call an evil spirit an evil spirit, so at that time they called an evil spirit a blackie. So they said, ‘This new-born babe has spoken! A blackie has come to birth, an evil spirit has come to birth!’ And this, Ambattha, is the origin of the Kanhayana, the ‘Black’ family. This was the first man, the founder, of the ‘Black’ family. So, Ambattha, should one call to mind your ancient family on the mother’s side and father’s side, it would be seen that the Shakyas are sons of your masters, and that you are descended from a slave girl.”

Then said the young men, his companions, to the Master, “Let not the worthy Gautama come down so heavily upon the young man Ambattha, with the reproach that he is descended from a slave girl. For the young man Ambattha is well born; Sir Gautama, he is of good family, he has studied the scriptures, he recites the sacred verses beautifully, the young man Ambattha is a pundit. He is able to answer the worthy Gautama effectively in this matter!”

Then the Master said to the young men, “If, indeed, you thought that the young man Ambattha was ill-born; of no family, unlearned, unable to recite the sacred verses beautifully, ignorant, not able to answer the ascetic Gautama effectively in this matter, then it would be for you to take up the discussion. But, since you think so well of the young man Ambattha, let him answer me himself!”

“We do think well of the young man Ambattha. Therefore let him speak with the worthy Gautama himself!”

So the Master said to the young man Ambattha, “This, Ambattha, is a fair and lawful question, which you should answer even though you are unwilling. Should you not answer clearly, should you try to change the subject, should you remain silent or go away, your head will be split in seven pieces. How then do you think, Ambattha? What have you heard from Brahmans, old and full of years, masters of disciples, when they were, speaking of the origin of the Kanhayana, and who was the founder of this ‘Black’ family?”

Thus addressed, the young man Ambattha remained silent. Then the Master repeated his question, using the same words. A second time the young man Ambattha remained silent.

Then the Master spoke thus to the young man Ambattha, “Answer

now, Ambattha, this is not the time for silence. For should anyone not answer a fair and lawful question, when it is asked him a third time by a Tathagata, his head will surely be split in seven pieces!”

Now at that time the spirit Vajrapani, taking a great mass of iron, blazing, throwing out flames and sparks, held it in the air above the head of the young man Ambattha, ready to split his head in seven pieces if he should not answer. The Master saw the spirit Vajrapani, and the young man Ambattha saw him. And the young man Ambattha was so startled and terrified that his hair stood on end, so that he sought refuge and safety and protection at the Master’s feet, saying to the Master, “What was that the worthy Gautama said? Will the worthy Gautama kindly say it again?”

“How do you think, Ambattha? What have you heard from Brahmins, old and full of years, masters of disciples, when they were speaking of the origin of the Kanhayana, and who was the founder of this ‘Black’ family?”

“I heard, Sir Gautama, exactly what the worthy Gautama has said; such is the origin of the Kanhayana, such is the founder of the ‘Black’ family!”

Then the young men who were with him cried out, and raised their voices, and made a great noise, saying, “Ill born is the young man Ambattha, of no family is the young man Ambattha, the young man Ambattha is descended from a slave girl of the Shakyas, the Shakyas are descended from the masters of the young man Ambattha. We were certain that the ascetic Gautama, a speaker of righteousness, was not to be gainsaid.”

Then the Master thought, “These young men are bearing too heavily on the young man Ambattha with their reproach that he is descended from a slave girl. Let me come to his rescue.” So the Master said to those young men, “Young men, do not bear too heavily on the young man Ambattha with the reproach that he is descended from a slave girl. For that Kanha, that ‘Black,’ was a noble Rishi!”

And the Buddha proceeded to relate an exceedingly entertaining story of how the strange, dusky infant grew to man’s estate, travelled through Southern India, which is to this day the home of black races, and there learned magical arts and incantations of such potency that,

on his return, he was able to compel the aged King Okkaka to give him in marriage the royal princess Slender-form, his daughter. So it appeared that the young man Ambattha, like the Shakyas themselves, was descended from King Okkaka. "For Kanha was a noble Rishi!"

But there remained the question of superiority, as between Kshatriya and Brahman, and the Buddha did not intend to leave it open. He proceeded to put to the young man Ambattha a series of questions involving the relations of Kshatriyas and Brahmans, and, on the basis of the young man's answers, he held it proven "that the Kshatriyas are best and that the Brahmans are inferior."

Finally, he quoted an authority of overwhelming weight, no less than the Brahma Sanatkumara, the divine Mind-born, profoundly venerated by the Brahmans themselves, to this effect:

"The Kshatriya is best in the estimation of those who attach importance to lineage. He who is perfect in wisdom and righteousness is best among bright powers and men."

So far the meeting between the Buddha and the young man Ambattha with his companions. There is one small but significant point in this spirited recital, which is worth noting, because it is the single case in which the pious Buddhist narrator has swerved from perfect dramatic propriety. It will be noted that, when he speaks of the four "colours," the young man Ambattha names them in this order, "Kshatriya, Brahman, Vaishya, Shudra." But it is quite certain that he, not only a Brahman, but even then maintaining the divine superiority of the Brahmans, would have named them thus, "Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra," as they stand in the Brahmanical books. So it would seem that the Buddhist scribe, keenly alert as he is to every shade of literary art, could not bring himself to put the Brahmans first, even in the speech of a Brahman. He prefers to follow the unvarying practice of the Buddhist books.

It happens that there is a second Sutta in which the Buddha again takes up this question of Kshatriya and Brahman, and again cites the divine Sanatkumara as a final authority. It is in many ways an exceptionally interesting scripture, for the reason that in it the Buddha departs from his general practice of making his discourse immediately practical, and of setting aside all problems of cosmology and origins, as

being of secondary importance, as compared with the great and immediate problem of salvation, of release from sin and bondage. In this Sutta the Buddha gives what we may recognize as a somewhat vague and general outline of the cosmology which we find in *The Secret Doctrine*, and especially that part of Anthropogenesis which is concerned with our own planet in the present period: of necessity vague, since it involved teachings of Initiation, which it was not lawful to divulge in detail. Yet the parallelism is undeniable, and of immense interest, particularly because it represents a departure from the Buddha's general rule.

As always, there is a vividly presented story in a concrete setting. We are told that, once upon a time, the Master was dwelling in Savatthi, in the stately dwelling built by the mother of Migara. At that time there were two Brahmans, bearing the high traditional names of Vashistha, or, in Pali, Vasettha, and Bharadvaja, probationers, seeking admission to the Order. In the evening the Master, coming forth from meditation, descended from the dwelling and began to walk up and down in the shade of the dwelling, taking the air. Vasettha noticed the Master and said to Bharadvaja, "Friend Bharadvaja, the Master has descended and is taking the air. Let us go, friend Bharadvaja, to where the Master is. Perhaps we may hear from the Master some speech concerning righteousness." Bharadvaja assented, and they went to where the Master was; So the Master said to Vasettha, "You, Vasettha, have come forth, being of Brahman birth, of a Brahman family, leaving the household life for the homeless life. Do not the Brahmans reproach and abuse you, Vasettha?"

"Certainly, Sire, the Brahmans reproach and blame us with marked abuse, not limited but unlimited."

"In what terms, Vasettha, do the Brahmans thus abuse you?"

"The Brahmans, Sire, speak thus, 'Brahmans are the best colour, inferior are the other colours; Brahmans are pure, not those who are not Brahmans; Brahmans are Brahma's own sons, both from the mouth of Brahma, Brahma-born, Brahma-caused, Brahma's heirs. But you have deserted this most excellent colour, and have betaken yourselves to an inferior colour, to these shavelings, ascetic fellows, servile, black men, offspring of the feet of Brahma.' In these terms,

Sire, do the Brahmans reproach and abuse us, with marked abuse, not limited but unlimited!”

“Certainly, Vasettha, you Brahmans forget the ancient teaching, when you say this, that Brahmans are born from the mouth of Brahma. For the Brahmans themselves see that their wives are fruitful and bear children and nurse them. Yet they say they are Brahma-born! They are bearing false witness, telling lies, making demerit.

“There are these four colours, Vasettha: Kshatriyas, Brahmans, Vaishyas, Shudras. It may happen, Vasettha, that a Kshatriya should be guilty of murder, theft, impurity, lying, slandering, evil speaking, garrulity, covetousness, malevolence, defence of false views. Such qualities, evil, blameworthy, immoral, un-Aryan, black, reprobated by the wise, may sometimes be found in a Kshatriya. Exactly the same with the Brahman, the Vaishya, the Shudra.

“On the other hand, Vasettha, a Kshatriya may be found who refrains from all such evils, whose qualities are noble, beyond reproach, admirable, Aryan, luminous, admired by the wise. So likewise, Vasettha, in the case of Brahmans, Vaishyas, Shudras. So among the four colours both good and bad qualities are distributed. How then can the Brahmans say that they are best, sons of Brahma, Brahma-born? The wise do not endorse this. Why? Among the four colours, Vasettha, he who is a disciple, an Arhat, who has purged himself of the poisons, who has fulfilled all righteousness, who has laid aside the burden, who has attained salvation, who has broken the bonds of rebirth, perfect in wisdom, liberated, he is esteemed the most excellent of these, rightly, not unrightly. For righteousness, Vasettha, is most excellent, both in this world and in the great Beyond.

“This is to be known, Vasettha, by this example. King Pasenadi of the Kosalas knows that the ascetic Gautama has gone forth from a Shakya family. Now the Shakyas are dependants of King Pasenadi. But as the Shakyas honour King Pasenadi, so King Pasenadi honours the Tathagata.

“You, Vasettha, who have gone forth from the household life to the homeless life, are of varying birth, varying names, varying tribes, varying families. But, when you are asked who you are, you reply, ‘We are sons of the Shakya sage!’ It is right for each of you to say, ‘I am the

Master's own son, born from his mouth, born of his righteous law, heir of his law.' Why is this? Because this is the appellation of the Tathagata, 'He who has the body of the law of righteousness, the body of Brahma, who has become righteousness, who has become Brahma.'

"There was a time, Vasettha, very long ago, when this world passed out of manifestation. When the world passed out of manifestation, the beings that were in it were for the most part reborn in the world of radiant shining. There they were formed of mind, feasting on delight, self-shining, traversing the ether, dwelling in happiness, and so they remained for a very long time. Then came the time, Vasettha, after a very long interval, for this world to be manifested again. And when the world came again into manifestation, those beings descended from the world of radiance and entered this world. Here, they remained mind-formed, feasting on delight, self-shining, traversing the ether, dwelling in happiness for a very long time.

"At that time, Vasettha, all was watery, wrapped in darkness, shrouded in darkness. Neither moon nor sun appeared, nor the constellations formed of stars, nor did night and day appear, nor the half-month, nor the month, nor the seasons of the year, nor was there yet any division into women and men. Beings then were all counted equally as beings. Then, after the passage of a long time, the flavour of earth became manifest among the waters. It was as when on milk boiled in rice and set to cool, a film forms on its surface, so was this manifested. It was rich in colour, rich in odour, rich in flavour; in colour it was like butter clarified by melting, or like fresh butter, and its flavour was like fine honey.

"So, Vasettha, one or other of these beings, incited by greed, and saying, 'How now, what will this be?' began to taste this earth-flavour with his finger. When he had tasted the earth-flavour thus with his finger, thirst for it overcame him. And others of those beings, Vasettha, seeing him and following his example, tasted the earth-flavour with their fingers. When they had so tasted, thirst for it overcame them also. And so those beings began to take pieces of the earth-flavour with their hands and to feast on it. And, as they began to feast on the earth-flavour, their self-shining disappeared. When their self-shining was thus withdrawn, the moon and sun became manifest

to them. Then came the constellations of the stars. Then night and day began, with the half-months and months, the seasons and the years. So, Vasettha, this world came once more into manifestation.

“So for a long time these beings feasted on the earth-flavour, eating it, making it their food. And, in measure as they so feasted, solidity began to develop in their bodies, and difference of colour began to appear. Some of these beings were comely, some were ill-favoured. Then those who were comely despised the ill-favoured, saying, ‘We are comelier, but these are ill-favoured.’ When, through pride in their comeliness, vanity and conceit arose among them, that earth-flavour was withdrawn. When the earth-flavour was withdrawn, they gathered together and fell into lamentation, saying, ‘Alas for the flavour! Alas for the flavour!’

“When the earth-flavour was withdrawn, a mushroom-like growth began to appear on the ground. It possessed colour, odour and flavour. The colour was like fresh butter, the taste was like fine honey. Then those beings began to feast on this growth. They feasted on it, eating it, making it their food. As they so feasted, the solidity of their bodies increased, and difference in colour became more marked among them. As before, those who were comely despised the ill-favoured. And when vanity and conceit thereupon increased, the mushroom-like growth was withdrawn, and vegetation, like a small herb, appeared. This also was possessed of colour, odour and taste. The colour was like fresh butter, and the taste like fine honey.

“So they began to feast on this vegetation, eating it and making it their food for a long time. As they so feasted, their bodies became yet more solid, and differences of colour became still more marked among them. Once again vanity and conceit increased. Then that vegetation disappeared.

“When that vegetation had disappeared, rice began to grow, ripening without tillage, bearing clean grain without dust or chaff. When they plucked rice for the evening meal, it grew again and was ripe in the morning. So it grew continually. So, Vasettha, these beings thus feasted on the rice for a long time. As they so feasted, their bodies became yet more solid, difference of colour increased, and they grew in vanity and conceit as before. At this time also the

sexes began to be separated, those who had been women (in an earlier cycle) taking the form of women, and those who had been men, taking the form of men.”

As has been suggested, there is a general correspondence between this picturesque cosmology or anthropology and the account, in *The Secret Doctrine*, of the appearance of the early ethereal races of mankind, their gradual consolidation as the world also grew more solid, and the division of the sexes in the second half of the Third Race. In carrying the story forward, the Buddha sketches the sociological history of the later races. On the one hand, there was a gradual development of agriculture, which led to the demarcation of fields and the growth of property in land. On the other hand, following the separation of the sexes and the beginning of family life, houses came to be built. With property came the violation of property rights, and general disorder inevitably followed. Then the Buddha comes to the point which he had in mind from the beginning.

“Then, Vasettha, these beings came together, bemoaning what had happened, and said, ‘Sinful deeds, verily, have appeared among beings, theft and contumely and lying. Let us then choose from among us a being who will be angry when it is right to be angry, who will censure when it is right to censure, who will expel when it is right to expel. And we shall bestow on him in return a portion of our rice.’ So they chose from among them the most comely, the best looking, the most gracious, the most eminent, and said to him, ‘Thou being! When it is right to be angry, be thou angry, when it is right to censure, do thou censure, when it is right to expel, do thou expel. We shall bestow on thee in return a portion of our rice.’ ‘So be it!’ said that being, complying with their desire.” This was the first of the Kshatriyas, therefore it follows that the Kshatriyas are more ancient, more venerable, than the Brahmans. The first Brahman was later chosen, to establish wise customs among mankind. In the course of time; they compiled the three Vedas and taught the recitation of the sacred verses. Then, with the development of trade, came the Vaishyas. “Then those who practised hunting and other mean pursuits became the first Shudras.”

So that all colours and classes arose in similar ways from among originally homogeneous mankind, and the Brahmans make false

claims, when they say they are born of Brahma. All have a like origin.

And all have a like destiny. A Kshatriya who sins in body, in speech, in thought, will journey, when he departs from the body, on the bad way to a state of punishment. So also a Brahman, a Vaishya, a Shudra. And a Kshatriya who is righteous in body, in speech, in thought, will journey, when he departs from the body, on the good way to a state of reward. So also a Brahman, a Vaishya, a Shudra.

“The Kshatriya who is controlled in body, controlled in speech, controlled in thought; who follows after the seven forms of righteousness which are the wings of wisdom, is set free in wisdom and righteousness. So likewise the Brahman, the Vaishya, the Shudra.

“Of these four colours, Vasettha, he who becomes a disciple, an Arhat, who has purged himself of the poisons, who has fulfilled all righteousness, who has laid aside the burden, who has attained salvation, who has broken the bonds of rebirth, perfect in wisdom, liberated, he is esteemed most excellent of these, rightly, not unrightly. For righteousness, Vasettha, is most excellent, both in this world and in the great Beyond.

“So it was declared, Vasettha, by the Brahma Sanatkumara: ‘The Kshatriya is best in the estimation of those who attach importance to lineage. He who is perfect in wisdom and righteousness is best among bright powers and men.’”

It is well to remember that this was said to two Brahman disciples, of whom there were many in the Order, side by side with many Kshatriyas and a few men and women of the other classes. Not all Brahmans, therefore, opposed the establishment of the Order, which was open equally to all, on the sole condition that they practised the needed virtues. But many Brahmans did oppose the Order, and, as the centuries passed, this opposition increased and became more determined, until the followers of the Buddha were driven forth from Brahmanical India. To this selfishness, exclusiveness and obscurantism, must be attributed the progressive degeneration of the Buddha’s land, a degradation which must await the turn of the life-cycle before it can be overcome. Then once again, perhaps, the teaching of the Buddhas of compassion will become universal from the Himalayas to the uplands of Ceylon.

Wise and Foolish Disciples

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With the single exception, perhaps, of *The Light of Asia*, the popular narratives of the Buddha's life surround the great story with coloured clouds of phantasy, giving to one of the greatest of men the semblance of the hero of a fairy tale, and sometimes adding qualities of sentimentalism that are wholly out of place in one of the most rigorous thinkers in the history of mankind.

Much has been said, in these studies, regarding the radiant sense of humour which illumines the Buddha's teaching. It may not be untimely to illustrate another quality of his noble mind and soul: the sternness with which he could rebuke vanity and presumptuous folly. This is one side of the Buddha's intellect, another side of which comes out clearly in his practical teaching to sincere and faithful disciples, which will also be illustrated.

The Buddha's readiness to administer stern and well-deserved rebuke is finely and graphically shown in the story of the vain youth Sunakshatra, who had associated with members of the Buddha's Order, without being in any real sense a disciple, or making any earnest effort to develop the qualities that might in time have made him a disciple. His skilfully drawn portrait suggests certain persons who, in the earlier days, held a similar relation to The Theosophical Society: seekers after wonders and startling doctrines, full of a sense of their own importance, and ever ready to complain that the Movement did not fulfil their high expectations. These petulant critics were in

general contemptuous of “mere morality” and discipline, and they often departed from the Movement loudly proclaiming its manifold shortcomings. It is edifying to find exactly the same futile and vexatious characters besetting the work of the Buddha two and a half millenniums ago.

Such a one was the youth Sunakshatra. Once upon a time, we are told, the Master was living among the Mallas, one of the tribes of the Ganges valley, having his temporary home in a Malla village, or small town. As was his wont, the Master rose early in the morning, donning his yellow robe and taking his bowl, with the thought of going through the village to receive food. But he bethought him that it was too early to seek food, and that it would be well to go instead to visit a pilgrim, a wandering devotee of the clan of the Bhargavas, descendants of Bhrigu. The pilgrim had established himself in a pleasant garden, and thither the Master went.

Thereupon the pilgrim of the Bhargava clan spoke thus to the Master: “Greeting to the worthy Master! The worthy Master is welcome! It is long since the worthy Master has had occasion to come hither. Let the worthy Master be seated! Here is a seat made ready.”

The Master sat down on the seat that was made ready. The pilgrim of the Bhargava clan placed for himself another, lower seat, and sat beside him. Seated beside the Master, the pilgrim of the Bhargava clan addressed him thus:

“In days gone by, worthy Sir, in days long past, Sunakshatra, a son of the Lichchhavis, came to where I was, and said this to me: ‘Bhargava, I have given up the Master! I will no longer remain for the Master’s sake!’ Is it so, worthy Sir, as Sunakshatra, the son of the Lichchhavis, asserted?”

“It is exactly as Sunakshatra, the son of the Lichchhavis, said. In days gone by, Bhargava, in days long past, Sunakshatra, the son of the Lichchhavis, came to where I was abiding. Coming to me and saluting me, he sat down by me; seated by me, Sunakshatra, the son of the Lichchhavis, spoke thus to me: ‘I am giving up the worthy Master! I will no longer remain for the Master’s sake!’

“When Sunakshatra, the son of the Lichchhavis, said this, Bhargava, I spoke thus: ‘Sunakshatra, have I ever said, “Come,

Sunakshatra! Abide with me!”?’

“No, worthy Sir!

“Or hast thou ever said to me: “I shall abide with the worthy Master!”?’

“No, worthy Sir!

“If this be so, vain man, as being what dost thou give me up?’

“But the worthy Master never performs superhuman works, miracles of magical power!

“Did I ever say to thee, Sunakshatra: “Come, Sunakshatra! Abide with me, and I shall perform for thee superhuman works, miracles of magical power!”?’

“No, worthy Sir!

“Didst thou ever say to me: “I shall abide with the worthy Master, if the Master will perform for me superhuman works, miracles of magical power!”?’

“No, worthy Sir!

“If this be so, vain man, as being what dost thou give me up? What thinkest thou, Sunakshatra? Whether superhuman works, miracles of magical power, be performed, or be not performed, does the Law of Righteousness taught by me lead to the destruction of misery for him who fulfils it, and for whose sake it is taught?’

“It is true, worthy Master, that, whether superhuman works, miracles of magical power, be performed, or be not performed, the Law of Righteousness taught by the Master does lead to the destruction of misery for him who fulfils it, and for whose sake it is taught.’

“If this be so, Sunakshatra, then what is accomplished by these superhuman works, miracles of magical power? Behold, vain man, how great is thy offence!

“Yes, but the worthy Master teaches nothing concerning the knowledge of the beginning of the universe!’

“Did I ever say to thee, Sunakshatra: “Come, Sunakshatra, abide with me, and I shall teach thee concerning the knowledge of the beginning of the universe!”?’

“No, worthy Sir!

“Didst thou ever say to me: “I will abide with the worthy Master, if the worthy Master will teach me concerning the knowledge of the beginning of the universe!”?”

“No, worthy Sir!

“If this be so, vain man, as being what dost thou give me up? What thinkest thou, Sunakshatra? Whether knowledge of the beginning of the universe be taught, or be not taught, does the Law of Righteousness taught by me lead to the destruction of misery for him who fulfils it, and for whose sake it is taught?”

“It is true, worthy Master, that, whether knowledge of the beginning of the universe be taught, or be not taught, the Law of Righteousness taught by the Master does lead to the destruction of misery for him who fulfils it, and for whose sake it is taught.’

“If this be so, Sunakshatra, then what is accomplished by teaching concerning the knowledge of the beginning of the universe? Behold, vain man, how great is thy offence!’

“On many an occasion, Sunakshatra, praise of me was spoken by thee in the town of the Vajjis, the Lichchhavis, saying: “The Master is an Arhat, a supreme Buddha, possessing fully the method of instruction in wisdom, a welcome one, a knower of the worlds, unexcelled, a teacher of Radiant Beings and of mankind, the Master is the Buddha.” Thus, Sunakshatra, on many an occasion was praise of me spoken by thee in the town of the Vajjis!

“On many an occasion, Sunakshatra, praise of the Law of Righteousness was spoken by thee in the town of the Vajjis, saying: “Well set forth by the Master is the Law of Righteousness, bearing immediate fruit, operating without delay, as who should say, ‘Come and see!’ leading to liberation, to be known by individual experience, full of intelligence.” Thus, Sunakshatra, on many an occasion was praise of the Law of Righteousness spoken by thee in the town of the Vajjis!

“On many an occasion, Sunakshatra, praise of the Order was spoken by thee in the town of the Vajjis, saying: “Well ordered is the Master’s Order of disciples, uprightly ordered is the Master’s Order of disciples, justly ordered is the Master’s Order of disciples, perfectly ordered is the Master’s Order of disciples, suited to disciples of each

class, worthy of sacrifices, worthy of gracious reception, worthy of gifts, worthy of reverent salutation, the unexcelled field of right deeds for mankind." Thus, Sunakshatra, on many an occasion was praise of the Order spoken by thee in the town of the Vajjis!

"I announce to thee, Sunakshatra, I make known to thee, Sunakshatra, that there will be those who will say of thee: "Sunakshatra, the son of the Lichchavis, had not the valour and endurance to live the pure life of a disciple under the ascetic Gautama; lacking valour and endurance; he has turned his back on the teaching and returned to the baser way." Thus, Sunakshatra, will they speak of thee!"

"Thus, Bhargava, did I address Sunakshatra, the son of the Lichchavis, when he deserted this law and discipline, falling away, falling into punishment."

This vigorous and finely told story depicts with perfect art the character of the youth Sunakshatra, in the beginning eloquently praising the Buddha, the Law of Righteousness and the Order, but really attracted to the Master by the hope of beholding superhuman and magical powers and hearing startling doctrines of the beginning of all things. Seemingly drawn to the Master by desire for wisdom, his real motive was self-seeking, sensationalism, mental curiosity. The seed, fallen on shallow soil, at first sprang up and flourished, but presently withered and died. Lacking the true courage and endurance of the disciple, the willingness to sacrifice self, he became a deserter and incurred the stern censure of the Master.

The story draws the portrait of the Buddha with equal clearness. Not often in the Suttas are we given so direct an insight into the mind and heart of the great Master, his thought about the nature and purpose of his teaching, his estimation of displays of magical power and philosophical discussion, before the heart has been made clean. Some Western students, whose minds are coloured by the materialism of their time, have laid stress on this story as indicating that the Buddha entirely disbelieved in these superhuman powers and magical endowments, which were mere popular superstitions of a credulous age. But this is not so. This very story goes on to relate two incidents, both of them striking and dramatic, and illuminated by a keen sense of

humour, which illustrate the Buddha's spiritual seership and his power to foresee and foretell future events, while the second shows him bringing to confusion a boastful miracle-monger by what would be called "action at a distance." The Buddha believed in the existence of these powers for the best of all reasons: because he possessed and constantly exercised them; but his aim and purpose was, not to exhibit feats of magic, but to impart wisdom to disciples seeking wisdom, and, so far as might be, to reveal the way of liberation to the whole world.

To teach wisdom to disciples seeking wisdom: this was the principal purpose; and justice has not yet been done to the penetrating power of his teaching, and to the fruit which it bears when put into practice.

The cogency and rigour of the Buddha's thinking are well illustrated in one of the Suttas, which is devoted to Recollection, as a means toward spiritual enlightenment. When considering this teaching, it is wise to remember that it was delivered to disciples, members of the Order; and to hold in mind what this implies. Before seeking admission to the Order, each one of them had "given up the life of house and family for the homeless life." They could not hold property; they were pledged to celibacy; they had no separate possessions; they had accepted the obligation of obedience to the Buddha and to those to whose care he entrusted them: they had renounced self and self-seeking in the most practical way possible. What, then, did the Buddha direct them to do?

First, to gain the power of Recollection, to which this Sutta is devoted. We are told that, once upon a time, the Master was abiding among the Kurus, the same tribe whose princes took part in the great war of the Mahabharata. Abiding there, in one of the towns of the Kurus, the Master addressed his disciples, saying:

"There is one way of salvation, disciples, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of grieving and lamentation, for the conquest of misery and dejection, for the increase of wisdom, for the attainment of Nirvana, namely, the establishment of the four kinds of Recollection.

"What are the four? In this world, disciples, a disciple with reference to the body abides considering the body, ardent, fully

conscious, recollected, altogether putting aside both covetousness and dejection; with reference to sensations he abides considering sensations, ardent, fully conscious, recollected, altogether putting aside both covetousness and dejection; with reference to imaginings he abides considering imaginings, ardent, fully conscious, recollected, altogether putting aside both covetousness and dejection; with reference to forms of thought he abides considering forms of thought, ardent, fully conscious, recollected, altogether putting aside both covetousness and dejection.

“And how, disciples, does a disciple with reference to the body abide considering the body?”

“In this world, disciples, a disciple, dwelling in the forest, or beneath a tree, taking the position of meditation on a seat, holding the body erect, keeps his mind firmly fixed on recollection. Recollected, he draws each breath; recollected, he exhales it. When he draws a long breath, he is conscious that he draws a long breath; when he exhales a long breath, he is conscious that he exhales a long breath. When he draws a short breath, he is conscious that he draws a short breath; when he exhales a short breath, he is conscious that he exhales a short breath. He practices himself to be aware of his whole body as he draws each breath. He practices himself to be aware of his whole body as he exhales each breath. He practices himself to control and tranquillize the energies of the body as he draws each breath. He practices himself to control and tranquillize the energies of the body as he exhales each breath.

“Just as, disciples, a skilled turner, or turner’s assistant, when he makes a long turn of the lathe, is conscious that he makes a long turn of the lathe, or when he makes a short turn of the lathe, is conscious that he makes a short turn of the lathe, in just the same way, disciples, a disciple is conscious when he draws a long or short breath, when he exhales a long or short breath. He practices himself to be aware of his whole body, to control and tranquillize the energies of the body, as he draws each breath.

“Thus he abides considering the body, whether with reference to his own body, or with reference to the bodies of others, or with reference to both. He is regardful of the character of beginning in the body, or of the

character of passing away, or of both. Realizing that such is the body, his recollection is established in the measure of this knowledge, in the measure of this detailed recollection. In this way, disciples, a disciple with reference to the body abides considering the body.

“Again, disciples, a disciple, while he is walking, is conscious that he is walking; while standing, he is conscious that he is standing; while seated, he is conscious that he is seated; while lying down, he is conscious that he is lying down; in whatever way his body is disposed, he is conscious that it is so disposed. And he abides unswayed by outer things, nor covets anything in the world.

“Again, disciples, a disciple, when advancing or withdrawing, is fully conscious of it. In looking toward, or away from, anything, he is fully conscious of it. In bending or extending his arm, he is fully conscious of it. In eating, in drinking, in chewing, in tasting, he is fully conscious of it. In walking, in standing, in sitting, in sleeping, in waking, in speaking, in keeping silent, he is fully conscious of it.”

So far, so good. The disciple must be thoroughly awake, aware, alert, at all points, in every moment. He must be positive, ardent, intent, never dreamy, drifting, comatose. With regard to what is said of breathing, it may be worth noting that, while even breathing does in fact tranquillize the bodily energies and emotions, this is not the point in the present case. It is a question, not of any kind of ‘Yoga-breathing,’ but of alertness, awareness, watchfulness. At any moment the disciple must know exactly what his body is doing, and in what way.

But this is only the beginning, a means to an end. That end is complete conquest of the body and the energies and desires of the body. To gain this end, the Teacher takes a somewhat rigorous course. He impresses on his disciples, and teaches them to impress on their own minds, not only the need for unbroken recollection regarding the body, but the still greater need to realize the transitory, unending nature of the body; nay, more, to dwell on what Saint Paul calls the corruption of the body. This may seem to us too rigorous; but we should consider the extent to which the worship of the body and its appetites is carried in our day and generation; the enormous amount of energy that is expended on pampering the body and ministering to its desires and to the vanities which spring from these desires. The

Buddha is convinced that, until this flood of bodily desires and imaginings is stemmed, there is no possibility of rising to the higher states of consciousness above bodily and animal consciousness, with their highly coloured psychical reflections and reverberations. Therefore he goes to the heart of the matter as vigorously and incisively as does Saint Paul. The teaching continues:

“And further, disciples, a disciple considers this body, upward from the sole of the foot, downward from the crown of the head, enclosed within its covering of skin, realizing that this body is made up of hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinew, bone, marrow, kidneys, heart, membranes, spleen, lungs, intestines and other organs, filled with substances subject to decomposition. It is just as though there were a bag filled with various kinds of grain, namely, upland rice, lowland rice, kidney beans, broad beans, oil seeds, husked rice, and a keen eyed man were to pour forth and examine the contents, recognizing the upland rice, the lowland rice, the kidney beans, the broad beans, the oil seeds and the husked rice; so the disciple realizes the contents of the body, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, enclosed within its covering of skin, filled with all manner of impurities. So the disciple attains full realization regarding the body, whether it be his own body or the body of another. He recognizes in the body the character of beginning and the character of passing away. Realizing that such is the body, his recollection is established in the measure of this knowledge, in the measure of this detailed recollection. In this way, disciples, a disciple with reference to the body abides considering the body.

“And further, disciples, a disciple considers this body however it may be placed, however it may be disposed, as consisting of the elements, namely, that the body consists of the element of earth, the element of water, the element of heat, the element of air. It is just as though a skilled butcher, or butcher’s assistant, having slaughtered a cow, setting up his stall at a place where four roads meet, divides the body into pieces; so the disciple recognizes that his body consists of the elements, namely, the element of earth, the element of water, the element of heat, the element of air. Realizing that such is the body, his recollection is established in the measure of this knowledge, in the measure of this detailed recollection. In this way, disciples, a disciple

with reference to the body abides considering the body.”

It may well be thought that this is a somewhat repulsive comparison. It is so, without doubt, and it is so because the purpose of the Teacher is to arouse and establish a feeling of revulsion, to counteract the mood of infatuation, of slavish pampering, which is so nearly universal. This idolatrous service of the body, “whether it be one’s own body or the body of another,” can only be killed by strong revulsion. This definite purpose, to arouse a mood of strong revulsion, is made clear by the passages which follow, and which are rather grimly called the “nine charnel grounds,” places where corpses were thrown, to disintegrate and decay. Of these, only one need be translated:

“And further, disciples, it is as though a disciple were to see a body cast away on a charnel ground, being eaten by crows, or being eaten by buzzards, or being eaten by vultures, or being eaten by dogs, or being eaten by jackals, or being eaten by vermin of various kinds, and, considering his own body, should realize that such is the body, with such a destiny, which it cannot escape.”

But, besides this mood of revulsion, which the Teacher considers it necessary to arouse and sustain, there is another side of the problem. When the tyranny of the body has been overthrown, the time comes to recognize it as a useful, nay, an indispensable servant. And the Buddha has laid down detailed directions for his disciples, concerning the right care for the body. He is entirely opposed to the extremes of self-torture to which many of the ascetics of his day went, often with motives of vanity. He is equally opposed to the neglect of bodily cleanliness and order, of which these same ascetics were often guilty. There are complete directions for regular washing of the body, with hot and cold water, for the proper clothing of the body, and the way in which the garments of the disciple should be worn, including the yellow, or saffron-coloured robe, which was the uniform of his Order; and equally detailed directions regarding the proper posture of the body, in standing, walking, sitting, resting. In all things, at each moment, there must be complete recollection and awareness. And no least detail of good manners or courtesy is overlooked. Here, as in all things, the Buddha follows the golden mean.

But the Teacher indicated four fields of recollection, namely, with

reference to the body, with reference to sensations, with reference to imaginings, and with reference to forms of thought. We come now to the three remaining to be considered.

“And how, disciples, does a disciple with reference to sensations abide considering sensations?

“In this world, disciples, a disciple experiencing a pleasant sensation, is conscious that he is experiencing a pleasant sensation; when he experiences a painful sensation, he is conscious that he is experiencing a painful sensation; when he is experiencing a sensation which is neither painful nor pleasant, he is conscious that he is experiencing a sensation neither painful nor pleasant; when he is experiencing a pleasant sensation involving the flesh, he is conscious that he is experiencing a pleasant sensation involving the flesh; when he is experiencing a pleasant sensation not involving the flesh, he is conscious that he is experiencing a pleasant sensation not involving the flesh; when he is experiencing a painful sensation involving the flesh, he is conscious that he is experiencing a painful sensation involving the flesh; when he is experiencing a painful sensation not involving the flesh, he is conscious that he is experiencing a painful sensation not involving the flesh; when he is experiencing a sensation neither painful nor pleasant involving the flesh, he is conscious that he is experiencing a sensation neither painful nor pleasant involving the flesh; when he is experiencing a sensation neither painful nor pleasant not involving the flesh, he is conscious that he is experiencing a sensation neither painful nor pleasant not involving the flesh.

“Thus he abides considering sensations, whether they be his own sensations or the sensations of another. He is aware of the beginnings of sensations. He is aware of the passing of sensations. Thus he recognizes the nature of sensations, and his recollection with reference to sensations is established in the measure of his knowledge, in the measure of his complete recollection. Thus he abides unswayed, coveting nothing in the world. Thus, disciples, does a disciple with reference to sensations abide considering sensations.

“And how, disciples, does a disciple with reference to imagination abide considering imagination?

“In this world, disciples, whenever he has a passionate

imagination, he is conscious that it is a passionate imagination; whenever he has a dispassionate imagination, he is conscious that it is a dispassionate imagination; whenever he has an imagination coloured by offence, he is conscious that he has an imagination coloured by offence; whenever he has an imagination free from offence, he is conscious that he has an imagination free from offence; whenever he has an imagination coloured by delusion, he is conscious that he has an imagination coloured by delusion; whenever he has an imagination free from delusion, he is conscious that he has an imagination free from delusion; whenever he has an intent imagination, he is conscious that he has an intent imagination; whenever he has a distraught imagination, he is conscious that he has a distraught imagination; whenever he has an exalted imagination, he is conscious that he has an exalted imagination; whenever he has an unexalted imagination, he is conscious that he has an unexalted imagination; whenever he has a low imagination, he is conscious that he has a low imagination; whenever he has a high imagination, he is conscious that he has a high imagination; whenever he has a concentrated imagination, he is conscious that he has a concentrated imagination; whenever he has an unconcentrated imagination, he is conscious that he has an unconcentrated imagination; whenever he has a liberated imagination, he is conscious that he has a liberated imagination; whenever he has an unliberated imagination, he is conscious that he has an unliberated imagination. Thus he considers the imagination, whether in himself or in another. He is aware of the beginnings of imagination, and of the passing of imagination, and, realizing that such is imagination, his recollection with regard to imagination is established in the measure of his knowledge, in the measure of his complete recollection. Thus he abides unswayed, coveting nothing in the world. Thus, disciples, does a disciple with reference to imagination abide considering imagination.

“And how, disciples, does a disciple with reference to forms of thought abide considering forms of thought?”

“In this world, disciples, with reference to the forms of thought a disciple abides considering the forms of thought in the five obscurities.

“And how, disciples, does a disciple with reference to the forms of

though abide with reference to the forms of thought in the five obscurities?

“In this world, disciples, a disciple having within himself a sensual form of thought, is conscious of having within him a sensual form of thought; or not having within him a sensual form of thought, he is conscious of not having within him a sensual form of thought; and he is also conscious of how the uprising of a sensual thought not yet arisen comes about, and how the rejection of a sensual thought which has arisen is accomplished, and how in the future the uprising of a sensual thought which has been rejected may come about.

“Or having within him an envious form of thought, he is conscious of having within him an envious form of thought; or not having within him an envious form of thought, he is conscious of not having within him an envious form of thought; and he is also conscious of how the uprising of an envious thought not yet arisen comes about, and how the rejection of an envious thought which has arisen is accomplished, and how in the future the uprising of an envious thought which has been rejected may come about.

“So also with regard to thoughts of sloth and torpor; with regard to thoughts of vanity and vacillation; with regard to thoughts of doubt. The disciple is conscious of having, or not having, within him these forms of thought; of their uprising, their rejection, and the danger of their return, even when they have been rejected.”

The Teacher goes on to consider further fundamental classes of thought and consciousness, but their analysis must be deferred for another occasion. We have reached the mid point of the discourse, the turning point, from which the teaching gradually ascends to the more spiritual states of consciousness. There is no sharp break, but rather an ordered and necessary transition. Beginning with recollection, alert awareness of the body and simple bodily acts like breathing, the disciple has learned to be conscious of what his body is doing at each moment, and in what way each act is being done. We gradually pass upward to awareness of sensations, to awareness of imaginings, to awareness of thoughts. But a spiritual element has already made its entrance, or, to speak more truly, has been present implicitly from the beginning. When a disciple is aware that he is harbouring an

imagination coloured by delusion, he has already gone far toward overcoming that delusion, to receiving and assimilating the spiritual light which that delusion would have shut out. So with each step. If recollection regarding each detail be faithfully practised, spiritual unfolding inevitably follows. The steps of that unfolding remain to be considered.

Building on Recollection

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While the *Suttas* record instances in which the Buddha spoke eloquently to groups of villagers, to large numbers of men and women assembled in the towns, to those who visited him, as did King Ajatashatru and many learned Brahmans, yet it remains true that the heart of his teaching and its deepest elements were addressed, not to these varied listeners, but to disciples, or, sometimes, to a single disciple, as the beloved disciple Ananda. His main desire and purpose was to train disciples, to help those who desired liberation, and who were ready to work and sacrifice for liberation.

It was not enough for the aspirant for discipleship to wish for liberty, or even to express that wish to the great Master. He had to do much more: he had to sacrifice; and the initial sacrifice was drastic and inclusive: he who wished to be, in the true sense, a disciple of the Buddha, and a member of his Order, must first renounce all the normal desires and ambitions of ordinary personal life, and prove that his renunciation was real, by “giving up the household life and entering the homeless life”; he must repeat the sacramental formula, “I go for refuge to the Buddha, I go for refuge to the Law of Righteousness, I go for refuge to the Order”; and he must make the equivalent of the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and accept in detail a rule of life covering his studies, conduct and manners. Only after these great sacrifices and efforts were made, was it possible for him to be a disciple in the true sense, and to strive successfully for liberation. This necessity of initial sacrifice and effort is

universal, perpetually valid; it may not be possible actually to leave home and all its duties and occupations, but it is necessary to make the act of self-surrender symbolized by this “going out”, and to maintain and increase that self-surrender.

Therefore, those disciples to whom the essential teaching of the Buddha was addressed, had already passed through the conversion of the will, the change of polarity, the transference of the centre of gravity, the self-identification, from the outer to the inner, from the lower to a higher self. Much, nay, almost everything remained to be done, but the first great sacrifice had been made, the first transformation had been passed through.

It is essential to keep this fundamental truth in mind when we seek to understand the central teaching of the Buddha: this teaching is addressed to those who have, in will and in act, sacrificed the personal to the spiritual life, and have thus established a focus of self-identification, of consciousness, in the spiritual life. It is especially necessary to keep this in mind while we are seeking to understand the vitally important teaching of Recollection, and what follows as the fruit of Recollection. The disciple, practicing Recollection, must become aware of his actions, his sensations, his emotions. Precisely because, through sacrifice and the transfer of the focus of self-identification from the lower to the higher nature, he has raised his point of view from the midst of these acts, sensations and emotions, and has established a footing above them, so that he now looks down upon them from above, this very act of viewing them from above tends to separate him from them, to detach his will and consciousness from his sensations and emotions, and to free him from their domination. In other words, the very act of Recollection is, for the disciple, an instrument of liberation: the white light of spiritual perception is full of power, and, like the pressure of physical light described by Arrhenius, tends to drive outward and downward the entrancing sensations and emotions.

This is true for the regenerate disciple who, drawn by overmastering love of the Master and the beauty of holiness and valour in the Master, has made the initial effort and sacrifice, and has crossed the dividing line, saying, “To the Buddha as my refuge I go.” But it is

not true for the unregenerate man who, still clinging to the desires and activities of his personality, makes a certain effort towards the practice of Recollection. If, seeking the alert awareness which the Buddha has enjoined on his disciples, he dwells in thought upon his sensations, let us say the sensation of the flavour of alcohol, he is more likely to increase his desire and his slavery than to diminish or conquer it. So with anger or resentment; by becoming more aware of his feeling of injury suffered, he will strengthen it, because the focus of his consciousness, his self-identification, is still firmly rooted in the lower, personal self. The initial effort and sacrifice have not been made. The promised fruits of Recollection will not be gathered by him.

Therefore, *Light on the Path* bids the disciple, at the very beginning of the way, to “seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it.” Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart. The great initial sacrifice must be made. Only after it has been made will the fruits of Recollection follow.

This is true of the ground previously covered regarding the practice of Recollection, up to the point where the disciple, having become fully aware of his acts, sensations and emotions, goes on to gain awareness of his thoughts, immediately “realizing within himself the presence or absence of sensual thoughts, envious thoughts, thoughts of sloth and torpor, thoughts of vanity and vacillation, thoughts of doubt; conscious of their uprising, their rejection, and the danger of their return, even when they have been rejected.” It is equally true of the teaching which follows.

The five forms of thought just enumerated are called the “five obscurities”, or “obstacles”, or “besetting sins”, because they are the causal impulses in the mind, which impel and set in motion the ensnaring emotions and sensations. The Buddha then goes on to an equally fundamental part of his teaching, the five Skandhas, or aggregates, which are the basis and substance of personal life, and are therefore described as “the five aggregates of clinging to (personal) existence.” Since the Skandhas are a fundamental element of the Buddha’s method of instruction, it may be expedient to give the Sanskrit names, and try to gain a clear view of their meaning and

content. First, Rupa, “form”, the “aggregate of form” being the physical body, whose constituent elements have already been enumerated and, in the “ceteries”, commented on with grim realism. As was pointed out at the time, the purpose of this stringent description is, to break down, at any cost, the enthralling tyranny of the body, which so dominates much of human life. After that tyranny has been broken, the right use of the body must be learned. Second, Vedana, “sensation”, the “aggregate of sensations” being “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye”, and the like enthrallments of the other senses; as before, conquest of these tyrannies will lead to the right use of the powers of perception; but their abuse must first be blotted out. Third, Sanjña, which has been rendered “abstract ideas”, “thoughts”, and, in the enumeration of the Skandhas, appears to mean, not the direct impressions of the senses, but the thoughts abstracted, or extracted, from these impressions, as the thought of an allurement through the eyes, which is more abstract, and more lasting, than the allurement itself, and which contains the impelling force that leads one to seek the situation in which the allurement may be renewed. It is more mental than emotional, yet it contains the seeds of future emotions and craving for sensations. Fourth, Sanskara, “tendencies, both physical and mental”. The history of this word is interesting. It seems to have meant first “adornment”, and in particular, the adornment of pottery, the curves and dots and patterns which the potter incised on the unbaked clay of a jar which he had completed on his wheel, and which were rendered permanent by the process of firing in the kiln. The past participle of the same base, Sanskrita, “adorned”, came to be applied to the “adorned”, or “refined”, language of the classical period, and is preserved in the word Sanskrit. As an element in the mind, Sanskara acquired a more special meaning. At first, it meant an imprint or pattern engraved on the psychic substance of the mind, as an inner copy of some outward object which the attention had rested on; the mind-image of something seen or heard or otherwise perceived. And, because this mind-image, if originally touched with desire, emotion or allurement, takes a certain life and energy of its own, and exerts pressure to bring about renewal of the alluring sensation, thus leading to a reinforcement of the mind-image, and renewed repetition, the

word gained the fuller meaning of “dynamic mind-image”, which it has in the school of Sankara Acharya. This is close to the meaning in the teaching of the Buddha, who used the word to describe impressions which, by reason of their energy, become impulses or tendencies; and he included both mental and physical tendencies. Both are built up in the same way, by the embodiment of an “elemental” force in the impression, a force with impulses and claims of its own, and the tendency to express them. Fifth, Vijñana, which means, in Sanskrit, knowing something as different from something else, a knowledge which distinguishes. As one of the Skandhas, its meaning is less abstract; it seems to indicate a tendency of the mind based on distinction or preference, and so a “predisposition, physical, mental or moral”. To these five Skandhas, two more should probably be added: the “heresy of separateness” which marks the boundary of the personality, and “egotism” which supplies the driving power of the personal machine built up by the five more concrete Skandhas. With this technical description in mind, we may now consider what the Buddha is recorded as saying regarding the Skandhas:

“And further, disciples, with reference to the elements of being, a disciple abides considering the elements of being in the Five Aggregates of clinging to personal existence. How does the disciple so abide?

“In this world, disciples, a disciple attains to the understanding that ‘this is Rupa, the bodily form, this is the rising of form, and this its setting; this is Vedana, sensation, this is the rising of sensation, and this its setting; this is Sanjña, thought, this is the rising of thought, and this its setting; these are the Sanskara, the tendencies, this is the rising of the tendencies, and this their setting; this is Vijñana, predisposition, this is the rising of predisposition, and this its setting’; thus recognizing the nature, the rising and the setting of each of these elements of being in the Five Aggregates of clinging to personal existence, his Recollection is established in the measure of this knowledge, in the measure of this detailed recollection.”

To put it in other words: the disciple, who has made the indispensable initial sacrifice and effort of self-surrender, and has thereby established a focus of consciousness in the higher, spiritual nature, looks down from that point of vantage at the personality,

analyses it, takes it to pieces, and thus comes thoroughly to understand its nature and impulses, and, most vital, becomes thoroughly saturated with the realization that the personality is “not-self”, that in it there is no selfhood or abiding principle. He does this not once, but continuously; establishing his realization by this detailed recollection until it is firmly fixed, and the domination of the personality is broken. Then will come the time for him to discover and acquire the right use of each of these powers, just as the time came to learn the right use of the bodily powers, after these had been analysed and conquered. And as before, the white light of spiritual perception, in which the disciple views these powers, by its very nature aids him to subdue them. True Recollection is already the first step of conquest. So we come to the Six Dwellings; namely, the five organs of perception, each being regarded as the dwelling of one of the powers of perception, sight, hearing and the other powers, together with mind, considered as the dwelling or receptacle in which the five kinds of perception are gathered together and moulded into general impressions or mind-images. The Buddha said:

“And further, disciples, with reference to the elements of being, a disciple abides considering the elements of being in the Six Dwellings, whether in himself or in another. How does the disciple so abide?

“In this world, disciples, a disciple understands the eye, understands forms, and understands the attachment which arises through these two, understanding how attachment not yet arisen may arise, how attachment which has arisen may be broken, how attachment which has been broken may arise in the future; so also he understands hearing and sounds and the attachment which arises through them, with its coming into being, its ceasing and the danger that it may arise again; so also with scent and odours; with the tongue and savours; so also with the body and contacts; so also with the mind and forms of thought and the attachment which may arise through these, its beginning, its ceasing and the danger that it may arise again. Thus he abides considering these elements of being, whether in himself or in another. He abides unswayed, coveting nothing in the world.

“And further, disciples, with reference to the elements of being, a disciple abides considering the elements of being in the Seven

Members of Illumination. How does the disciple so abide?

“In this world, disciples, a disciple, if that member of illumination named Recollection is awake in his inner self, understands that it is awake; if it be not yet awake, he understands that it is not yet awake; so also with that member of illumination named Discernment of Elements; so also with that member of illumination named Valour; so also with that member of illumination named Joy; so also with that member of illumination named Serenity; so also with that member of illumination named concentrated Meditation; so also with that member of illumination named Poise. In the case of each, he understands how, if it be not yet awakened; it arises, and how, when it has arisen, it goes onward to perfect fulfilment”

The dividing line between the lower and the higher has been passed, the turning in the way has been conquered and the new way has been entered on; the disciple, having fought the good fight against the personal self and won the victory, thoroughly understanding the personal self and all its activities and allurements and delusions, now prepares to enter on that life which supersedes the personality; he is ready to gather the fruits of the spirit. And the fruits of the spirit are these: recollection, discernment, valour, joy, serenity, meditation, poise; this is the wisdom which comes down from above. The disciple is established on the path; his task is to attain these fruits, and to bring each one of them to perfection, assiduously guarding against the danger of recession.

In *Light on the Path* it is written that “he who would escape from the bondage of Karma must raise his individuality out of the shadow into the shine; must so elevate his existence that these threads do not come in contact with soiling substances, do not become so attached as to be pulled awry. He simply lifts himself out of the region in which Karma operates. He does not leave the existence he is experiencing because of that. The ground may be rough and dirty, or full of rich flowers whose pollen stains, and of sweet substances that cling and become attachments—but overhead there is always the free sky. . . . The operation of the actual laws of Karma is not to be studied until the disciple has reached the point at which they no longer affect himself.” This is an eloquent description of the stage of the path we

have been considering; a summary of the allurements and the victory over them, whereby the disciple raises himself from the personality to the life which is above the personality, and receives his reward in an understanding of the laws of personal life, the laws of personal Karma. For there is also the greater Karma, the universal law of harmony guiding to perfection.

Therefore, it is precisely at this stage of the way that the Buddha gives his expression of the laws of personal Karma, by expanding and explaining the Four Noble Truths, whose deep metaphysical significance the disciple is now ready to understand, because he has conquered. The four noble truths are:

- The misery of bondage to personal life;
- The origin of this misery;
- Its cessation;
- The path that leads to this cessation.

Each of these noble truths is set forth with the Buddha's matchless gift for analysis and order, and also with something even greater, his profound understanding of human pain and sorrow that has won for him the name, Siddhartha the Compassionate; that kingly quality in him which inspired him to say, "Let all the sins of this evil age fall upon me, but let man be saved."

"What, disciples, is the noble truth of the misery of bondage? Birth is misery, decay is misery, sickness is misery, dying is misery, sorrow, lamentation, pain, despondency, despair are misery, longing for what we cannot get is misery, and in brief, the five aggregates of clinging are misery."

With compassion the Buddha describes the misery of birth in bondage to personality, the misery of decay, the misery of dying; with even deeper compassion he speaks of the misery of grief and lamentation, desponding and despair:

"What, disciples, is grief? When anyone, disciples, is overwhelmed by calamity, stricken by pain, so that he is afflicted by grief and grieving, the very essence of grief, the height of grief, the depth of grieving, this, disciples, is named grief.

"What, disciples, is lamentation? When anyone, disciples, is

overwhelmed by calamity, stricken by pain, he laments with lamentation, with great and bitter lamentation, with the very essence of lamentation, grievous and bitter, this, disciples, is named lamentation.

“What, disciples, is bodily pain? When anyone, disciples, experiences bodily affliction and suffering, bodily torment and wounds, this, disciples, is named bodily pain.

“What, disciples, is desponding? When anyone, disciples, is afflicted by grief of heart, sorrow of heart, filling and overwhelming the mind, this, disciples, is named desponding.

“What, disciples, is despair? When anyone, disciples, is overwhelmed by calamity, stricken by the very essence of pain, and is filled with despair and despairing, with the full bitterness of despair and despairing, this, disciples, is named despair.”

Even more noteworthy are the sentences that follow:

“What, disciples, is the misery of longing for what we cannot get? When any one among mortals longs to be free from the misery of birth, to escape from birth. But this is not to be gained by longing. When anyone longs to be free from decay, to escape from decay. But this is not to be gained by longing. When anyone longs to escape from dying. But this is not to be gained by longing. When anyone longs to escape from sickness and grief and lamentation and desponding and despair. But this is not to be gained by longing.”

The Buddha then turns to the source, the cause, of this inescapable misery which surrounds and overwhelms the life of bondage to personality:

“What, disciples, is the noble truth of the origin of this misery? It is that thirsting desire which causes bondage to rebirth, thirsting desire full of sensuality and passion, seeking indulgence everywhere; it is the thirst of desire, the thirst for bodily life, the thirst for separate life. Whatever things are alluring and fascinating in this world, in these desire springs up and grows, in these desire establishes itself and takes root.”

And once again he repeats to the disciples, now better able to comprehend, the long lists of sensual things which fascinate and allure, and of the powers through which they allure, dispensing “a several sin

to every sense". Then follows the question:

"What, disciples, is the noble truth of the cessation of this misery? It is revulsion without any reserve, renunciation, abandonment, forsaking of thirsting desire; it is final liberation, free from allurements.

"And what, disciples, is the noble truth of the path that leads to the cessation of misery? It is the Noble Eightfold Path, that is: Right Understanding, Right Resolution, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Recollection, Right Meditation.

"And what, disciples, is Right Understanding? It is an understanding of the misery of bondage to personal life, an understanding of the origin of this misery, an understanding of its cessation, an understanding of the path that leads to this cessation.

"And what, disciples, is Right Resolution? It is the resolution of self-surrender, the resolution to be rid of malice, the resolution to refrain from injuring others.

"And what, disciples, is Right Speech? It is abstinence from lying, abstinence from slander, abstinence from cruel words, abstinence from foolish and frivolous talk.

"And what, disciples, is Right Conduct? It is to abstain from killing, to abstain from taking what is not given, to abstain from unclean desires.

"And what, disciples, is Right Livelihood? It is when a noble hearer of the teaching, renouncing a wrongful livelihood, enters upon a right livelihood.

"And what, disciples, is Right Effort? It is when a disciple, with regard to evil and sinful elements of being which have not arisen, arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they shall not arise; when with regard to evil and sinful elements of being which have arisen, he arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they shall be extirpated; when with regard to righteous elements of being which have not arisen, he arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they shall arise; when with regard to righteous elements of being which have arisen, he arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they

shall be established, that they shall not be shaken, that they shall be increased, that they shall be developed to full perfection.

“And what, disciples, is Right Recollection? It is when a disciple with reference to the body abides considering the body, ardent, fully conscious, recollected, altogether putting aside both covetousness and dejection, and so likewise with reference to sensations, to imaginings, to forms of thought.

“And what, disciples, is Right Meditation? It is when a disciple, cleansing himself from sensual desires, cleansing himself from sinful elements of being, enters into and abides in the first stage of Contemplation, which is accompanied by analysis and reasoning, born of discernment, suffused with happiness and joy; when, rising above analysis and reasoning, he enters into and abides in the second stage of Contemplation, a stilling of mental activity within himself, unified, without analysis or reasoning, suffused with happiness and joy; when, rising above rejoicing, he abides poised, recollected, fully conscious, aware of bodily serenity, he enters into and abides in the third stage of Contemplation; when he transcends both rejoicing and grieving, when both exulting and desponding have ceased, he enters into and abides in the fourth stage of Contemplation, beyond rejoicing or grieving, poised, recollected, pure. This, disciples, is Right Meditation. This is the noble truth of the cessation of the misery of bondage.”

So far the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the consummation of the Four Noble Truths. For how long, through how many lives, must the devoted disciple tread the path before he attains to liberation? The answer of the Buddha to this inevitable question is, perhaps, the most striking part of the whole teaching:

“Whoever, disciples, thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during seven years, may confidently look for one of two rewards: even in his present state he will attain to illumination, or, if there be in him a remainder of the aggregates, he will not again fall into bondage. But, disciples, it is not a question of seven years; whoever thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during six years, may confidently look for one of these rewards. Nor, disciples, is it a question of six years; whoever thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during five years, may

confidently look for one of these rewards. Nor, disciples, is it a question of five, or four, or three, or two years, or even of one year, of seven, or six, or five, or four, or three, or two months, or one month, or even of a half-month; whoever thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during seven days, may confidently look for one of these two rewards: even in his present state he will attain to illumination, or, if there be in him a remainder of the aggregates, he will not again fall into bondage.

“This was my meaning when I said in the beginning that there is one way of salvation for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of grieving and lamentation, for the conquest of misery and dejection, for the increase of wisdom, for the attainment of Nirvana, namely, the establishment of these four degrees of Recollection.”

Thus spoke the Master. Rejoicing, the disciples praised the Master’s word.

Self-Glorification or Self-Conquest

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I.

In the first two Gospels, there is a story of gentle irony at the expense of the non-discerning disciples. The Master had entered into a ship, to sail across the Sea of Galilee. The disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And the Master charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. And the disciples reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

One wonders which of them first saw the point of this delightful and yet pathetic incident; to whom do we owe its recording for posterity, to teach us not to be too literal minded? A like problem arises regarding the discourse of the Buddha with which we are concerned, and which also warns against the leaven of the Pharisees: against those who pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and omit the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy and faith; who love salutations in the marketplaces, and for a pretence make long prayers.

In the story to be narrated, it is not certain to whose excellent memory and fine sense of humour we owe the record of the Buddha's words. Tradition, in this matter wholly to be relied on, tells us that, at the first great Council of his disciples, shortly after his bodily death, the great disciples recalled and recorded his discourses, while on the beloved disciple Ananda was laid the duty of putting each discourse in

its proper setting, restoring the circumstances under which it was delivered, with the names and characters of those who were present or took part in the conversation of which the Buddha's teaching was a part. This choice of the beloved Ananda shows that his fellow disciples believed that he possessed a vivid pictorial memory, keen powers of observation, and a loving attention to his great Master's doings, which would be certain to note and retain the image of the persons and events at each of the Master's discourses; a shrewd insight into character also, and, we are justified by the records in adding, a lively and charming sense of humour.

In the discourse with which we are concerned, it is not recorded that the beloved Ananda is present. The Buddha is depicted as going alone to visit a group of self-mortifying ascetics, who evidently filled a conspicuous place in the India of twenty-five centuries ago, as they do in the India of today; the most sensational of these self-tortures, lying on a bed of spikes, was evidently fashionable then, as it is now. But the fine character drawing and the keen humour of this story are exactly those that we find in others, of which Ananda may well have been the recorder, and we may conjecture either that the beloved disciple accompanied his Master or that the Buddha himself told the story on his return to his disciples, with Ananda as a delighted auditor.

Once upon a time, says the story, the Master was living at Rajagriha, on Vulture Peak. At that time it befell that a certain mendicant pilgrim, Nigrodha by name, that is, Banyan Tree, was residing in the park of the devout Queen Udumbarika, whose name was taken from an Indian fig tree; with him were many mendicant pilgrims, in all three thousand pilgrims. Now it happened that there was in Rajagriha a pious householder, whose name was Sandhana, that is, Bond, who ardently desired to see the Buddha. And this came into the mind of Bond, the householder:

“This is not a fitting time to see the Master, for the Master is in retirement; nor is it a good time to visit his disciples, who are disciplining their minds and hearts, for they also are in retirement. What if I were to go to Queen Fig Tree's park, to visit the pilgrim Banyan, who is dwelling there?”

Thus the narrator finds a motive for his story, and incidentally

draws an outline portrait of the householder Bond, who, as he tells us, forthwith set out for the park, to pay his visit to the pilgrim Banyan. Then follows one of those set passages, keenly observed and delightfully framed, whose stately repetition gives a peculiar charm to the Buddhist discourses. We are told that the self-mortifying pilgrims, gathered in the wide rest-house of the Queen's park, were not, as we might expect, engaged in debate concerning righteousness and the law; but, instead, with a roaring, with a shrill and mighty noise, they were relating many kinds of common tales, such, for example, as talk of kings, talk of robbers, talk of ministers, talk of armies, talk of terror, talk of war, talk of food and drink and garments and couches, talk of garlands and perfumes, talk of kinships and cars, of villages and towns and countries, talk of women and men and heroes, talk of the street and of the village well, talk of the dead, all kinds of stories, traditions of the forming of lands and oceans, discussions of being and non-being.

It is exactly like the mental medley of things wise and foolish that fill the columns of a modern newspaper, and the list recurs a little later, in identical terms, with the fine rhythmical effect of the orchestral enumeration in the story of the burning fiery furnace, in that compendium of magnificent stories, the Book of Daniel.

The pilgrim Banyan, who seems to have been somewhat better than his mendicant companions, saw Bond, the householder, approaching from afar, and tried to quiet the noisy crew:

"Gentlemen!" he said, "Gentlemen, be less noisy! Make less noise, for here is one of the ascetic Gautama's adherents coming, the householder Bond. White-robed adherents of the ascetic Gautama dwell at Rajagriha, and this householder Bond is one of them. And these worthies delight in freedom from noise, they are well bred in their quietude, they speak in praise of quietude; perhaps, if he saw that our assembly was free from noise, it might occur to him to pay us a visit."

Whether from shame, or merely through curiosity, the mendicant pilgrims consented to be silent.

Then indeed the householder Bond came up to where the pilgrim Banyan was, and, coming up to the pilgrim Banyan, he saluted him

with courtesy and politeness, and sat down beside him. Seating himself beside the pilgrim Banyan, the householder Bond spoke thus:

“Far different is the manner in which these sectarian gentlemen comport themselves when they are assembled together, roaring with shrill and mighty noise, relating many kinds of common tales, such, for example, as talk of kings, robbers and ministers,” and so on, through the whole imposing list of themes, “far different is this indeed from the practice of our Master, who abides in the forest, seated in meditation, seeking quietude and silence, pondering wisdom, with heart intent on hidden things, devoted to retirement.”

Nettled by this mild reproof, the pilgrim Banyan said:

“Go to, householder! Knowest thou with whom the ascetic Gautama confers? With whom does he hold converse? With whom does he clarify his understanding? The understanding of the ascetic Gautama is injured by this habit of solitude, the ascetic Gautama does not know how to conduct a meeting, he cannot carry on a debate, he is really not in the current of things. Your ascetic Gautama, with his habit of solitude, his ignorance of meetings and debates, his limited outlook, is like a cow going round in circles! Look you, householder, if the ascetic Gautama should come to this assembly, we should shut him up with a single question, we should bowl him over like an empty water-jar!”

So the pilgrim Banyan warmed himself up with intemperate speech. And one may doubt whether in the whole cycle of Buddhist scriptures, there is a finer touch of humour than this. For this passage, like all these records, is to be recited aloud by devoted disciples, whose reverence for the Buddha knows no limits. Consider with what a twinkle of the heart they would describe their august Master walking in circles like a cow, and then consider the fine dramatic irony of the sequel.

For we are told that the Master, through the principle of divine hearing, pure and surpassing that of men, heard this edifying talk of the pilgrim Banyan and the householder Bond, and that, hearing, he straightway descended from Vulture Peak and came to the bank of the lotus pond where the peacocks were fed, and walked to and fro, taking the air on the lawn of the peacocks. Then the pilgrim Banyan beheld

the Master taking the air on the lawn of the peacocks, beside the lotus pond, and, seeing him, thus addressed his company:

“Gentlemen, be less noisy! Gentlemen, make less noise! There is the ascetic Gautama, walking to and fro, taking the air, on the lawn of the peacocks beside the lotus pond. And that worthy delights in freedom from noise, he speaks in praise of quietude; should he see how imbued with quietude is this our assembly, he might think well to come and pay us a visit. And should the ascetic Gautama come to our assembly, we should ask him this question:—What, worthy Master, is the Law of Righteousness which the Master teaches to his adherents, trained in which the Master’s adherents win serenity, recognizing this Law as the firm foundation of their spiritual life?”

We are told that the pilgrims became silent; perhaps they cherished a delighted hope of seeing the Buddha walking in circles like a cow, or bowled over like an empty water-jar.

Straightway the Master came over to where the pilgrim Banyan was. And the pilgrim Banyan said this to the Master:

“Let the worthy Master come! Welcome is the worthy Master! The worthy Master has been a long time making up his mind to come to us! Let the worthy Master be seated; this seat is prepared for him!”

The Master seated himself on the seat that was prepared. The pilgrim also seated himself on a low seat beside him. Then the Master said to the pilgrim Banyan, seated by him:

“On what topic, Banyan, were you engaged here? What was the theme that was interrupted?”

The pilgrim Banyan, saying nothing whatever about a cow walking in circles, or a rolling water-jar, thus answered the Master:

“We saw the Master walking to and fro on the lawn of the peacocks beside the lotus pond, taking the air, and, seeing him, we said, Should the Master visit this our assembly, we should ask him this question:—What, worthy Master, is the Law of Righteousness which the Master teaches to his adherents, trained in which the Master’s adherents win serenity, recognizing this Law as the firm foundation of their spiritual life? This is the topic that was interrupted when the Master arrived.”

“It is difficult, Banyan, for one of other views, for one of other practices, of other purposes, of other mental habits, for one following

other teachers, to understand the discipline which I give to my adherents, the discipline through which my adherents are established in serenity, recognizing it as the firm foundation of their spiritual life. But come, Banyan, ask me a question concerning your own teaching of extreme self-mortification: in what conditions is this self-mortification perfected, and in what conditions is it not perfected?" The Buddha turned aside the question regarding his own teaching by saying that it was difficult to understand. Without doubt he realized that, while there was a spark of genuine spirituality in Banyan, the great mass of mendicant pilgrims with him were full of cavilling, stony ground on which no precious seed should be sown. But there was a still more definite reason, a rule framed by the Buddha himself, which he formulates in another discourse: "Whoever has been an adherent of another sect, and wishes to enter the discipline of this Law of Righteousness, desiring admission to the first degree, and afterwards to the second degree, must first remain on probation for four months, after which the disciples of strenuous heart will admit him to membership in the first degree, and afterwards to membership in the second degree of the Order of disciples. But even in such a case, the difference between individuals is taken into account." It was not a favourable moment to explain this wise rule to Banyan; but, if his desire for light was genuine and strong, he would presently find it out. So, for the time, the Buddha parried the premature question, and introduced the whole subject of self-mortification, thus finding a motive for the special theme of this discourse.

How unfavourable the occasion was for expounding the Law of Righteousness, the narrative reveals; for when the Buddha had answered Banyan as just recorded, the swarm of mendicant pilgrims began to shout with exceeding great noise, "Marvellous, Sir, wonderful, Sir, is the superhuman gift and power of the ascetic Gautama in holding back any pronouncement regarding his own teaching, and turning the conversation to the teaching of others!"

To the credit of the pilgrim Banyan, we are told that he imposed silence on these ironical mendicants, and spoke thus to the Master:

"We, Sire, are believers in penitential self-mortification, we hold that penitential self-mortification is essential, we practise penitential

self-mortification. In what conditions, Sire, is this penitential self-mortification perfected, and in what condition is it not perfected?"

In reply, the Buddha enumerates a long series of practices, which may with advantage be condensed. There is, first, a certain anarchism in manners, often characteristic of youthful radicals even in our own enlightened age, beginning with curt speech and culminating in a scrupulous abstinence from the use of water, whether internally or externally. It is worth noting that one finds the same abstinence among the hermits of the Egyptian desert, in the third and fourth centuries of our era. Next come scruples regarding food, the refusal to eat cooked food, precise rules as to accepting gifts of food, a punctilious spacing of the times of eating, whether once a day, once in three days, or once a week, and so forth; practices also found, carried to extreme exaggeration among the Egyptian solitaries. Indeed, one may suppose that this drift to meticulous formalism in the Egyptian desert may well have frustrated a spiritual movement originally of the greatest promise, so that it was necessary for Benedict to frame a new rule, on spiritual principles. Then come self-mortifying postures, such as standing bareheaded in burning sunshine, or lying on a bed of thorns or spikes. There is a quaint note on this kind of practice in the records of the Egyptian hermits, exactly in line with the Buddha's teaching: "The brother went to his cell, and fell on his face upon the ground, and for three whole days and nights he wept before God. And after these things, when his thoughts were saying unto him, 'Thou art now an exalted person, and thou hast become a great man,' he used to contradict them, and set before his eyes his former shortcomings, and say, 'Thus were all my offences.'"

After enumerating many penitential self-mortifications, the Buddha said, "What thinkest thou, Banyan? If they be thus carried out, is penitential self-mortification perfected, or is it not perfected?"

Banyan replied that, in his view, self-mortification was in fact perfected by these practices. But the Buddha said:

"Even when these self-mortifications are perfectly carried out, I say that they are subject to certain impurities."

"In what way, Master, when these self-mortifications are perfectly carried out, are they subject to impurities?" The opening of the

pilgrim's mind and the softening of his self-righteous heart are indicated by his addressing the Buddha as Master, in contrast to the rather abrupt "ascetic Gautama", used by the other mendicants. The Buddha's reply introduces the essence of the discourse, which is in principle closely akin to the criticism of the Pharisees:

"An ascetic, Banyan, enters on a penitential exercise. Because of this penitential exercise he is delighted with himself, filled full with self-satisfaction. When this so happens, Banyan, it is an impurity. Again, Banyan, an ascetic enters on a penitential exercise. Because of this penitential exercise he exalts himself and despises another. When this so happens, Banyan, it is an impurity. Once again, Banyan, an ascetic enters on a penitential exercise. Because of this penitential exercise he becomes infatuated, he becomes intoxicated and falls into negligence. When this so happens, Banyan, it is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic enters on a penitential exercise. Because of this penitential exercise, he receives gifts and gains honour and fame. And because he receives gifts and gains honour and fame, he becomes greatly pleased with himself. When an ascetic, thus gaining gifts, honour and fame, is greatly pleased with himself, this, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic enters on a penitential exercise. Because of this penitential exercise, he receives gifts and gains honour and fame. And because he receives gifts and honour and fame, he exalts himself and despises another. When this so happens, Banyan, it is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic enters on a penitential exercise. Making a distinction of foods, he says, 'This commends itself to me; this does not commend itself to me.' That which commends itself not to him, he steadily rejects, but that which commends itself to him, he eats greedily, becoming infatuated with it, not recognizing the sin and danger in this gluttony. This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic enters on a penitential exercise, his motive being a desire for gifts, honour and fame, with the thought that kings and courtiers, nobles, priests and householders will pay him honour. This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic grows jealous of some ascetic or Brahman, saying, 'That fellow lives lavishly; he eats every kind of thing, that is, things grown from roots, things grown from shoots, things grown from fruit, things grown from sprouts, things grown from seeds; he grinds them all together with his

thunderous jaws!’ This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic sees some other ascetic or Brahman honoured, esteemed, highly regarded, respected among those whom he visits for alms. And, seeing this, he thinks, ‘People honour, esteem, regard and respect this fellow who lives lavishly; but they do not honour, esteem, regard, nor respect me, a true ascetic, living a life of austerity!’ So he nourishes ill-will and resentment against those who give alms. This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic seats himself in some place where he will be seen of men. This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic slinks about among those who give alms, thinking to himself, ‘This is a part of my penance! This is a part of my penance!’ This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, an ascetic practices secretiveness. Should an ascetic ask him, ‘Does this commend itself to thee?’—even though disapproving, he says, ‘It does commend itself!’ And, even when he approves, he answers, ‘It does not commend itself!’ Thus he becomes a deliberate liar. This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, when the Tathagata or an adherent of the Tathagata, teaching the Law of Righteousness, follows a method worthy of approval, he does not accept it. This, Banyan, is an impurity. Once more, Banyan, a self-mortifying ascetic may nourish wrath and enmity; he may nourish hypocrisy and deceit; he may nourish avarice and envy; he may be crafty and full of guile; he may be obstinate and conceited; he may entertain sinful wishes and fall under their sway; he may entertain false views, he may become addicted to delusive opinions, he may grow worldly minded, grasping after riches, turning away from renunciation. These, Banyan, are impurities. What thinkest thou, Banyan, are these things impurities, when they exist in him who practices self-mortification, or are they not impurities?”

“They are impurities, Sire; they are not free from impurity. It is indeed the truth, Sire, that one who practices self-mortifying penances may be tainted with all these impurities, and much more, that he may be guilty of any one of them.”

“Very good, Banyan. But let there be an ascetic who enters on a penitential exercise. He is not delighted with himself, nor is he full of self-satisfaction because of his penitential exercise. In so far as he is not delighted with himself nor full of self-satisfaction, in that measure is he purified. He exalts not himself, nor despises another. In that measure

is he purified. He is not infatuated nor intoxicated. In that measure is he purified. Should he, because of his penitential exercise, receive gifts and honour and fame, he is not delighted with himself, nor filled with self-satisfaction because of this. In that measure is he purified. Nor does he on that account exalt himself and despise another. In that measure is he purified. Nor, should he receive gifts and honour and fame, is he thereby infatuated and intoxicated, falling into negligence. In that measure is he purified. Nor does he fall into making distinctions in foods, saying, 'This commends itself to me; this does not commend itself to me.' Nor, saying this, does he steadily reject that which does not commend itself to him, nor does he eat greedily that which commends itself to him, becoming infatuated with it, not recognizing the sin and danger in this gluttony. In that measure is he purified. Nor does he enter on a penitential exercise moved by a desire for gifts, honour and fame, with the thought that kings, courtiers, nobles, priests and householders will pay him honour. In that measure is he purified. Nor does he grow jealous of some ascetic or Brahman, saying, 'That fellow lives lavishly; he eats every kind of food, grinding them all together with his thunderous jaws!' In that measure is he purified. Nor, seeing some other ascetic or Brahman honoured, esteemed, highly regarded, respected among those whom he visits for alms, does he think, 'People honour, esteem, regard and respect this fellow who lives lavishly; but they do no honour, esteem, regard, nor respect me, a true ascetic, living a life of austerity!' Nor does he nourish ill-will and resentment against those who give alms. In that measure is he purified. Nor does he seat himself in some place where he will be seen of men, nor slink about among those who give alms, thinking to himself, 'This is a part of my penance!' Nor does he practise secretiveness, dissembling his views, and thus falling into deliberate lying. In that measure is he purified. Nor, when the Tathagata or an adherent of the Tathagata, teaching the Law of Righteousness, follows a method worthy of approval, does he reject it. In that measure is he purified. Nor does he nourish wrath or enmity, hypocrisy or deceit, avarice or envy, craft or guile; nor is he obstinate or conceited; nor does he entertain sinful wishes, falling under their sway; nor does he hold false views, becoming addicted to delusive opinions, nor grow worldly minded, grasping after riches and turning away from

renunciation. In that measure is he purified.

“What thinkest thou then, Banyan? If this be so, is self-mortification purified or not purified?”

“Truly, Sire, if this be so, self-mortification is purified, it fails not of purification. It has reached the summit; it has penetrated to the inmost core!”

“Not so, Banyan! Not yet has self-mortification reached the summit nor penetrated to the inmost core; rather it has only touched the outermost bark.”

“How then, Sire, may self-mortification reach the summit and penetrate to the inmost core?”

It is a wise question, showing something of the grace of humility. We shall on a future occasion consider the Buddha’s wise and gracious answer.

II.

In relating the story of the Buddha’s discourse concerning penitential self-mortification, its fruit and its danger, reference was made to a period in the West when like penitential practices were intensively followed, the period of the monastic communities and the great solitaries in the Egyptian desert. It may be worth while to show the likeness of these self-mortifying exercises in the Egypt of the fourth century of our era to those of the Ganges valley in the Buddha’s day, and in particular that the fruits and dangers were the same in these two sacred lands.

In that forceful and detailed record of the Egyptian solitaries which is called *The Paradise of the Fathers*, the author records an experience which he personally noted. There was a certain man in Scete, he says, whose name was Stephana, who had dwelt in the desert for twenty-nine years; his apparel was made of palm leaves, and he lived in such a strict self-denial, and persisted to such a degree in ascetic abstinence, that he never had the least inclination for the meats which are usually desired, and which are pleasant to the taste; and he greatly condemned those who, because of sickness, either ate cooked food or drank cream. Now the gift of healing had been given to him to such a degree that he could cast out devils by a word. And it came to pass that on one

occasion a man in whom was an unclean spirit came to Scete, and wished to be healed, and when the monk saw that he was sorely vexed by the devil he made a prayer and healed him. So much for the fruit of abstinence and self-discipline.

But there was danger also. For, says the narrator, this monk was rejected by Divine Providence because of his immeasurable arrogance and haughtiness, for he imagined himself to be more excellent in his life and works than the other fathers. First of all, he separated himself from the brotherhood, and then he went and became archimandrite in one of the monasteries of Alexandria, "For," he said in his pride, "am I to be in subjection to Macarius? Are not my life and works better than his?" And this man arrived at such a state of madness that he went to the city, and gave himself up to gluttony, and drunkenness, and to the eating of more flesh than rational beings are wont to eat, and finally he fell and settled down into the pit of unclean living. He gratified his unclean desires without shame, and became a laughing-stock to all who knew him. But he excused himself, saying, "The law was not made for the perfect." The narrator goes on to say that strong efforts were made to redeem this man and bring him to repentance. But he remained arrogant and obdurate, and came to a miserable death.

The Buddha spoke also of self-mortifying ascetics who sought praise of men and thereby forfeited the fruit of discipline. The same Macarius already mentioned is recorded as saying, "I hate the love of praise of young men who toil, and who lose their reward because they expect the adulation of the children of men." Then, we are told, another well-known ancient said to Macarius, "And it is not greatly acceptable unto me, but it is better that they should work for praise rather than that they should despise it, for it always constraineth those who love praise to lead lives of abstinence, and to keep vigil, and to live in nakedness for the sake of vainglory, and to bear afflictions for the sake of praise." Then after these things the Grace of God came to them and spake, saying, "Wherefore do ye not toil for My sake? And why do ye toil for the sake of the children of men?" And they were convinced that they must not expect the praise of men but that of God.

We shall see in what terms the Buddha brings out the same

antithesis. It will be remembered that, in the discourse between the Master and the Brahman Banyan, the Brahman had expressed the conviction that self-mortification which is purged of all self-seeking and vanity has reached the summit, has penetrated to the inmost core. But the Master replied that self-mortification, even though it be thus purged, has only touched the outermost bark. Self-mortification, in the Buddha's view, was not an end but a means. The problem to be considered now is, to what end is it a means? What is the true purpose of self-mortification? What corresponds in the Buddha's teaching to "the praise of God"?

Banyan logically asks, "In what way, Sire, does self-mortification reach the summit and penetrate to the core?" Then he shows that he is more than a skilful reasoner, that he is a practical disciple; for he continues, "It would be a happy thing for me, if the Master should bring my self-mortification to the summit, and should make it penetrate to the core!"

The Master replied, "A self-mortifying ascetic, here in the world, is restrained by the restraint of the fourfold watch. In what way, Banyan, is a self-mortifying ascetic restrained by the restraint of the fourfold watch? First, Banyan, such an ascetic injures no life, causes no life to be injured, nor approves of the injuring of any life; second, he takes not what is not given, nor causes what is not given to be taken, nor approves of the taking of what is not given; third, he speaks not falsely, nor causes anything to be spoken falsely, nor approves of any false speech; fourth, he longs for no self-satisfaction, nor causes anyone to long for self-satisfaction, nor approves of any longing for self-satisfaction. In this way, Banyan, an ascetic is restrained by the restraint of the fourfold watch. When, Banyan, the ascetic is thus restrained, such an ascetic goes forward, he turns not back to lower things. He seeks out for himself a place of meditation, in the forest, at the root of some great tree, among the mountains, in a glen or a cavern in the mountains, or even in a place for the burning of bodies, or a dwelling in the woods, or simply a heap of straw in a clearing. Then, after he has gone forth to receive alms of rice in his bowl, and has eaten what has been freely given, returning to his retreat, he takes his seat in the position of meditation, holding his body upright, with heart and mind intent on recollection. Ridding himself of covetous desire

for the things of the world, he dwells with heart free from covetous desire, he purifies his thoughts of covetous desire; ridding himself of the sin of malevolence, he dwells with heart free from malevolence, seeking the welfare of all living beings, he purifies his thoughts of malevolence; ridding himself of sloth and torpor, he dwells free from sloth and torpor, seeing the light, recollected, with consciousness alert, he purifies his mind of malevolence; ridding himself of vanity and fretfulness, he dwells not inflated by vanity, with heart inwardly serene, he purifies his thoughts of vanity and fretfulness; ridding himself of doubting, he dwells on the farther shore beyond doubt, no longer anxiously questioning concerning what is right and good, he purifies his thoughts of doubting.

“Through spiritual awakening he rids himself of these five obscurities which rob the heart of power; he dwells irradiating one quarter of the world with heart enkindled with love, and so also the second quarter, so also the third, so also the fourth. Thus he dwells, irradiating the whole world, upward, downward, through and through, altogether, in all ways, with heart enkindled with love. He dwells, irradiating the whole world, upward, downward, through and through, altogether, in all ways, with heart enkindled with compassion; he dwells, irradiating the whole world, upward, downward, through and through, altogether, in all ways, with heart enkindled with even-balanced serenity, abounding, magnanimous, free from enmity, free from ill will. What think you, Banyan? If it be thus, is such self-mortification perfected, or is it not perfected?”

“Of a surety, Sire, self-mortification such as this has reached the summit, has penetrated to the inmost core!”

“Nay, not so, Banyan! Far from reaching the summit and penetrating to the inmost core, such self-mortification has but touched the skin, the outer bark.” That declaration is likely to astonish us as greatly as it astonished good Banyan. Is not the radiant love described the utmost possible fulfilment of the law of righteousness? Of what more can we conceive?

We may anticipate the answer of the Buddha by asking a question: How is it possible for the aspirant, even after he has cleansed his heart of envy, anger, vacillation, sloth and unbelief, the “five obscurities,”

even after he has torn out the root of egotism, even after he has made the complete sacrifice of worldliness symbolized by the alms bowl and the cave—how is it possible for him to create this splendour of love in his clean heart? The answer is, that he has no need to create what is, as a potentiality, already there. It is the treasure of gold buried in the field, to be brought to the light when the earth and stones are removed; it is the true desire of the heart, to be fully revealed when false desires have been purged away; it is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, the Light of the Logos itself, the universal spiritual consciousness which underlies and gives life to every individual consciousness. But in the heart of unregenerate man that spiritual consciousness has been hidden and buried under a multitude of mental, passional and psychic obscurities, so that the Light can no longer shine through. With the removal of this accumulation of obscurities real life can begin. It is not too much to say that the whole system of self-denial, purification and asceticism imposed by the Buddha on his ardent disciples had no other aim than this: the removal of the heaped up obscurities which impede that Light. And this is true of every genuine religious teacher.

The cleansing of the inner nature, mind and heart and soul, so that the Light may shine, is, therefore, not the end of the way, but its beginning; it is the entrance to the royal road. But, we may be inclined to ask with the ascetic Banyan, what can possibly remain to be undertaken or accomplished, after so much has been already done?

The answer is really implicit in what has been said. The disciple, with fiery energy cleansing and purifying his inner life, has given access to the Light of the Logos. This, which would be otherwise altogether beyond his power, is possible for the simple reason that the Light is already there: is, indeed, the inner essence of his life. In the wise words of the Upanishad, he is That. But, if one may use such a term for the undivided All, he is as yet only a minute fragment of the Logos, only the end of one small ray. His tremendous destiny is, to enter into and become one with all of that infinite Life, or, to speak more truly, to realize that he has been one with that Life, through innumerable ages. Beginning with the dim, divine star that gleams in his cleansed heart, he is to grow and expand until he knows himself one with the infinite Light. So great, so limitless is the path before him.

Therefore this is indeed not the end, but the beginning of the true, divine way. If the ardent disciple travel farther on that way, what should be the fruit of his journey? Let us for a moment consider. He is, step by step, to enter into the Logos; not as a part, but as the All. But the Logos is from eternity. Therefore, as he rises, the disciple will transcend Time, the great illusion which divides Being into a past which has disappeared, an evanescent present, a still imaginary future. The Logos is not omniscient, but omniscience, for the All, as consciousness, must be conscious of all things, whether in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the regions beneath the earth. And, since oneness of Being is the very essence of the Logos, he who enters into that divine consciousness, thereby enters into that perfect love which the Buddha has already described, a love abounding, magnanimous, compassionate. The ardent disciple, with heart and mind purified, is to enter into, and to share, that conquest of Time, that omniscience and love, which are, not so much properties of the Logos, as its essential being. So we come back to the dialogue between the Master and the ascetic Banyan.

Banyan had affirmed that the illumination of the heart by love was the very perfection and consummation of self-mortification, reaching to the summit, penetrating to the inmost core. But the Buddha had replied that, far from penetrating to the core, this illumination only touched the skin, the outer bark. Recovering from his astonishment at a statement so perplexing, yet promising so much more, Banyan thereupon asked, with fine logical perseverance:

“In what way, then, Sire, does self-mortification reach the summit and penetrate to the core? It would be a happy thing for me, if the Master should bring my self-mortification to the summit, and should make it penetrate to the core!”

“Practising self-mortification, Banyan, the ascetic restrains himself by the restraint of the fourfold watch, and so goes forward, turning not back to lower things. Establishing for himself a quiet refuge for meditation, he irradiates the world with heart enkindled with love. Thereafter he calls to memory many a dwelling of his in by-gone times, that is to say, one former birth, or two births, or three births, or four births, or five births, or ten births, or twenty births, or thirty

births, or forty births, or fifty births, or a hundred births, or a thousand births, or a hundred thousand births, many involutions of a world period, many evolutions of a world period, many involutions and evolutions of a world period, so as to say, 'There I was of such a name, of such a family, of such a colour, with such a livelihood, experiencing certain joys and sorrows, completing such a span of life. Departing thence, I became manifest in such a place. There, I was of such a name, of such a family, of such a colour, with such a livelihood, experiencing certain joys and sorrows, completing such a life span. Departing thence, I became manifest here;' thus he remembers many a dwelling of his in by-gone times, with all details and particulars.

"What think you, Banyan? If it be thus, is such self-mortification perfected, or is it not perfected?"

"Of a surety, Sire, self-mortification such as this has reached the summit, has penetrated to the inmost core!"

"Nay, not so, Banyan! Far from reaching the summit and penetrating to the inmost core, such self-mortification has only reached the fibre beneath the bark."

"In what way, then, Sire, does self-mortification reach the summit and penetrate to the core? It would be a happy thing for me, if the Master should bring my self-mortification to the summit, and should make it penetrate to the core!"

"Practising self-mortification, Banyan, the ascetic restrains himself by the restraint of the fourfold watch, and so goes forward, turning not back to lower things. Establishing for himself a quiet refuge for meditation, he irradiates the world with heart enkindled with love. Thereafter he calls to memory many a dwelling of his in by-gone times, one birth, two, three, up to a hundred thousand births, with all details and particulars. So with divine vision, pure, surpassing that of the sons of men, he sees beings departing and coming into manifestation, debased or excellent, fair or foul, righteous or evil; he sees these beings faring according to their works, so as to say, 'These personages, of a truth, persisting in evil deeds, persisting in evil words, persisting in evil thoughts, speaking ill of the noble, holding lying opinions, are incurring the fruit of lying opinions. They, separated from the body after death, have fallen into misery, suffering,

retribution, punishment. But, on the other hand, these personages, persisting in good deeds, persisting in good words, persisting in good thoughts, speaking well of the noble, holding true views, are enjoying the fruit of true views. They, separated from the body after death, have entered into a realm of happy manifestation.’ Thus, with divine vision, pure, surpassing that of the sons of men, he sees beings departing and coming into manifestation, debased or excellent, fair or foul, righteous or evil; he sees these beings faring according to their works.

“What think you, Banyan? If this be thus, is such self-mortification perfected, or is it not perfected?”

“Of a surety, Sire, self-mortification such as this has reached the summit, has penetrated to the inmost core!”

“Truly so, Banyan! Such self-mortification has reached the summit and has penetrated to the inmost core. So, Banyan, when you said to me in the beginning, ‘What, worthy Master, is the Law of Righteousness which the Master teaches to his adherents, trained in which the Master’s adherents win serenity, recognizing this Law as the firm foundation of their spiritual life?’—this, Banyan, is the higher and more excellent discipline which I give to my adherents, through which my adherents are established in serenity, recognizing it as the firm foundation of their spiritual life.”

So far, all has gone well with the Master and his earnest hearer, Banyan, who, because of his candid spirit and willing heart, has gained the great boon which at the outset was refused. But what of the others? What of the householder Bond, and the obstreperous pilgrims? Have they been forgotten? In the answer, we shall see the happy humour and the perfect skill of the recorders of old time, who so faithfully preserved these discourses. For the record goes on to say that, when this had been said, the pilgrims burst forth in an uproar and a mighty noise, saying, “We are thus brought to naught, with our preceptors, for we know nothing better and higher than what they have taught us!”

Meanwhile, the householder Bond had been thinking, “Even though these pilgrims hold other principles, yet they are listening to what the Master says, they are giving heed to what they hear, they are entering into a better understanding.” So he spoke to the pilgrim Banyan:

“Did you not say to me, good Banyan, ‘Go to, householder! Knowest thou with whom the ascetic Gautama confers? With whom does he hold converse? With whom does he clarify his understanding? The understanding of the ascetic Gautama is injured by this habit of solitude, the ascetic Gautama does not know how to conduct a meeting, he cannot carry on a debate, he is really not in the current of things. Your ascetic Gautama, with his habit of solitude, his ignorance of meetings and debates, his limited outlook, is like a cow going round in circles! Look you, householder, if the ascetic Gautama should come to this assembly, we should shut him up with a single question, we should roll him along like an empty jar!’ Now, therefore, that the excellent Master has come, he who is perfectly awakened, a perfect Buddha, do you show that he is ignorant of meetings, that he is like a cow going round in circles, do you shut him up with a single question, and roll him along like an empty water-jar!”

Surely a situation dramatically conceived! Are we to hold that the householder Bond, for all his virtues, has fallen short of perfect tact? Or, really resentful of Banyan’s peppery phrase, is the householder Bond seizing the opportunity to avenge himself? The venerable commentator, Buddha Ghosa, suggests a third explanation, which does credit to his resourceful heart: the householder Bond is really inspired by the most excellent motives; he has brought the ticklish matter up in order to give Banyan a chance to repent, to confess and be forgiven. The recorder says that, when the householder Bond had thus spoken, the pilgrim Banyan was speechless, irritated, with drooping shoulders, chap-fallen, his mind full of confusion. Every word of this vivid description we can readily believe. The recorder does not say so, but pilgrim Banyan was in fact rolled along like an empty water-jar. The story goes serenely forward:

So when the Master saw that the pilgrim Banyan was speechless, irritated, with drooping shoulders, chap-fallen, his mind full of confusion, he spoke thus to the pilgrim Banyan:

“Is it true, Banyan, that this was spoken by you?”

“It is true, Sire, that this was spoken by me, like an idiot, like a fool, like a wrong-doer!”

“Then what think you, Banyan? Have you heard pilgrims who were

old and full of years saying, ‘Those who were Arhats in the far distant past, perfect Buddhas, these Masters came together in such assemblies, they raised their voices, boisterous and noisy, relating many kinds of common tales, such, for example, as talk of kings, talk of robbers, talk of ministers, talk of women and men and heroes, talk of the street and of the village well, all kinds of stories, traditions of lands and oceans, discussions of being and non-being, like you and these preceptors a little while ago?’ Or, on the contrary, did they say that the Masters of the far distant past sought rather the forest and the verges of the woods, making for themselves refuges there, where there is little tumult, little noise, where breezes blow through the solitudes concealed from the sons of men, in refuges fitted for meditation, even as I do now?”

“Sire, I have heard pilgrims who were old and full of years saying, ‘Those who were Arhats in the far distant past, perfect Buddhas, these Masters did not come together in such assemblies, nor did they raise their voices, boisterous and noisy, relating many kinds of common tales.’ But they said that the Masters of the far distant past sought rather the forest and the verges of the woods, making for themselves refuges there, where there is little tumult, little noise, where breezes blow through the solitudes concealed from the sons of men, in refuges fitted for meditation, even as you, Master.”

“Though you are an intelligent man, Banyan, and full of years, you did not say, ‘The Master is a Buddha, teaching the righteous law of wisdom, the Master is self-ruled, teaching the righteous law of self-mastery, the Master is serene, teaching the righteous law of serenity, the Master has crossed the ocean of delusion and teaches the righteous law whereby others may cross over, the Master has attained supreme Nirvana and teaches the righteous law whereby others may attain Nirvana.’”

When the Master had spoken thus, the pilgrim Banyan thus addressed the Master:

“A transgression overtook me, Sire, like an idiot, like a fool, like a wrong-doer, so that I thus spoke of the Master. May the Master accept my confession that a transgression overtook me, so that I may obtain the victory over it!”

“Of a truth, Banyan, a transgression overtook you today. But as you acknowledge your transgression honestly, we accept your confession. For this is the rule of the noble one, that he who, overtaken by a transgression, acknowledges and confesses it, making amends, thereby gains the mastery over that fault.

“So, Banyan, I say this: Let an intelligent man come to me, one who is without guile and free from delusion, upright in life, I will teach him and show him the law of righteousness. So practicing as he has been taught, and recognizing as the most excellent spiritual way and the supreme goal the doctrine and discipline for whose sake the sons of families come forth from the household life to the homeless life, he will attain to insight and full realization in seven years. But not to speak of seven years, Banyan, if he practise as he has been taught, he will attain in six years; nay, in five years, in four, in three, in two, in a single year; nay, even in seven months, in six, in five, in four, in three, in two, in one month; nay, in a fortnight, in seven days.”

Rajput and Brahman in Buddha's Day

Theosophical Quarterly, January, 1929

The understanding of Buddhism by Western scholars is in general marked by certain limitations. To begin with, they are inclined to lay too much stress on what may be called the negative aspect of the Buddha's teaching, as, for example, when they represent that great Teacher as denying the existence of the soul, or the existence of a Divine Principle in the universe. The deeply misleading term, Nihilism, has been applied by certain of these Western students of Pali to the Buddha's doctrine, and they have described Nirvana as unconditional death.

The view that the Buddha denied the existence of a soul in man turns on the misunderstanding, and therefore the mistranslation, of the Pali word *Atta*, which is a softened dialect form of the Sanskrit *Atma*. But besides the change of form, there is also, between Sanskrit and Pali, a profound change of meaning. It is true that in Sanskrit the word *Atma* covers a wide range, beginning as a simple pronoun, "oneself," the habitual personality, often including the body, and ranging upward through ascending stages of self-identification, and, in the great Upanishads, signifying the Higher Self, and, finally, the Supreme Self of all beings. A careful study of the Pali records of the Buddha's discourses indicates that, philosophically, the word *Atta* had suffered from the downward tendency which affected all India after the great war of the *Mahabharata*, when Kali Yuga, the Age of Evil, began. As the knowledge of the Divine Mysteries was steadily contracted within a narrowing circle of Initiates, and, it should be

added, as able Brahmans, intellectually rather than spiritually developed, gained a steadily increasing influence in the religious life of India, mystical and philosophical conceptions were narrowed, and grand principles were hardened into dogmas. The word Atma shared the general fate, with the result that, in the Buddha's day, the conception had become intellectualized, and the noble intuitional ideal of the Divine Self had been replaced by an image, firmly rooted in the mind, of a "self" limited and set apart from the great total of Being, with definite boundaries, even when it was described as infinite and everlasting. This steady concentration of thought on a "self" which was in reality only a mental image, gave rise to a type of intellectual egotism that was a far more serious barrier in the way to true spiritual progress than the passionate egotism of the man of desire, since this more dynamic egotism may rend itself apart and burn out through its very intensity. Intellectual egotism may, and often does, co-exist with all the outward forms of virtue and purity; it may be the source of characteristics, in appearance seemingly excellent, and yet devoid of true spiritual life, because their root is poisoned; or, to put the matter in another way, these "virtues" can develop only up to a certain point because there is a deep-seated conviction of limitation behind them, which eternally blocks their expansion toward the great Liberation.

Certain of the Buddha's discourses, as recorded by his disciples, make it clear that this intellectualizing of the "self" prevailed among the Brahmans, both those who lived a worldly life under the protection of the princes, and those who, following the old tradition of renunciation, had abandoned worldly life and had become homeless ascetics, often practicing bodily and mental mortifications of extreme severity, and carrying them on for years, with persevering honesty.

If we grasp this progressive intellectualization and hardening of the idea of "self", we shall find in it the clue to many different sides of the Buddha's teaching. To begin with, we shall see clearly that the presence of this obsessing thought in the minds of those who were in other ways fitted to become his disciples, made it necessary for the Buddha, as a preliminary, to break up this mental image once and for all, and, consequently, to over-emphasize and over-state the unreality of "self", thus lending colour to the view taken by Western scholars, that the Buddha flatly denied the existence of the soul. One is led to

believe that the great Teacher clearly saw that, until this inner idol was broken to atoms, there could be no beginning of spiritual life; any seeming beginning would be a false dawn, a danger, not a real progress. He further saw, we may believe, that those who successfully passed through this shattering of the interior image of "self", would in due course enter the silence beyond the storm, and that the dawn of the true Self within their hearts would supply the positive truth, the supplement of his initial negative teaching.

There are many recorded conversations of the Buddha with learned and distinguished Brahmans, both wealthy landowners and homeless ascetics, which are fully intelligible only when we have grasped this clue of the intellectualization and hardening of the idea of "self". But in reality the problem is not limited to distorted philosophical views and the need of controverting them. The tendency which carried the Brahman type of intellect so far in this direction, was strongly operative in other ways also. Rightly to understand them, and to see how they affected the life of India then, as they affect it today, we must consider the history of the Brahmans through many millenniums. And it may be said in passing that the contraction of these long millenniums into brief centuries by Western scholars, under the influence of a distorted dogmatic chronology, has immensely complicated the problem of Indian history, including the spiritual history of that ancient land.

While there has been race mixture among the Brahmans, they remain today, as they were millenniums ago, distinctly a white race; Brahmans of pure ethnical type sometimes have blue eyes, showing an ancient connection with the white-skinned, blue-eyed races of more Northern lands. Indeed, both tradition and the evidence of the oldest hymns indicate that the Brahmans, or the white race from which the Brahmans originated, entered India from the North, at a period immensely remote. It seems also certain that they were already in possession of what, for lack of a better name, may be described as a "magical" system, in part embodied in the chanting of the Vedic hymns; and that these hymns, or, rather, their manner of chanting them, represented a knowledge of magical powers, of "occult" forces, depending on the correlations of sounds and tones with forces in Nature which may be described generally as "etheric" or "electrical". If

this be true, then the Vedic “divinities”, the Fire-lord, the Wind-lord, and the rest of the Vedic hierarchies, were personifications of cosmic “electrical” forces, such as the science of today is beginning to reveal; and the “incantations” represent the technical method of controlling these forces.

There are indications that this science of subtler substances, of “celestial” electricity and magnetism, was a part of a more comprehensive science, mystical and spiritual in the fullest sense, possessed by the ancestors of the white Brahmans long ages before they crossed the Himalayas and entered India by the North-western passes; and that much of the deeper and more spiritual part of this ancient wisdom had become obscured, so far as the majority of that white race was concerned, before they crossed the Himalayan snows. The causes of this obscurity are hidden from us in an immensely remote past, but we can trace some of its effects. Indeed, these effects are clearly brought to light and underlined in certain significant passages of the great Upanishads. To make the matter concrete, we may say that the Brahmanical teaching, as represented by the hymns of the Rig Veda, does not contain, or, at any rate, does not reveal, the heart of the Mystery teaching: namely, the twin doctrines of Liberation and Reincarnation. The life beyond death, as set forth in this oldest Brahmanical system, pictures an under-world very like that of Babylonia: a limbo of shades, the wraiths of deceased ancestors, who were in danger of perishing from inanition unless they received yearly offerings of food from their descendants, in the Shraddha sacrifice. At this point, two thoughts suggest themselves: first, that this view of the life after death is a shadowy memory of a fuller version of the Mystery teaching, such as we have supposed the remote trans-Himalayan ancestors of these white Brahmans of Upper India to have possessed millenniums earlier. This is suggested by the fact that these partial and limited beliefs will yield a consistent and much more spiritual meaning, if interpreted according to the principles of symbolism which run through the great Upanishads. To illustrate: the departed “shades” must be nourished by offerings of food made by their children and grand-children; interpreted according to the principles of symbolism, this has at least two meanings. First, the “descendants” are future lives, future incarnations of the individuality; if spiritual

progress gained in one life is to be maintained, this can only be done through sacrifice and effort carried forward in life after life. Again, the "descendant", the personal man, must ceaselessly offer sacrifice, if the higher, spiritual man is to be strengthened and sustained. On the one hand, then, there are perpetual suggestions of an inner, deeply spiritual meaning within the traditional Brahmanical doctrines, a meaning going back to a primeval Mystery doctrine in the fullest import of that term. On the other hand, there are clear indications that, at least for the great majority of the white race of the Brahmans, when they entered India, that meaning had been largely obscured. The technical method of effective "incantation" had been preserved, and a clearly marked type of intelligence, capable of wonderful development, had likewise been preserved, as both technical method and intelligence are preserved among the Brahmans to the present day.

Western scholars have traced with some fullness the meeting of these white invaders with older Indian races, especially with the yellow races now called Kolarian, dwelling mainly in the central belt of mountains, and the Dravidians, so called also in ancient times, who are the very dark races of Southern India, possibly remnants of an older Lemuria, like the Melanesians of the New Guinea region. This concussion of the white race with older yellow or black races has been clearly seen by our scholars; there are records of black Dasyus, and of yellow Dasyus, in the Vedic books. But in the ancient Sanskrit books there are equally clear records of yet another race, namely, the red Rajput race, which is by no means so clearly recognized by Western scholars. Yet the Sanskrit texts are explicit. The *Mahabharata* says that "the colour of the Brahman is white; the colour of the Kshatriya (Rajput) is red"; and, that there may be no obscurity, no supposition that these words are symbolical, describing moral qualities only, the word "red" is expanded into "red-limbed" (rakta-anga). Besides rakta, a second word for "red" is used, lohita, which means the colour of fresh iron rust. And, lest the matter should still remain in doubt, keen and able observers who know the Rajputs of pure race in their own Rajputana, tell us that these Rajputs are today exactly what the *Mahabharata* said they were millenniums ago: namely, red-limbed, a red race, distinguished from the white Brahmans by skin-colour and by a series of associated ethnical characteristics.

Once we clearly grasp the ethnical, physical distinction between the white Brahmans and the red Rajputs, we have taken the first step toward unravelling the tangled skein of ancient Indian history; if we follow the clues thus found, we shall be better able, on the one hand, to understand the attitude of the Buddha toward the Brahmans of his day, and also, perhaps, to gain some insight into the account outstanding between the Rajputs and the Brahmans of our own day, with the future possibilities which these differences imply.

There are no indications that the red Rajputs were a part of the Northern race which crossed the Himalayas; for one thing, there are clear indications of white races, but not of red races, in Central Asia, from which these white invaders proximately came. But there were red races in ancient Egypt. The red granite of the Egyptian statues may have been chosen, not only for its excellent lasting qualities, but because it well represented the skin-colour of the ancient Egyptian race, as contrasted with whiter limestone or marble. This likeness of skin-colour may suggest an ethnical kinship between the ancient Egyptians and the remoter ancestors of the great races of Rajputana, whose pure descendants are a red race today. The symbol of the "eye of Osiris" has been found in Mesopotamia, probably carried thither by colonists from Egypt, and there is no difficulty in supposing that another larger colony may have reached the mouth of the Indus, the Western doorway of Rajputana, many millenniums ago.

Whatever their earlier home, the Rajputs as described in the *Mahabharata*, belong to a red-limbed, fighting race, clearly distinguished from the white Brahmans. But, to gain a full comprehension of the line of demarcation between these two great races, we must go to the far older Upanishads, and, in particular, to a vitally important passage, more than once translated and discussed, which reveals the true relation between Rajput and Brahman at a decisive point in the history of India.

Without repeating that story, we may say that it puts on record three profoundly important truths. The first of these, dramatically and also very humorously set forth, is, that at that immensely remote time, the Brahmans, here represented by a humble father and a conceited son, already possessed the Three Vedas, namely, the Rig Veda of the

hymns, the Yajur Veda of the formulae of sacrifice, and the Sama Veda of incantations; the three together constituting the practical method of using the command of cosmic "etheric" forces which was the hereditary treasure of the Brahmans. It seems further clear that the ability to operate these "etheric" forces through the rites which may broadly be described as "sacrificial ceremonies", gave the Brahmans their power and prestige, and led to their being employed (as "celestial electricians," if the expression be permitted) by rich princes and landowners, who thereupon bestowed largesse upon the successful operators, gifts of cattle and gold. The Brahmans of that earliest period of the Upanishads were thus in full possession of an ancient literary and ceremonial culture, which conferred definite and valuable powers over what may be called ethereal natural forces; this knowledge being an heirloom, what remained of the far more comprehensive knowledge of the Mysteries which their remote ancestors had possessed in some region of Central Asia, north of the Himalayas; a land that may then have flowed with milk and honey, but which slowly and steadily deteriorated under the influence of those far-reaching climatic changes that have made an arid desert of so much of Inner Asia, where streams flow down from the snow-clad mountains, to lose themselves in sandy wastes, and never reach the sea. It is altogether likely that this climatic deterioration of a once fertile region was the cause of the southward emigration of the white race, whose arrival on the upper Indus marked the beginning of a new epoch in the history of most ancient India.

The second truth which emerges from the Upanishad story is that, while the Brahmans were in full and effective possession of this hereditary scientific and literary lore, they quite certainly did not possess, as a class or race, the far more vital knowledge of the Great Mysteries, and, in particular, a knowledge of the twin doctrines which are the heart of the Mysteries: the doctrines of Liberation and Reincarnation. When the youth, "conceited, vain of his learning and proud," was asked five questions by the Rajput King—questions which quite clearly imply these twin doctrines, and which were, in fact, transparent leading questions—he failed completely to answer them; in his own words, "The Rajput asked me five questions; I did not know even one of them." If, as has been suggested, the remote trans-Himalayan ancestors of these Brahmans had of old possessed a

full knowledge of the Mysteries, of necessity including these twin doctrines, then we are compelled to come to the conclusion that, at the time of the earliest and greatest of the Upanishads, the descendants of the white invaders of India, though retaining a partial knowledge of the Mysteries, with the effective mastery of etheric, electrical forces, had so completely forgotten the more spiritual side of that knowledge, that they altogether failed to recognize its central truths, even when laid before them in an almost transparent disguise.

The third of the three truths revealed by this ancient Upanishad story is the most important; it is the clue to the whole subsequent history of India, spiritual and political, through the millenniums down to the Buddha's day, and onward to the present and the still unrevealed future. It is that, while the Brahmans, father and son, though masters of the "magical" lore of the Three Vedas, yet admitted frankly that they were wholly ignorant of the heart of the Mysteries, on the other hand, the red Rajputs, represented by King Pravahana, were in full possession of that deeper teaching. More than that, the text clearly implies that they had possessed this treasure for ages, and that it had been handed down in regular succession of Teacher and disciple in the Rajput race. This is explicitly brought out in the famous commentary attributed to the great Brahman Sankaracharya, who here uses the term *guru-parampara*, the technical meaning of which is the chain, or apostolic succession, of Teacher and disciple, through which a spiritual teaching is handed down from century to century.

Finally, we have the practical conclusion of this deeply significant story. On the occasion there described, the elder of the two Brahmans, because of his great humility and aspiration, was initiated into the Mystery teaching hereditary among the Rajputs, but which, as the texts explicitly record, "had never before been given to any Brahman." Here, then, is the key to all the later history of India, through the period of the Great War, the time of the Buddha's teaching, the later centuries of conflict between Brahman and Buddhist, and the whole modern period, as well as centuries yet to come.

The Brahman race had a great heredity, and possessed, and still possesses, remarkable gifts. If the supposition be correct, that their remote trans-Himalayan ancestors were in full possession of the

Greater Mysteries, a knowledge still testified to, by the probable symbolic meaning of the Rig Veda hymns, then this would mean an hereditary capacity for spiritual learning, which, even after the earlier knowledge of the Mysteries had been obscured, or even completely forgotten, would make it far easier for them to attain this spiritual knowledge, than would be the case with races possessing no such spiritual heredity. Yet it would also seem that the ancient tendency to obscurity would also of necessity be operative, and, in certain circumstances, might once again obscure or deflect the regained treasure of wisdom.

Both tendencies seem to have come into operation. It is certain, on the one hand, that the Brahmans, once the secret wisdom had been imparted to them by the Rajputs, made great efforts to assimilate that secret wisdom, and, on the whole, with remarkable success. The immense development of the philosophical systems of India, and in particular the system of the Vedanta, embodied in the Brahma Sutras and their commentaries, is sufficient evidence of this success. Yet in these highly philosophical systems, and even in the later Vedanta, the second tendency, the darkening of wisdom, is also evident. Intellect gained a remarkable development, but at the expense of intuition; or, to put the matter more definitely, the powers of transcendental reasoning were developed, rather than the far deeper powers of the awakened spiritual will. Brilliant knowledge took the place of real spiritual attainment, and, too often, the possessors of this intellectual brilliance devoted their powers, not to gaining spiritual growth, but to confuting their opponents. It thus comes that so many of the Sanskrit commentaries, whether of the Vedanta, the Sankhya, or the Yoga Sutras, are remarkable examples of intellectual gymnastics, rather than revelations of vital, spiritual realities. But it should be added that at every period there must have been Brahmans who overcame the defects of their qualities, and made a wiser use of their great hereditary gifts, and of the rich spiritual treasure which they had received from the Rajputs through King Pravahana.

This deeply rooted tendency toward intellectualizing and crystallizing spiritual truth marks the whole history of the Brahmans. Something was said at the outset concerning its part in the days of the Buddha. But it is clear that such a fundamental misdirection of

spiritual power as is involved in the over-intellectualizing of spiritual truths, would be certain to react strongly upon the moral nature. Perhaps it would be truer to say that the inherent tendency which, on the one hand, expressed itself in this intellectualizing, would be certain to express itself also in the moral nature, both on higher and on lower levels of that nature. On the lower level, its expression would be worldly ambition, the love of power, of wealth, the desire for rich possessions and for distinction, a deep and continued enjoyment of recognition and respect, from prince and peasant alike. This tendency to make spiritual gifts bear material dividends was, in fact, widely in evidence in the Brahmans of the Buddha's day. It was, indeed, in full play ages earlier, and a number of ironical stories in the great Upanishads turn precisely on this Brahmanical weakness. Yet this worldliness was more or less on the surface of the moral nature. Far deeper, and therefore far more dangerous, was its inner counterpart, a form of spiritual ambition and arrogance, which might easily comport with the possession of great "virtues", ascetic rigours, bodily and even psychical purity; yet the whole edifice built upon a false and dangerous foundation of spiritual pride, and an exclusiveness which, shutting out other, less gifted human beings, at the same time and by the same tendency shut out any fuller revelation of the Logos, thus barring the way to the true path of Liberation.

If we keep these historical and spiritual considerations clearly in view, we shall be able to understand in detail the recorded relations of the Buddha with the Brahmans of his day, both the rich, worldly possessors of the Three Vedas, and the exceedingly dogmatic ascetics, depicted in so many of the Pali discourses. On the one hand, we shall be able to see why the Buddha devoted so much time and effort to rebuking and diminishing the spiritual pride and arrogance of the Brahmans, and to understand his repeated insistence on the higher rank and more ancient origin of the Kshatriyas (Rajputs); on the other hand, it will be clear that, granted the distinguished spiritual hereditary and inborn gifts of the Brahman race, the Buddha was fully justified, indeed, compelled, to make special efforts to enlist the best of the Brahmans among his disciples. One may say that he had set his heart on "converting" the Brahmans from intellectual brilliance to spiritual attainment; that he strove continuously to induce these Brahmans to

become once more the disciples of the great Mysteries that, for long ages, had been the hereditary possession of the Rajputs. If he had fully succeeded in this great effort, we may well believe that the whole future history of India, and of the Eastern world, would have been transformed, in part counteracting the dark influences of Kali Yuga, and bringing a return of the Golden Age.

There were "conversions" among the Brahmans. Distinguished Brahmans sought and gained permission to become disciples, members of the Buddha's Order. Yet, apart from these individual victories, it must be admitted that, in the larger aspect of his undertaking, the Buddha failed. The evil characteristics of spiritual arrogance and ambition, with their outer counterpart of love of wealth and power, which made the Brahmans a permanent danger to the spiritual and social life of India, remained unconquered; these evil qualities, rousing themselves in fierce opposition to the Buddha's challenge, became a formidable and steadily increasing barrier in the way of his teaching, and after centuries of covert opposition, finally drove his disciples out of India, to the southern realms of Ceylon, Siam and Java, and northward across the Snowy Mountains to China, Tibet and Japan. The consequences to India were, and still are, deplorable degradation, and the establishment of a Brahmanical despotism, which is today as strong as it was when the Buddha made his mighty effort to transform the Brahmans.

Yet in justice it must be said that the Brahmans must not bear the whole burden of blame and condemnation. A heavy responsibility lies upon the Rajputs also, the warriors of the race to which the Buddha and some of his great disciples belonged. The Rajputs themselves, or many of them, had also suffered deterioration. Their warlike energy had the defects of its qualities, and they were altogether too prone to fratricidal quarrels and rivalries. This had been true for millenniums. The war of the *Mahabharata*, besides its mystical meaning brought out in the *Bhagavad Gita*, has its historical side. It was a fratricidal war among the tribes and clans of Rajputs, waged with unrelenting ferocity, and it was precisely the weakening of the Rajputs in this internecine war that gave the Brahmans their opportunity to seize and hold predominant power in India, a power fully in evidence in the Buddha's time, and not less strongly operative today.

The influence of the Rajputs, weakened in the Great War, was never fully restored, though they always possessed, and still possess, many elements of moral and spiritual greatness. But, in part because of this weakening, the Rajputs were not able to give the Buddha the support which they ought to have given, in his campaign against Brahman arrogance and ambition. And it would further appear that their hold on their great hereditary possession, the sacred Mysteries, had been so restricted and impaired, that they were not able, as a race, to recognize the magnificent opportunity presented to them by the Buddha's mission, by his incarnation among them as a Rajput.

The available evidence tends to show that the failure of the men of Rajput race adequately to support the Buddha, not less than the spiritual arrogance and ambition of the Brahmans, contributed to hold the Buddha's mission back from full success, and was, therefore, one of the causes of its ultimate and humiliating failure, so far as India was concerned, a failure which has brought in its train centuries of degradation and spiritual bondage. Such failure is no new experience for the Masters of Wisdom; but, for them, failure is ever an incitement and a challenge, a signal to try again, with renewed effort and immortal valour.

“For I Desired Mercy, and Not Sacrifice”

Theosophical Quarterly, April, 1929

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, it was the custom among Occidental students of Buddhism to maintain that the Buddha had not laboured to establish a spiritual religion, but rather a somewhat bleak and arid system of morality, whose essence was negation, and whose inexorable goal was death, complete annihilation of conscious being. It has, perhaps, already been made clear, in these Notes, that Gautama Buddha sought to establish a rich and living spiritual system, the heart of which was a realization of the hierarchy of Masters, above whom was the still higher and more august Celestial Hierarchy, and that the rules of conduct, of meditation and intellectual training, which hold so large a place in the Buddha's teaching, are precisely the rules of discipleship, a lucid and detailed description of what the disciple must do and learn, in order to draw closer to the Masters of Wisdom, to come consciously within the aura of the Lodge of Masters; to follow in the footsteps of those great Beings, and, if he win full victory, to join their ranks and help to bear their burden. And this has been shown, not from the more transcendental and mystical texts of Northern Buddhism, but from the Pali Suttas of the Southern School, the School of Ceylon and Siam: these most ancient and authentic Buddhist records are “full of the sparkle of esotericism,” the heart and essence of that highest Occultism which our Theosophical studies enable us to recognize.

Our studies should have shown us this, and something more. We should have come to understand that the Buddha had clearly in view,

and wisely and consistently laboured for, a great moral and spiritual reformation of India; for one reason, because India then represented, and even now represents, an immense investment of spiritual capital, an effort of millenniums by the Lodge of Masters; for many centuries a submerged and buried capital, almost an investment that has gone astray; yet an investment which the Lodge is bound by spiritual law to recover, though the effort may take centuries.

In the "Notes and Comments" for January, 1929 [see "Rajput and Brahman in Buddha's Day"], an attempt was made to discover what this spiritual investment was, and through the operation of what forces of human sin and folly it became submerged. It was there suggested that the spiritual history of India was in the main the history of two great and ancient races: the red Rajputs, coming, perhaps, from mystical Egypt; and the white Brahmans, who, at some time a good many millenniums before our era, came down from Central Asia through the high passes of the Himalayas, and, beginning among the Five Rivers which unite to form the Indus, in time spread southward and eastward through the Ganges valley. The red Rajputs, when we get our first view of them, were already in possession of the Greater Mysteries, which are imparted through Initiation; those teachings which our Western scholars mistakenly think of as the mystical "speculations" of the Great Upanishads; mistakenly, because they are the fruit, not of speculation, but of spiritual experience, of direct vision. The Brahmans, those of the white race who settled in the plains of India, do not appear to have known the Greater Mysteries. Of this, there is twofold evidence: first, the often stated fact that, in the hymns of the Rig Veda, the spiritual heritage of the Brahmans, there is no teaching of Reincarnation and Liberation, the twin doctrines of the Mysteries; and second, and even more explicit, the statement of the two greatest Upanishads, that these twin doctrines had never reached the Brahmans until they were imparted to the father of Shvetaketu by the Rajput King-Initiate Pravahana; until that time these teachings "had been among all peoples the hereditary teaching of the Rajputs alone." But the Brahmans had nevertheless a great and exceptional spiritual heredity; their Vedic hymns are full of remote echoes of hidden wisdom, of a teaching which, perhaps, their earliest ancestors had fully and consciously possessed on the high plateaux of Central

Asia, unnumbered millenniums before the descent through the snowy passes to the Indian plains. In virtue of this remarkable spiritual heredity the Brahmans, as soon as the Rajputs opened to them the doors of the hidden wisdom, became apt pupils, thenceforth supplying many recruits to the Lodge of Masters.

As against this credit, two less advantageous factors must be counted. The first is the tendency of the Brahman mind to over-intellectual development, as a result of which much of the practical mysticism of the Rajputs was transformed into fine-drawn metaphysics; the commentaries of the groups of Sutras, for example, are filled with long and subtle disputations, loaded with the contentious reasonings of opposing advocates. What belonged to the spirit and the soul was dragged down to the plane of the mind, and there flattened out into lifeless intellectualism.

The second adverse factor had a wider reach. The intellectual "superiority" of the Brahmans reappeared as ambition, which by degrees sought to dominate, and did in course of time completely dominate, the whole mental, moral and social life of India, and, to a large degree, also its political life, a domination which lasted for millenniums. It would seem that, as an echo of their earlier and fuller spiritual inheritance, the ancestors of the Brahmans, when they entered Northern India, still possessed what one may call a system of practical magic based upon incantation, or the Occult correlations of sound, and on an understanding of personal, mental and psychical "magnetism." This system they used, from the beginning, to establish their power and influence. They sought and received rewards from those of the princes who were not Initiates, for the performance of magical ceremonies whose general purpose was to secure success and prosperity by influencing and dominating psychic conditions, by establishing a favourable and positive psychic atmosphere, much as a magnetically gifted orator establishes an ascendancy over his audience, largely by using, even though unconsciously, the same Occult powers of the voice, which carries and spreads his personal magnetism. So, in the Upanishads, we find many stories of Brahman practitioners of this magical system of magnetic sound invited by princes to perform ceremonies making for success. And we find that they receive as their reward large herds of cattle, in which, as in other

ancient lands, wealth mainly consisted. Many of these earlier ceremonies centred about an altar on which burned a sacred fire, symbol of the Hidden Fire of the Spirit, and personified as the god Agni, Lord of the Sacred Fire, to whom are addressed the first series of hymns of the Rig Veda. Worship of the Hidden Fire, symbolized by an ever-burning sacred flame, is of immemorial antiquity; it goes back to the immensely remote time before a branch of the white Central Asian race made its way to prehistoric Persia, carrying with it the spiritual essence of Zoroastrianism.

Thus "sacrifice," in this earliest period, would appear to have consisted wholly of adoration of the sacred, perpetual fire, into which melted butter was poured as an offering of consecrated fuel, symbolizing the offering of the personal powers to the divine Spiritual Fire, the Logos. There was a second form of rite, namely, the Soma "sacrifice," with which the Sama Veda is largely concerned. The Soma appears to have been a stimulant, or narcotic, which, by rendering quiescent the physical powers, gave the psychical powers freer play, thus liberating the faculties of clairvoyance and clairaudience, much as these powers may be liberated today by the methods of hypnotism. It is true that there was also a "divine Soma," a genuine spiritual influx, of which the natural Soma became the symbol; yet it seems certain that the physical Soma, the magical narcotic, was widely used in the system of practical magic hereditary among the white Brahmans. It may be noted, in passing, that a very similar cult exists to the present day among the remoter pagan tribes who inhabit the high mountains of Western Mexico; they prepare a magical potion from certain kinds of cactus, which they hold sacred, and by its use their magicians induce "prophetic" states, that is, psychical states of clairvoyance and clairaudience. To make the parallel closer, the aboriginal Mexicans have a cycle of immemorial songs or incantations used in these rites only, which may well be compared with the verses of the Sama Veda, chanted by the Brahmans at the Soma sacrifice.

Besides these two earlier "sacrifices" of Agni and Soma, a third and more sinister form of "sacrifice" gradually established itself; namely, the sacrifice of animals, with profuse offerings of blood, in the forms which play so great a part in the system of worship embodied in the book of Leviticus.

For these animal sacrifices, so widely spread both in space and time, it would seem that three different motives may be assigned. First, the desire to gain the goodwill of the supernatural powers for the flocks and herds by an offering corresponding to the first fruits of the fields. Second, there was the quite intelligible but not quite creditable wish of the priesthood to obtain a free supply of food: "Thou shalt bring the meat offering that is made of these things unto Yahweh . . . and that which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons' . . ." The third purpose is more sinister; it rests on the belief that freshly shed blood is a potent aid to invocations of ghostly powers, whether human or elemental. It is, in effect, a phase of what is called black magic.

It is probable that all three motives entered into the gradual adoption of animal sacrifices by the Brahman priesthood, and it is also probable that the system of animal sacrifices had prevailed for ages among the darker races of Southern India, among whom many forms of black magic, generally associated with mesmeric influences, have always prevailed. At any rate, it is certain that the Brahmans very generally adopted the practice of animal sacrifices as an additional means of extending the despotic power of their priest-craft over the princes and peoples of India. Already in the oldest Upanishads there is much evidence of their success in this effort.

When the Buddha began his mission, this system of animal sacrifice was firmly established. It need hardly be said that in it his Order, pledged to abstain from animal food and from the taking of life, could have no part whatever. But it seems clear that the Buddha's plan went far beyond the establishment of an Order as a direct recruiting ground for the Lodge. He desired also to bring about the redemption of the Brahmans, to break up the great, tyrannous system of priest-craft, and so to purify the Brahman race that its exceptional qualities and gifts might be turned in the direction of spiritual development and attainment. To gain this end, he worked along several lines. First, he made many appeals to the best and highest elements in the character of the Brahmans, to their ancient, submerged spiritual heredity, and in fact succeeded in winning many disciples from their ranks. How far the Brahmanical minds of these new Buddhists were influential in changing his directly practical teachings into the somewhat wire-drawn

dialectics of certain schools of Buddhism, just as earlier Brahmanical minds had metamorphosed the spiritual discipline of the old Rajput schools into controversial philosophical systems, is an interesting subject of inquiry which we cannot at present pursue.

The Buddha made a second attack on Brahman priest-craft by flatly denying, at every opportunity, the claim of the Brahmans to rank above the Rajputs, or Kshatriyas, and to hold the highest place among the four great classes of Indian society. The Buddha in general refused to discuss questions of cosmogony, or, indeed, any questions which did not bear immediately on discipleship. It is of immense interest that on almost the only occasion when he did speak of cosmogony, giving an exceedingly interesting account of the development of the early races of mankind in the present world-period, the practical moral to which this cosmogonical teaching was made to lead was the superior rank and antiquity of the Kshatriyas, or Rajputs, and the inferiority of the Brahman priests. So consistently is this purpose carried out that, while in enumerations of the four classes in all Brahmanical books, the Brahmans invariably stand first, this is never the case in the Buddhist scriptures, which as invariably give the precedence to the Kshatriyas. This became such an ingrained habit with the Buddhist recorders that even when they tell of a Brahman enumerating the four classes, they make him yield the first place to the Kshatriya, something which no Brahman would conceivably have done.

Finally, the Buddha threw the great weight of his influence against the whole system of animal sacrifice, which was one of the means through which the Brahman priest-craft riveted its power upon the people. He worked toward this end both by example and by precept. The disciples of his Order were pledged, as we have seen, not to take life. Further, his teaching of Karma, and of Liberation through spiritual effort, ran directly contrary to the Brahmanical system of expiation through the sacrifice of animals; it was the exact equivalent of Paul's affirmation: "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The Buddha further faced the problem directly, in a discourse which is recorded in one of the Suttas named after the Brahman Kutadanta, who is the central figure of the episode there related. It is a part of the fine, pervading humour of the Suttas that the name of this distinguished Brahman means "peak-tooth," as

though with reference to his creophagous character.

The recorders of the Sutta begin, as always, by painting in a rich Oriental background, against which the leading figures presently come forth, represented dramatically, by their own words, rather than descriptively. We are told that the Buddha was journeying through the country of the Magadhas, accompanied by about five hundred disciples, and that, coming to the settlement of Khanumata, he was encamped with his followers in a garden where young mango trees were planted; their deep shade offering a pleasant resting place.

Now it happened that a part at least of the land of this region, very fertile and teeming with life, had been bestowed by the King of the Magadhas, Seniya Bimbisara, on the distinguished Brahman Kutadanta, just as large tracts are granted to Brahmans in Rajputana to day; the Brahman Kutadanta had succeeded to that extent in establishing himself and acquiring worldly wealth. Perhaps as an act of gratitude, he had formed the design of offering a great sacrifice of animals: seven hundred bulls, seven hundred bullocks, seven hundred heifers, seven hundred goats and seven hundred rams had been assembled, to be slaughtered for the glory of Kutadanta, and many Brahmans had gathered together, to take part in the sacrifice, and, we may suppose, in “the leavings of the sacrifice,” according to the phrase of the *Bhagavad Gita*. When the Buddha and his disciples encamped in the mango garden, the fame of his coming went abroad among the people, both the Brahmans and the householders of Khanumata, and they said among themselves: “The ascetic Gautama, in truth, the son of the Shakyas, he who went forth from the Shakya family, has come with many of his disciples and is encamped here in the mango garden. Concerning the Master Gautama fair fame has gone abroad, that this Master is an Arhat, a perfect Buddha, full of wisdom and virtue, a welcome one, teaching the way of salvation to devas and men. He teaches a law of righteousness lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle, lovely in its consummation. It is good, in truth, to go to see such an Arhat as he!”

So the Brahmans and householders of Khanumata went forth in larger and lesser groups toward the mango garden.

Now, at this very time it happened that the distinguished Brahman

Kutadanta had mounted to the upper terrace of his dwelling, shaded and cherished by cooling breezes, to enjoy a “day-sleep,” as the Pali phrase goes, and, seeing the groups of Brahmans and householders going past toward the mango garden, he asked his major-domo what this concourse might mean. His major-domo repeated to him what the Brahmans and householders were saying to each other, concerning the coming of the ascetic Gautama and his high spiritual rank.

Wisely and logically the Brahman Kutadanta determined within himself that, since he was contemplating a great sacrifice, and since the ascetic Gautama was reputed to be learned concerning sacrifice, it would be well to visit the ascetic Gautama, and to consult him regarding the proper consummation of the threefold sacrifice with its sixteen concomitants. So he sent the major-domo to the Brahmans and householders of Khanumata, who were on their way to the mango garden, asking them to await his coming, for he too desired to visit the ascetic Gautama. So the major-domo carried the message.

The recorders of the story, with their love for round numbers, say that several hundred Brahmans had come to be present at the great sacrifice which the Brahman Kutadanta had prepared. When the major-domo brought his message, they asked somewhat incredulously among themselves whether it could be true that the distinguished Brahman Kutadanta was planning to visit the ascetic Gautama.

The Brahmans raised their voices in protest, declaring that it was not seemly that the highly distinguished Brahman Kutadanta should visit the ascetic Gautama; a Brahman deeply versed in Vedic lore, a teacher of disciples, a holder of rich lands from the king of the Magadhas, and, withal, a man venerable and full of years. On the contrary, it would be more fitting that the ascetic Gautama, who was a much younger man, should first visit the distinguished Brahman Kutadanta. It would seem, then, that this event took place comparatively early in the Buddha’s long mission, while the fact of his relative youth was still very noticeable.

But the worthy Kutadanta held to his purpose. The ascetic Gautama was an Arhat, a Buddha, supremely enlightened; moreover neither in birth nor lineage did he at any point yield to the good Brahman himself. So Kutadanta would go, in spite of protests, to visit

the ascetic Gautama.

So not only did he go, but carried with him the whole Brahmanical company, winning them over to his view. So they all went together to the mango garden and greeted the Master, taking their seats in silence beside him.

Then Kutadanta the Brahman spoke thus:

“It has been heard by me, Sir Gautama, that the ascetic Gautama knows well the successful conduct of the threefold sacrifice with its sixteen concomitants. But I myself do not know well the successful conduct of the threefold sacrifice with its sixteen concomitants, yet I desire to offer a great sacrifice. It were a fortunate thing for me, if the worthy Gautama would instruct me concerning the successful conduct of the threefold sacrifice.”

The situation is deeply humorous, and was so felt by every devout Buddhist hearer of the Sutta. That the Master of mercy should be consulted regarding the right method of slaughtering hundreds of bulls and rams, and that, instead of reproaching Kutadanta and condemning the whole proceeding without stint, the Master should appear to give the advice which was asked for, of necessity appealed to the keen sense of humour which runs through these ancient books, a humour whose characteristic is, that it is invariably coupled with a high spiritual purpose. Further, it is profoundly characteristic of the Buddha’s method, that he put himself as far as possible in the position of his questioner, accepted that questioner’s views, and then proceeded, always from the questioner’s standpoint, so to unfold the principles involved, as to bring the questioner gradually to accept the truer, deeper view, to adopt the principles of the Buddha’s teaching. In pursuance of this wise method, the Buddha said nothing to the Brahman Kutadanta regarding the evils of the system of animal sacrifices or the sin of taking life. Instead, he answered with his habitual courtesy:

“Hear, then, Brahman, paying good heed, and I shall declare the matter.” “So be it, Sir!” the Brahman Kutadanta replied. The Master said:

“In by-gone days, Brahman, there was a king, Maha-vijita by name, whose kingdom was great, who had much wealth and stored-up gold

and silver, with great treasure of wealth and grain, with full treasury and barns. Once, when the king had withdrawn himself in secret, he reflected, thinking, 'I possess all the good things a mortal can desire, the wide circle of the earth I have won for my pleasure. It would be well for me to make a great sacrifice, to gain long life and prosperity!' And so King Maha-vijita summoned his household priest and told him the thought that had come to him when he was withdrawn into solitude, and of his purpose to make a great sacrifice, securing long life and prosperity, and asking to be instructed as to how the sacrifice should be made to this end.

"Thus addressed, the Brahman household priest replied to the king, saying that the king's realm was disturbed and troubled, beset with highwaymen and robbers. Should the king levy a contribution at such a time for a great sacrifice, the king would err. Or should the king determine to visit these evil-doers with swift punishment, this also would not avail, for those who escaped would continue as before to do deeds of violence. But there is a better way: not to punish, but to help. Wherever there are those in the king's realm who are engaged in husbandry, let the king give them seed-corn. Wherever there are those in the king's realm who are engaged in trading, let the king give them money. Wherever there are those in the king's realm who are in the king's service, let the king give them food and payment. Then these men will no longer trouble the peace of the king's land, the revenues of the king's realm will increase, the land will enjoy peace, men will rejoice and dandle their sons in their arms, and none in the kingdom will bolt his door.

"The king did even so, and all went as the Brahman household priest had said. The revenues of the king's realm increased, the land enjoyed peace, men rejoiced and dandled their sons in their arms, and none bolted his door.

"Then the king summoned the Brahman, his household priest, and said, 'Tranquillity is restored, revenue is increased, contentment reigns. I desire now, Brahman, to make a great sacrifice. Instruct me how this may be done, for long life and prosperity!'

"Thereupon the Brahman, the household priest, counselled the king to gain the consent of four great classes of his subjects to the

sacrifice: first, the Kshatriyas who governed lands under the king; second, the Kshatriyas who were ministers in the king’s service; third, the Brahmans of distinction, whether in the country or in the cities; fourth, the rich householders, whether in the country or in the cities. The king sought their consent, and all gladly gave it. Thus all these classes were made partakers of the sacrifice.”

Then the Buddha enumerated eight virtues, eight gifts and graces which the king possessed, and in like manner four virtues possessed by the Brahman, the household priest. These twelve gifts, together with the consent of the four classes, making sixteen in all, became the sixteen concomitants of the sacrifice. And further, a generous attitude of the king’s mind, thrice repeated, completed the threefold nature of the sacrifice, according to the traditional rule. The Buddha continued:

“At that sacrifice, verily, Brahman, no cattle were slain, nor any goats, nor fowl, nor swine, nor was any living thing deprived of life; no trees were felled, nor was sacred grass cut to strew upon the ground; nor was any compulsion used upon those who helped. Only clarified butter, oil, fresh butter, curds, honey and the juice of sugar-cane were offered in making that sacrifice.”

Many beneficent results followed in that ancient realm. And among those who heard the Buddha, the results were not less happy. All the Brahmans applauded, saying, “That was a true sacrifice! That was a successful sacrifice!”

All, indeed, applauded excepting only Kutadanta. Then the Brahmans who had come with him asked him whether he did not approve. Kutadanta replied: “I do not withhold approval from what the ascetic Gautama has said, but this thought came to me: ‘The ascetic Gautama does not say, “Thus did I hear,” nor does he say, “Thus should it be!” The ascetic Gautama says instead, “Thus it was.”’ Therefore I thought within myself, ‘Of a truth the ascetic Gautama was at that time the king, or the Brahman, the household priest!’” The Buddha answered that he was the priest.

Thereupon Kutadanta asked whether there might not be some better, higher sacrifice, noble though that ancient sacrifice had been. And in answer the Buddha revealed to Kutadanta the path of discipleship, as the true offering. Kutadanta was completely won, and

straightway sought and gained admission to the Master's Order.

There remains the practical outcome of the story. The Brahman Kutadanta countermanded the great sacrifice that he had planned, and gave orders that the cattle and sheep and goats he had assembled should be spared, and should live their lives in peace. In that instance, at any rate, the sacrifice of animals came to an end.

Concerning the larger results of this teaching, it may be profitable to quote what Professor T. W. Rhys Davids wrote, a good many years ago, concerning this Sutta:

“On this question, as on the question of caste or social privileges, the early Buddhists took up, and pushed to its logical conclusions, a rational view held by others. And on this question of sacrifice their party won. The Vedic sacrifices, of animals, had practically been given up when the long struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism reached its close. Isolated instances of such sacrifices are known even down to the Muhammadan invasion. But the battle was really won by the Buddhists and their allies. And the combined ridicule and earnestness of our Sutta will have had its share in bringing about the victory.”

This is, perhaps, too optimistic; for it is certain that the sacrifice of animals, under Brahman auspices, lingers in India today, for example, at Kalighat. Further, it is worth noting that the sacrifice of the story, which met with such hearty approval from the Buddha's listeners, namely, the pouring of melted butter or oil into the consecrated fire, was more truly the original Vedic sacrifice, as contrasted with the sacrifice of animals, which was probably taken over from the dark races of Southern India.

Finally, Rhys Davids speaks of the long struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism coming to an end. We should remember that it ended in the complete defeat of the Buddhists, and in their violent expulsion from India, a violence whose heavy Karma still weighs on that afflicted land. Brahman priest-craft was completely triumphant. Though the Buddha may have won the lesser victory, the partial abolition of animal sacrifices, he failed in the great heroic effort, the spiritual redemption of the whole Brahman order with its rich possibilities for good. There have been, and are, many noble and pure-

hearted Brahmans; nevertheless, the Brahman order, as a whole, remains a tyrannous and ambitious priest-craft, the greatest barrier to the spiritual regeneration of India.

The Ideal Brahman

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It has been suggested that the principal purpose of the Buddha, in all that he did and taught, was the founding of an Order which should train disciples, not for abstract or general ends, but for the definite goal of Chelaship. It may be added that every detail of his words and acts gains new light from the recognition of this primary aim.

It has also been said that the Buddha made a great and deeply considered effort to influence the Brahmans of his day, for several different yet harmonious reasons. First, in consonance with the principal purpose noted above, he clearly recognized that the Brahmans as a class offered exceptionally promising material for Chelaship. They were endowed with spiritual gifts of great value; they had a long spiritual heredity; many of them were blest with ardent aspiration and a burning desire for spiritual attainment, as the result of that spiritual heredity. To repeat a phrase that has been used before: the Brahmans as a class represented an immense spiritual investment; the Buddha ardently desired to aid this great investment to bear fruit, and to bear fruit abundantly.

This is the brighter side of the picture, and it is still, to a certain degree, a true account of the Brahmans. But there was also the darker side. The Buddha, seeing and knowing the universe face to face, clearly perceived certain long-standing dangers in the position of the Brahmans of his day; the danger of spiritual and temporal ambition; the danger that the Brahmans as a class, instead of giving spiritual and

intellectual life to their land, might become a tyrannous despotism, entrenching themselves, not only through superior intellectual vigour, but by all the arts of superstition and priest-craft; so that, in spite of the genuinely spiritual minority among them, they might, as a class, become a burden and a menace to India, a source of darkness rather than light.

Seeing these menacing possibilities, the Buddha made a strong effort, sustained through a long series of years, to call the Brahmans back to the high ideals which were in their spiritual heredity, and which had been reinforced when the King Initiates of the Rajput race had accepted Brahmans as their disciples, as recorded in the great Upanishads; a strong and sustained effort at the same time to draw them back from the dangerous path, which, as a class, they were already entering. Unhappily, it must be added that, on the whole, this splendid and generous effort failed. Many spiritually gifted Brahmans were drawn to the Buddha, and therefore to the Lodge, by the splendour of his character and his teaching, as Brahmans have been drawn to the Lodge through the intervening centuries. But the Brahmans as a class went headlong forward on the dangerous path which the Buddha so clearly saw opening before them. They drove his teachings and his Order from India, and they have in fact become the most astute and oppressive priest-craft in the world.

So much in introduction to one of the Suttas, which shows, first, the way in which the Buddha made his potent effort to draw the Brahmans back again to their ancient ideals of a spiritual life; then, the high qualities, gifts and endowments of certain Brahmans, which so fully justified this effort; and, finally, the forces of reaction and obscurantism which were working in opposition to the Buddha's effort, and which, so far as the whole Brahman caste is concerned, finally gained complete mastery over spiritual aspiration.

The Sutta, like so many of the Suttas, tells a story, and tells it well. And the story is suffused with that fine ironical humour which is characteristic of so many of these records of the Buddha's teachings. The dramatic elements in the tale are brought out with finesse and skill, and with a delicate appreciation of their ironical colouring.

The Sutta follows a conventional form, and contains many

repetitions, and much that is found in other Suttas. Rightly to estimate these qualities of iteration and convention, we should keep in mind that while we think of a volume of Suttas as a book to be read, the Suttas were originally stories to be told, and to be told to separate audiences, each of which might hear one story and only one. Therefore it was imperative that this story should be told in such a way that it would easily be remembered; hence the repetitions of parts of other Suttas, and the iterations within the Sutta itself. Further, each Sutta, each story designed thus to be told, must carry the pure essence of the Buddha's teachings, so that it might supply spiritual sustenance to those who might hear no second Sutta. Indeed it is an explicit condition of the collection of Twelve Suttas on which we are drawing, that each one of them should contain the Buddha's teaching and should contain it in identical terms; therefore, while the stories differ, and their differences are exceedingly informative, telling us a great deal regarding the Buddha, his methods and his message, yet the essence of all the stories is the same; each one would serve for the instruction of a disciple, and would set his feet firmly on the path of life.

The Sutta with which we are at present concerned bears the name of the Brahman Sonadanda, that is "Golden-staff" or "Golden Sceptre", a name which is in itself an outline of his character. But we are given much more than an outline; the personality of Sonadanda is so fully depicted that we see both his strength and his weakness as a representative Brahman; the strength which justified the Buddha's effort, and the weakness which, growing and increasing in the Brahmans as a caste, was fated to defeat the Buddha's effort, and to bring that effort to frustration.

The Master, we are told, was journeying through the Anga country, accompanied by five hundred disciples, and had settled for a time at Champa, on the bank of Gaggara lake, a body of artificial water which had been excavated through the piety of Queen Gaggara as a halting place for Pilgrims. By the lake there was a grove of the heavily scented Champaka trees, from whose white flowers, like glove-fingers, is extracted the perfume known by the Malay name, Ylang Ylang. Beneath these trees the pilgrims rested.

Now it happened that the Brahman, Sonadanda, of the Golden-

staff, dwelt not far from Queen Gaggara's lake; indeed, King Seniya Bimbisara, the ruler of Magadha, had made a grant to the Brahman, Sonadanda, of much fertile land, arable land, pasture and woodland, with many villages. So, quite unobtrusively and without comment, the narrator touches on the first danger which overshadowed the Brahmans; their willingness to lay up treasure upon earth, rather than treasure in heaven, and their persuasive way with kings and princes, who had it in their power to make rich gifts of land.

The coming of the Buddha was at once noised abroad. The Brahmans and the householders of Champa began to speak to each other concerning the coming of the Buddha to Gaggara lake, saying that he was reputed to be an Arhat, fully awakened and illuminated, richly endowed with holiness and wisdom, blessed, unequalled as a guide to the sons of men willing to be taught, an instructor of gods and men, a Master, a Buddha; that he of himself had seen and known the universe face to face, the bright worlds above, the dark worlds below, the world of men with its ascetics and Brahmans; and that he was ready to impart his wisdom to others, making known to them the truth, lovely in its beginning, lovely in its development, lovely in its perfection, making known the higher life. Finally, they told each other that it was an excellent thing to go to see such a Master.

So they began to gather together in groups and bands, making ready to set forth to where the Buddha was, at Gaggara lake.

The stir and noise of their going came to the ears of Sonadanda, as he rested on the upper terrace of his house, and, when he asked its meaning, the steward of his household told him that all the Brahmans were on their way to visit the ascetic Gautama, for so the Buddha was called by those who were not his disciples. The narrator of the story said that the number of the Brahmans at Champa, who were thus so strongly drawn toward the Buddha, whether by genuine aspiration or by curiosity, was about five hundred.

When the steward described their errand to Sonadanda, he at once made up his mind that he also would visit the Buddha, and sent word to the Brahmans asking them to wait, as he also intended to visit the ascetic Gautama in their company.

Then comes exactly the same discussion as in the story of the

Brahman Kutadanta; the Brahmans try to persuade Sonadanda that it is not consonant with his dignity to pay the first visit to the ascetic, Gautama, the more so, that the ascetic Gautama is a much younger man. But Sonadanda holds firmly to his purpose, declaring that the ascetic, Gautama, is his equal in all points of family and personal distinction, while as a Buddha, fully enlightened, he is unquestionably superior. So, both through his desire to see the Buddha, and through the element of humility which made him willing and eager to admit his own inferiority, the nobler elements in Sonadanda's character are suggested by the narrator; just as his distinguished position, both spiritual and worldly, is suggested by the insistence of the Brahmans that the ascetic Gautama should pay the first visit to Sonadanda, even while they themselves, though by no means without pride in their dignity as Brahmans, were ready to pay the first visit to the ascetic Gautama.

After the narrator has thus impressed upon his hearers both the eminent dignity of the Brahman Sonadanda, and the finer qualities of aspiration and humility in his character, he proceeds to reveal certain weaknesses in Sonadanda, characteristic of the Brahmans as a class, and he does this with the artless artfulness which runs through all these stories.

Sonadanda indeed carried his point, and set forth in the company of the admiring Brahmans, stoutly asserting that the greatness of the ascetic Gautama was such that, if he were two hundred miles away, he, Sonadanda, would set forth to visit him with pilgrim's scrip and staff.

Yet, while so affirming, and drawing near to Gaggara lake, where the Buddha was encamped with his disciples, Sonadanda was full of doubts and hesitations, whose motive was sheer vanity.

He wished to seek wisdom from the Buddha, to ask him questions; but his vanity instantly suggested to him how unpleasant it would be, should the ascetic Gautama say, "You should not have asked your question in that way; you should have asked it in this way!" Sonadanda immediately conjured up a picture of his Brahman admirers, and perhaps also the disciples of the ascetic Gautama, mocking him and saying that he, Sonadanda the Brahman, did not even know how to ask a question properly. Then again, supposing that the ascetic

Gautama were to ask a question, and Sonadanda should try to answer it, the ascetic Gautama might say, "The question should not be answered in that way, in this way should it be explained!" And once again the lively vanity of Sonadanda called up a picture of his Brahman friends rejoicing in his discomfiture. The Buddhist narrator skilfully and dramatically shows that the Brahman Sonadanda, even while on his way to seek wisdom from one whom he held to be a great Master, was in reality more concerned about himself than about the Master. It is a fine piece of portraiture, and it applies to others beside the ancient and venerable Brahman Sonadanda.

So overwrought by these imaginings of vanity was Sonadanda, that he even thought of turning back to his comfortable home without visiting the Buddha. He decided that this course would be inexpedient, but his decision was prompted not by aspiration, but once more by vanity. For he pictured his companions as saying, "Sonadanda the Brahman is a fool, obstinate, proud; he is afraid to meet the ascetic Gautama; after going so far, he turns back!" And Sonadanda added in his mind, that, if they spoke thus openly of him, his fame would suffer, and, if his fame suffered, his earnings would decrease. On the whole, the heart of the Brahman Sonadanda is sufficiently revealed.

So he went forward with his companions to the grove of Champaka trees by the lake, where the Buddha was surrounded by his disciples. He greeted the Master courteously and sat down beside him, but his thoughts continued to revolve around himself: "If only the ascetic Gautama would ask me something about my own subject, the science of the Three Vedas! then I should be able to win his admiration by my answer!"

The narrator says that the Buddha clearly saw this thought in Sonadanda's mind and, with courteous kindness, proceeded to comply with Sonadanda's wish. So he said to Sonadanda:

"O Brahman, what are the qualities which, in the view of the Brahmans, a man should possess in order to be a Brahman, so that he might truthfully say 'I am a Brahman'?"

Sonadanda was immensely relieved: "Exactly what I desired has happened", he congratulated himself; "the ascetic Gautama has asked

me a question in my own subject! I hope my answer will win his admiration!"

So he drew himself up, and, looking around on the gathering of Brahmans and disciples, spoke thus to the Buddha:

"In the view of the Brahmans, Gautama, in order to be a Brahman, so that he may truthfully say, 'I am a Brahman', a man should possess five endowments. And what are these five endowments?"

"First, Sire, a Brahman should be well born on the mother's side and on the father's side, of stainless descent through seven generations.

"Second, he should know by heart, and be able rightly to intone the Mantras of the three Vedas; he should be a Master of Vedic studies and the traditions also; he should be able to recognize the bodily marks of a great man.

"Third, he should be handsome, fair, good to look upon.

"Fourth, he should be perfected in virtue.

"Fifth, he should be wise and learned, able to perform the Vedic sacrifice of the holy fire."

As a basis of criticism, it would be well to compare this list of qualities with the qualifications for Chelaship, as set forth, for example, in the Crest Jewel of Wisdom.

The Buddha had, without doubt, a similar standard in mind, but he expressed his criticism by indirection, leading Sonadanda on by what the Latin poet calls the expedient of the diminishing heap.

So he said to Sonadanda: "But of these five qualifications, O Brahman, would it be possible to omit one, and yet describe such a man truthfully as a Brahman?"

"Yes, Gautama", Sonadanda answered; "fairness of face could be omitted. If such a man possessed the other four, namely, birth, Vedic studies, virtue and wisdom, he could truthfully be called a Brahman."

"But of these four, would it be possible to omit one, and yet truthfully to call the man a Brahman?"

"Yes, Gautama, Vedic studies might be omitted. If such a man possessed the other three, namely, birth, virtue and wisdom, he could truthfully be called a Brahman."

"But of these three would it be possible to omit one, and truthfully

to call the man a Brahman!”

“Yes, Gautama, birth could be omitted. If such man possessed virtue and wisdom, he could truthfully be called a Brahman.”

It is evident that the good Sonadanda, led on by the Buddha’s skilful questioning, and preoccupied by the desire to give an answer that would win the Buddha’s admiration, was going much farther than orthodox Brahmans would be willing to follow him.

They might be willing to waive good looks and even Vedic studies, since a Brahman boy might not yet have begun his studies, while not all Brahmans attained to eminent knowledge of the Vedic texts. But for a caste which was already entrenching itself in hereditary privilege, and claiming to be sacrosanct by birth alone, to exclude birth as a qualification for Brahmanhood was not admissible. Therefore we are prepared for the immediate, vigorous protest which the Buddhist recorder tells us, was raised by Sonadanda’s Brahman companions:

“Say not so, noble Sonadanda, say not so! He is belittling our colour, our Mantras and our birth! Sonadanda is going over to the teaching of the ascetic Gautama!”

The recorder represents the Buddha as coming down somewhat heavily upon the protesting Brahmans, bidding them keep silent unless they thought that the distinguished Sonadanda was too ignorant and inept to speak for himself. But the recorder further represents Sonadanda as bravely taking up the cudgels in his own defence, and, incidentally, pressing forward the discussion in the direction of the conclusion which the Buddha desired to reach.

Sonadanda’s nephew had accompanied him, a comely youth, Angaka, by name. Pointing to him, Sonadanda said:

“Do the worthy Brahmans see our nephew Angaka?”

Sonadanda, receiving an affirmative answer, went on to characterize Angaka in a way that was somewhat too flattering to the young man’s vanity, and by implication, to the vanity of Angaka’s worthy uncle. Angaka, he said, was the living embodiment of the admirable qualities which had been described as characterizing the perfect Brahman. He was of spotless lineage, handsome, well versed in Vedic studies, virtuous and wise.

“But”, Sonadanda went on to say, “if Angaka should be guilty of

taking life, of theft, of unchastity, lying and drunkenness, what would his birth, his comeliness, his Vedic Mantras profit him?"

It is worth noting that Sonadanda has so completely come over to the Buddha's position, that he is here citing the five moral laws of the Buddha's Order as the standard of righteousness; and he goes on to say that, if one be perfected in virtue and wisdom, he may truthfully be called a Brahman. This is really the expression of the Buddha's ideal, and of his purpose: to call the Brahmans back to the true standard of Brahmanhood, the ancient spiritual standard, according to which a true Brahman was a knower of Brahma, a knower of the Eternal. Sonadanda here becomes the spokesman of the Buddha. He, who prided himself on his Brahman heredity, and his Vedic knowledge, is represented as setting these things aside, and basing genuine Brahmanhood on the possession of holiness and wisdom. This is exactly the ideal which the Buddha was striving to awaken in the hearts of the Brahmans.

The recorder then represents the Buddha as putting to Sonadanda another question, the answer of which further reveals a complete acceptance of the Buddha's view:

"But, O Brahman, of these two things, virtue and wisdom, is it possible to omit one, and then to say that he who possesses the other may be truthfully called a Brahman?"

"Not so, Gautama", Sonadanda answered; "for wisdom is perfected by righteousness, and righteousness is perfected by wisdom. Where there is righteousness, there is wisdom; and where there is wisdom, there is righteousness also. As one hand washes the other, so wisdom and righteousness perfect each other. Therefore wisdom and righteousness are declared to be the best things in the world."

The Buddha replies, "This is indeed so, O Brahman. I also say the same. But what is righteousness? And what is wisdom?"

Sonadanda replies that he knows only in a general way, and asks the Buddha to make the matter clear in detail.

This is the opening for what has already been spoken of, the full presentation of the Buddha's teaching, which must form a part of each one of this collection of Suttas.

This presentation is vitally important, because it shows that the

primary purpose of the Buddha's whole teaching was, not the foundation of a popular religion, but the formation of an Order, which should prepare and train disciples, Chelas.

To Sonadanda, the Buddha answers that true wisdom and righteousness, the wisdom and righteousness with which he is concerned, are bound up with the appearance in the world of an Arhat, one who has conquered the truth, who is fully awakened, who has attained to blessedness, unsurpassed as a guide to the sons of men who are willing to be led, a teacher of divine beings and men, a Master, a Buddha.

By the teaching of this Master, a householder, or the son of a householder, or a man of any class is drawn to enter the path of discipleship, to give up the world and its attractions, and to surrender himself wholly to the guidance and teaching of the Master.

But this complete self-giving to a Master, with devoted love and aspiration, is the very essence of Chelaship, and what the Buddha goes on to say in his reply, clearly shows that he is concerned, not with the tenets of a popular religion, but precisely with Chelaship. For he speaks next of the practical element of Chelaship, namely, of purification. The man who has completely surrendered himself to a Master, being admitted to that Master's Order, lives self-ruled, delighting in righteousness, and seeing danger in the least offence. He follows complete purity, in conduct and in livelihood, guarding well the door of the senses. He lays aside all weapons of offence and defence, and is filled with compassion and kindness toward everything that has life.

He submits himself to systematic discipline, under the guidance of his Master, as regards both his conduct and his meditation; the training, that is, of will and intelligence alike. The attainment of mastery over the senses is set forth in detail, a training in virtue of which each one of the senses ceases to be a means of alluring and ensnaring his mind, and becomes what it ought to be, a doorway of intelligence.

In going forth or in returning, the disciple keeps clearly before the eye of his mind, the immediate objective of each act, its spiritual significance, whether or not it is favourable to the high aim which is

set before him, and the inner essence hidden within the outward appearance of the act. Thus, in looking forward, in looking about, in extending his arm or drawing it back, in eating or drinking, in standing or sitting, in sleeping or waking, he keeps himself fully aware of all that it really means. Thus is the disciple recollected and self-ruled. He seeks no more than food and raiment; having these, he is content. Whithersoever he goes, he takes these with him, as a winged bird, whithersoever it may fly, carries its wings.

“Putting away all the desires of worldliness, he dwells with heart and mind purified of lusts and longings. Putting away the corruption of the wish to injure, he dwells with heart free from anger and malice. Putting away all slothfulness of heart and mind, he dwells illumined, recollected, self-mastered. Putting away confusion of mind and perturbation, he dwells serene, free from all vexation of spirit. Putting away perplexity and doubt, he dwells in certainty of intelligence.”

In each point, therefore, there are the ideals, not of the conventional adherent of religion, the conventionally religious man, though it would be well if every adherent of religion fully followed them out; these are the working ideals, the items of discipline, of the disciple, of the Chela.

The Buddha then goes on with keenly practical eloquence to say that the disciple who thus establishes himself through wise discipline is as one who, having been plunged in debt, works his way up to solvency and a competence; as one who, having been beset by sickness and disease, completely regains his health and strength; as one who, having been a slave, subjected to the will of another, attains the happiness of freedom; as one who, after long wandering in the desert, comes safely to his home—so the disciple, established in discipline, is full of serenity and joy.

The Buddha then describes the attainment, by this well-trained disciple, of the successive stages of Dhyana, of illumination and power, which are the successive degrees of Chelaship.

It is significant that, for these stages of discipleship, the Buddha uses illustrative symbols, with which we are all familiar in another context, though they are there rarely interpreted in terms of discipleship. In the first stage, the disciple is “washed and made clean.”

In the second stage, there is within him “a well of water, springing up to everlasting life.” In the third stage his heart and soul have the serene beauty of “the lilies of the field.” In the fourth stage, he is “clothed in white raiment”, for he is worthy.

Then is expounded the more concrete side of discipleship. The disciple “applies his heart and mind to the formation, within this body, of another body, having form, of the substance of mind, possessed of all the organs of perception and of action.” He draws it forth, in the words of *Katha Upanishad*, which the Buddha quotes, as the reed is drawn forth from its sheath; or as the serpent, sloughing off his old skin, comes forth renewed; as a sword is drawn from its scabbard.

Thus renewed and reborn, the disciple enters the path of *Iddhi*: “being one, he becomes many; he becomes visible or invisible, he passes through a mountain as though passing through the air; he walks on water, as on solid ground; he travels through the sky like a bird on the wing; he reaches up to the realm of Brahma; with heart serene, purified, illumined, he hears with heavenly ear, surpassing the hearing of mortals, sounds both human and celestial, far or near; with heart serene, purified, illumined, he discerns the hearts of other men, beholding their thoughts as one beholds his face in a mirror; with heart serene, purified, illumined, he attains to knowledge of his former births, and understands clearly the rebirths of others; his vision is as lucent as that of one who, standing beside a limpid mountain pool, discerns the shells and pebbles on the bottom, the fish passing through the water.”

It should hardly be necessary to insist that the whole substance of this, the most characteristic and oftenest repeated discourse of the Buddha, embodied in every one of these *Suttas*, is concerned, not with conventional and formal religion, nor with canons of general morality, but with something far more definite and concrete, namely, with discipleship, with *Chelaship*, with the spiritual pathway to the attainment of the *Adept*, the *Master*.

We return now to *Sonadanda*, the *Brahman*, to whom, in answer to his question concerning the true character of wisdom and righteousness, this eloquent teaching is addressed. How did this

appeal, embodying the ancient Wisdom of the Upanishads, affect the worthy Sonadanda?

The answer is of immense historical significance, in that it symbolizes the result of the Buddha's effort to reform, purify and spiritualize the whole body of the Brahmans; it is an answer at once tragic and full of the keenest irony, revealing the seeming success and, at the same time, the practical failure of the Buddha's magnificent appeal, and the underlying cause of that failure. Sonadanda expressed himself as delighted, won over, fully persuaded; in the words of the sacramental formula, he went for refuge to the Buddha, the law of righteousness, the Order; he claimed the Buddha as his spiritual guide, from that day forth to his life's end. And, in token of his conversion, he invited the Buddha and his disciples to visit him and partake of his hospitality. It is in the speech of Sonadanda accompanying this invitation and banquet, that the full irony of the story comes out. Taking a low seat beside the Buddha, Sonadanda said:

"If, Gautama, after I have entered the company, I should rise from my seat and bow down before the noble Gautama, the company would think ill of me. Now, when the company finds fault with a man, his reputation is clouded; when his reputation is clouded, his income falls off. Therefore, if I stretch forth my joined palms in salutation, let the noble Gautama accept this as though I had risen from my seat. So, also, if when I am in my chariot, I were to leave the chariot, to salute the worthy Gautama, those who were present would think ill of me. Therefore, if, when I am in my chariot, I lower my goad in salutation, let the noble Gautama accept this as though I had dismounted. For, if men thought ill of me, my reputation would be clouded; if my reputation were clouded, my income would fall off. . . ."

The Buddha's Teaching of the Logos

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For millenniums the Brahman community has dominated the religious and intellectual life of India. It may be added that, today, the Brahmans are working to preserve that domination by means of political agitation against the suzerainty of England; for while popular agitators speak eloquently of liberty for the people of India, the astute Brahmans who really direct the agitation have as their true goal the confirmation of the Brahman caste in its ancient despotism, with all the advantages, social and financial, which for many centuries have rewarded Brahman political skill. Opposing this Brahmanical plan are various forces. First, there is a nucleus of Englishmen, of whom Sir Walter Lawrence may stand as the type, who clearly recognize the reality of Brahmanical tyranny over the humbler classes and the less endowed races, and who as clearly see that impartial British justice has given these lowlier classes a genuine protection against Brahman Zemindars, or landlords, who are swollen with the sense of their privileges, but have little feeling of their obligations. In the *Letters* to Mr. Sinnett, the way in which the Zemindars gained their power over the cultivators is thus explicitly stated:

“Recall the past and this will help you to see more clearly into our intentions. When you took over Bengal from the native Rulers, there were a number of men who exercised the calling of Tax Collectors under their Government. These men received, as you are aware, a percentage for collecting the rents. The spirit of

the letter of the tithe and tribute under the Mussulman Rulers was never understood by the East India Company; least of all the rights of the ryots (village cultivators) to oppose an arbitrary interchange of the Law of *Wuzeeja* and *Mookassimah*. Well, when the Zemindars found that the British did not exactly understand their position, they took advantage of it as the English had taken advantage of their force: they claimed to be Landlords. Weakly enough, you consented to recognize the claim, and admitting it notwithstanding the warning of the Mussulmans who understood the real situation and were not bribed as most of the (East India) Company were—you played into the hands of the few against the many, the result being the ‘perpetual settlement’ documents. It is this that led to every subsequent evil in Bengal” (page 389).

The character of these evils, in Bengal, and, to a degree, throughout India, is depicted in a slightly earlier letter: “The ‘Cradle Land of Arts and Creeds’ swarms with unhappy beings, precariously provided for, and vexed by demagogues who have everything to gain by chicane and impudence.” The attitude of the Landlords, many of them Brahmans, into whose hands the village cultivators were stupidly delivered by the “perpetual settlement” of Lord Cornwallis in 1793, is sufficiently characterized by the same observer in a single word: “The resistance to, and the intrigue set on foot by the Zemindars against the Bill are infamous . . .” It may be added in parenthesis that the Bill alluded to was duly passed, as the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, and that it did in fact give to the hapless village cultivators of Bengal a certain measure of protection against their rapacious Landlords, many of whom were Brahmans.

If we go from Bengal to the other side of India, to Kashmir, we shall find Sir Walter Lawrence describing an almost identical situation in *The India We Served* (page 133):

“My object was to encourage the peasants to cultivate their fine land, and to restore the land revenues of Kashmir. The object of the [Brahman] pandits was simply to take the best of the land and to force the Moslem cultivators to work for nothing. The wicked system of forced labour had ruined the

country, and as I settled in each division of the valley the revenue that the villagers were to pay, in cash, and not as heretofore in kind, not to middlemen [Brahman] pandits, but to the State, I set free the villagers from the crushing exactions which were enforced by the privileged classes under the tyrannous system known as *Begar*. No wonder that the city disapproved of me, and that the *fermier* [Brahman] pandits, who lost their power and perquisites, disliked me." Sir Walter Lawrence adds, a little later: "Nowhere in the East have I met any body of men so clever and so courteous as the Kashmiri [Brahman] pandits."

The tragedy is that these gifted men, with their high spiritual heritage, misuse their brilliant gifts to the ends of extortion and tyranny.

It will be noted that both Mr. Sinnett's correspondent and Sir Walter Lawrence speak of the Mussulman, the Muslims, as opposing Brahman tyranny. One may surmise that to this end the Karma of India brought across the North-West frontier successive hordes of Muslim invaders, often cruel and rapacious, but nevertheless to some degree breaking the power of the Brahman priest-craft both by armed force and by their militant monotheism. The Muslims of India, therefore, are the second of the three forces alluded to at the outset, as making headway against the despotism of Brahman priest-craft. A third power, well worthy of consideration, is rising in the India of today, namely the great organization, already reckoned at more than twenty-five million souls, explicitly opposed to the Brahmans, in Southern India, and especially in the Presidency of Madras. This anti-Brahmanical community, largely recruited from the "depressed" classes, who had been deprived of almost every privilege of manhood by the Brahmans, has been strongly fostered by Christian missions, as though the great Western Master had reached out to India, with the definite purpose of co-operating in this way in the effort which the Eastern Lodge is making, to break the grip of Brahman tyranny over India. We shall presently see how this special and profoundly interesting effort is related to the work which the Buddha inaugurated, along almost identical lines, twenty-five centuries ago.

For what has been written above is an introduction to the study which we have been making, of the attitude of the Buddha toward the Brahmans of his day, and his strong and long-continued efforts to redeem the Brahmans, who are and were among the most gifted races of mankind, from the dangerous degradation into which they had fallen through the abuse of their high spiritual heredity. One line of this effort is set forth in the *Tevijja Sutta*, a dialogue between the Buddha and two young Brahmans, Vashistha and Bharadvaja, a part of which has already been translated. The Buddha was at that time dwelling with his disciples in a mango grove on the bank of the river Achiravati, to the north of the Brahman settlement of Manasakata.

In this dialogue, which is sterner in tone than some of the other discourses on the same theme, the Buddha shows that he is familiar with the whole Brahmanical tradition and system, the Three Vedas (from which the Sutta takes its name), and the names of the great Rishis of old, to whom the composition of the hymns of the Rig Veda was attributed. He has asked Vashistha whether the Brahmans and their disciples, or even the ancient Rishis themselves, had ever seen the Divinity, Brahma, the way to whom they claimed to know, and Vashistha has replied that neither the Rishis nor the Brahmans had ever seen Brahma, though they professed to know and to teach the way to Brahma, the path leading to entry into the being of that Divinity.

The Buddha then makes his criticism more personal and pointed:

“Once more, Vashistha, if this river Achiravati were so full of water that a crow, standing on the bank, could drink, and a man with business on the other side should come up, desiring to cross to the other bank; and he, standing on the brink of the river, were to call to the farther bank, ‘Come hither, farther bank! Come hither, farther bank!’ What thinkest thou, Vashistha, would the farther bank of the river come over, by reason of that man’s invocations and prayers?”

“No, indeed, Sir Gautama!”

“In exactly the same way, Vashistha, the Brahmans who know the Three Vedas, neglecting the conduct which makes men truly Brahmans, knowers of Brahma, and pursuing conduct which makes men cease to be Brahmans, make such invocation as: ‘We invoke Indra, we invoke Soma, we invoke Varuna!’ and so with the other

Divinities; and they think that, because of these invocations, they will, departing from the body after death, enter into companionship with Brahma—but such a condition of things has no existence.

“Once more, Vashistha, if this river Achiravati were so full of water that a crow, standing on the bank, could drink, and a man with business on the other side should come up, desiring to cross to the other bank; and if on this bank he were bound with a strong chain, his arms chained behind his back—what thinkest thou, Vashistha, would that man be able to cross over from this bank of the river Achiravati to the farther bank?”

“No, indeed, Sir Gautama!”

The Buddha proceeds to apply his parable. The Brahmans who put their trust in the Three Vedas are bound and tied by bonds, such as the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, like the traveller bound with chains on the hither bank of the river Achiravati. It is impossible for them, when they depart from the body after death, to cross over into companionship with Brahma, just as it is impossible for the traveller, while chained on the hither bank of the river Achiravati, to cross over to the farther bank and proceed to his desired destination. But there may be other hindrances besides bondage:

“Once more, Vashistha, if this river Achiravati were so full of water that a crow, standing on the bank, could drink, and a man with business on the other side should come up, desiring to cross over to the other bank; and if he were to lie down, and, wrapping his head in his mantle, were to go to sleep—what thinkest thou, Vashistha, would that man cross over from this bank of the river Achiravati to the farther bank?”

“No, indeed, Sir Gautama!”

But the Brahmans who put their trust in the Three Vedas are in like manner swathed about and covered up with veils of illusion and delusion. Therefore, it is impossible for them, when they depart from the body after death, to cross over into companionship with Brahma. Then the Buddha becomes still more definite and concrete:

“Then what thinkest thou, Vashistha? Whether hast thou heard from Brahmans who are old and full of years, when teachers and

pupils are talking together—is Brahma possessed of wife and family, or no?”

“He is without wife and family, Sir Gautama!”

“Is Brahma of angry heart, or not of angry heart?”

“Not of angry heart, Sir Gautama!”

“Is Brahma of malevolent heart, or not of malevolent heart?”

“Not of malevolent heart, Sir Gautama!”

“Is Brahma prone to mental sloth and perturbation, or no?”

“He is not thus prone, Sir Gautama!”

“Is Brahma lord of himself, or not lord of himself?”

“He is lord of himself, Sir Gautama!”

“Then what thinkest thou, Vashistha? Are the Brahmans of the Three Vedas possessed of wives and families, or no?”

“Possessed of wives and families, Sir Gautama!”

“Are they of angry heart, or not of angry heart?”

“Of angry heart, Sir Gautama!”

“Are they of malevolent heart, or not of malevolent heart?”

“Of malevolent heart, Sir Gautama!”

“Are they prone to mental sloth and perturbation, or no?”

“Prone to mental sloth and perturbation, Sir Gautama!”

“Are they lords of themselves, or not lords of themselves?”

“Not lords of themselves, Sir Gautama!”

“So then, Vashistha, Brahma is without wife and family, not of angry heart, not of malevolent heart, not prone to sloth and perturbation, lord of himself; while the Brahmans who trust in the Three Vedas are possessed of wives and families, of angry heart, of malevolent heart, prone to sloth and perturbation, not lords of themselves. Therefore, it is impossible for them, when they depart from the body after death, to cross over to union with Brahma. Therefore, Vashistha, these Brahmans who put their trust in the Three Vedas, who sit in fancied security, are in reality sinking in a quagmire; while they think that they are crossing to a happier world, are in reality falling into misery. Therefore, the Vedic knowledge of these Brahmans who trust in the Three Vedas should be called a Vedic desert, a Vedic jungle, a Vedic destruction!”

It is, therefore, clear that the Brahmans of the settlement of Manasakata, by the river Achiravati, in the land of the Koshalas, instead of being true knowers of Brahma, knowers of the Eternal, were already in the Buddha's day, twenty-five centuries ago, exactly like the Brahman landholders, as described by the writer of the *Letters*, exactly like the Brahman pandits of Kashmir, as described by Sir Walter Lawrence: greedy, worldly, ambitious, a tyrannous and despotic priesthood, using their great gifts for selfish and evil ends. It must be added that the Buddha's efforts to save them, though successful in the case of some individuals, completely failed to alter for the better the communities of the Brahmans as a whole. They still rule despotically over the temporal fortunes of the lowlier Hindus; they still exercise a mental and psychical despotism over a great part of India. And, precisely because the rule of just Englishmen is a check on that despotic sway, these Brahmans are seeking to drive the English out of India, craftily alleging that "liberty" is their goal, while their true goal is an increase of their own despotic power.

But to return to the Buddha and his youthful interlocutor, the Brahman Vashistha. The dialogue at the point which we have reached takes a new turn, which brings us to matters of immense interest and importance.

Thus addressed, we are told, the young man Vashistha spoke as follows to the Master:

"It has been heard by me, Sir Gautama, that the ascetic Gautama knows the way to union with Brahma!"

"What thinkest thou, Vashistha? Manasakata is near by, Manasakata is not far from here?"

"Even so, Sir Gautama! Manasakata is near by, Manasakata is not far from here!"

"Then what thinkest thou, Vashistha? A man was born in Manasakata and grew up there. Suppose that they should ask this dweller in Manasakata the way thither. Would there be any doubt or hesitation in the mind of this man, born and brought up in Manasakata, concerning the way to Manasakata?"

"No, indeed, Sir Gautama! And for what cause? Because, Sir Gautama, since the man was born and brought up in Manasakata, all

the ways to Manasakata would be well known to him!”

“Yet even though the man born and brought up in Manasakata might fall into doubt and hesitation concerning the way to Manasakata, the Tathagata could not fall into doubt or hesitation concerning the world of Brahma or concerning the path which leads to the world of Brahma. For Brahma I know, Vashistha, and the world of Brahma, and the path which leads to the world of Brahma. As one who has attained to the world of Brahma, as one who has entered the world of Brahma, that world I know!”

The young man Vashistha logically pursues his enquiry, and asks the Buddha to reveal to him the path. The Buddha answers by setting forth in order the rules of discipleship, and the following of the path under the guidance of a Master: rules which have already been considered at length. We may for the present leave this part of the subject, in order to consider what the Buddha has already said to Vashistha.

It will be remembered that, in the Buddha’s discourses, the Divinity, Brahma, has more than one meaning. There is, first, the gently ironical treatment of Great Brahma, to correct the too literal view of those who persist in representing Divinity as “a magnified and non-natural man.” This is finely exemplified in the *Kevaddha Sutta*, when the Buddha narrates to Kevaddha the story of an enquiring disciple who, inspired by a boundless desire for knowledge, made his way, by force of supreme asceticism, to the world of Brahma, and, when Great Brahma appeared, heralded by a radiance and a shining, put to the Great Lord a very difficult question concerning the constitution of the elements during the period of the dissolution of the universe. The Great Lord made answer:

“I am Brahma, mighty Brahma, Maker of all, Father of all . . .”

But the ascetic, naively relentless, replied:

“I did not ask whether you were Brahma, mighty Brahma, Maker of all, Father of all! I asked concerning the constitution of the elements during the dissolution of the universe!”

This was twice repeated. The Buddha thus continues his narrative:

“Then great Brahma, taking that ascetic by the arm, and leading him away to one side, said this: ‘Of a truth, ascetic, these Bright Ones

here, attendants of Brahma, think that there is nothing whatever that Brahma does not know, nothing whatever that Brahma does not perceive. Therefore in their presence I did not answer. But the truth is, ascetic, that I do not know what the constitution of the elements is, during the period of the dissolution of the universe! . . .”

We shall see presently that, in addition to the gently ironical correction of the belief in a “magnified and non-natural man,” there is, in this answer a profound philosophical truth.

What is at first sight a different view of Brahma is given in a magnificent discourse, in which the Buddha describes, under the guise of a fairy tale, a Convention of the Immortals, ranged in order under the Four Maharajas, in the Realm of the Thirty-Three Divinities. To the Immortals, thus assembled in Convention, comes the manifestation of Great Brahma, again heralded by a radiance and a shining. And to each of the Immortals it appears that Great Brahma draws near directly to him, speaks directly to him.

Finally, we have the very remarkable declaration of the Buddha, in the discourse just translated:

“Brahma I know, and the world of Brahma, and the path which leads to the world of Brahma. As one who has attained to the world of Brahma, as one who has entered the world of Brahma, that world I know!”

There is, in the *Secret Doctrine*, a conception which at once illuminates and harmonizes these three apparently different expressions: namely, the conception of the Logos, the Divine Mind, as made up of the sum total of the spiritual consciousness of the cosmos; or, to use an alternative expression, as the collective Life of the Divine Host, the Host of the Dhyana Chohans, a collective spiritual consciousness which, so far as our cosmos is concerned, is omniscient and omnipotent. It is further taught in the *Secret Doctrine* that this Divine Consciousness of the Heavenly Host overshadows and inspires the Lodge of Masters; and we may suppose that this overshadowing is especially potent at certain times, on certain occasions; perhaps such an occasion as would correspond to the Convention of the Immortals, in the fairy-tale which the Buddha told.

If we take Great Brahma thus to mean the Logos conceived as

active, then there would be the completest justification in the declaration of the Buddha: "Brahma I know; and the world of Brahma, as one who has entered the world of Brahma, that world I know!" For the attainment of Buddhahood is precisely such entry into the Life of the Logos, with a resulting knowledge of the Life of the Logos, as it were, from within. Further, this clear declaration, so unaccountably ignored by certain Western Orientalists, bent on seeing in the Buddha an agnostic, and sometimes even a philosophical Nihilist, once more demonstrates that his teaching is in all ways identical with that of the Great Upanishads, which hold as the ideal the completeness of identification of the individual consciousness with the Eternal, of Atma with Brahma; and, in those older Upanishads, the word Brahman means "one who knows Brahma, one who knows the Eternal," the sublime significance which the Buddha constantly seeks to restore to a name which in his day had come to mean little more than a member of an hereditary priestly caste.

To come back to the gentle irony of the *Kevaddha Sutta*; we have found good reason for holding that by Brahma the Buddha means the Logos of our cosmos, the sum of the spiritual consciousness of our system of worlds. It is evident, however, that in this definition there is already a suggestion of something which falls short of absolute Omniscience, the Omniscience of the Absolute, if such an expression may be permitted. For our cosmos is one of many within the inconceivable immensity of the Universal Kosmos; and, if one may speak without presumption concerning matters which are wholly beyond any form of perception which we can conceive, it would seem logical to hold that there are certain things which of necessity remain unknown even to the supreme spiritual consciousness of the Logos of our cosmos. There is, to begin with, the eternally unanswerable question: Why is there a Kosmos? So it would seem that, under the guise of gentle irony, the Buddha was in reality conveying a profound philosophical truth, a fundamental truth of the *Secret Doctrine*.

It has been shown previously that, in several remarkable instances, the Buddha quotes the identical words of certain of the Great Upanishads. It would appear that he is thus quoting, in the vitally important declaration which has been translated: "Brahma I know, and the world of Brahma; as one who has entered the world of

Brahma, that world I know!" For this phrase, Brahma-loka, has, in the Great Upanishads, a quite definite meaning. It is found, as indicating the supreme spiritual attainment, in the story of the King-Initiate Pravahana, son of Jivala, which occurs with deeply interesting variants in the two greatest Upanishads.

In the version of the story which is given in the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*, the King-Initiate, instructing his Brahman disciple concerning the consummation of the way of Liberation, the path of Divinity, says that, to those who go forward along this path, there appears "a Spirit, of the nature of Mind (*manasa*), who leads them to the Brahma-worlds. . . . For them, there is no return."

The parallel version in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* reads: "A Spirit not of the sons of Manu (*a-manava*) leads them to Brahma. This is the path of Divinity."

It would seem, then, first, that the Buddha is affirming of himself exactly that Liberation which the King-Initiate taught, in these two greatest of the Upanishads; and, second, that the Spirit, which is at once "of the nature of Mind" and "not of the sons of Manu," is the Divine Host already considered.

In that treasure-house of knowledge, *Isis Unveiled*, there are certain passages which confirm this view of the Buddha's teaching, as identical with that of the Great Upanishads. Speaking of "pre-Vedic Buddhists," *Isis* goes on to say: "When we use the term *Buddhists*, we do not mean to imply by it either the exoteric Buddhism instituted by the followers of Gautama Buddha, nor the modern Buddhistic religion, but the secret philosophy of Shakyamuni, which in its essence is certainly identical with the ancient wisdom-religion of the sanctuary, the pre-Vedic Brahmanism" (ii, 142). It should be added that "Brahmanism" here means, not the priestly system of the Brahman caste, but the ancient teaching of the knowledge of Brahma—precisely the teaching revealed to the Brahman disciple by the King-Initiate Pravahana, who, in revealing it, added the significant declaration: "This Wisdom has never dwelt in any Brahman before thee, but has been handed down among the Kshatriyas alone!" It will be remembered that, like King Pravahana, the Buddha was also a Kshatriya. It would seem clear, then, that by "pre-Vedic Buddhism" or

“pre-Vedic Brahmanism,” *Isis* means precisely the secret teaching which, handed down from time immemorial among the Kshatriya-Rajputs, King Pravahana revealed for the first time to the Brahmins.

Yet another passage from *Isis*: “Gautama, no less than all other great reformers, had a doctrine for his ‘elect’ and another for the outside masses, though the main object of his reform consisted in initiating all, so far as it was permissible and prudent to do, without distinction of castes or wealth, to the great truths hitherto kept so secret by the selfish Brahmanical class. Gautama Buddha it was whom we see the first in the world’s history, moved by that generous feeling which locks the whole of humanity within one embrace, inviting the ‘poor,’ the ‘lame,’ and the ‘blind’ to the King’s festival table, from which he excluded those who had hitherto sat alone in haughty seclusion. It was he, who, with a bold hand, first opened the door of the sanctuary to the pariah, the fallen one, and all those afflicted by men clothed in gold and purple, often far less worthy than the outcast to whom their finger was scornfully pointing. All this did Siddhartha six centuries before another reformer, as noble and as loving, though less favoured by opportunity, in another land . . .” (ii, 319).

It may be noted that these passages from *Isis Unveiled* are identical in import with what has been said concerning the relation of Buddha to the Brahman caste; and that the second passage suggests, toward its close, that identity of purpose which makes readily intelligible the co-operation of the Western Master with the Eastern Masters in their purpose to break the grip of Brahmanical tyranny in India. When in this long and difficult conflict, victory is finally won, then the high name, Brahman, will no longer mean a member of a selfish hereditary caste, but, what it originally meant, a “knower of Brahma,” a knower of the Eternal.

The Buddha's Cosmology

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The teaching of the Buddha, particularly where it is most profound and spiritual, is for all practical purposes identical with the teaching of the great Upanishads. The great Upanishads contain cosmological principles, which derive the manifested worlds from the unmanifested Being by a series of emanations, downward steps from impalpable Shining Ether, through the forms of Fire, Air, Water and Earth, to the fullness of concrete and formal existence. Further, there is in the great Upanishads a body of teaching concerning what one may call solar physics, a classifying of the radiant forces of the Sun, with a description of the Sun's concentric spheres which bear a good deal of resemblance to the chromosphere (or rose-coloured layer), the photosphere (the brilliantly shining layer), the darker core revealed in the sunspots, and so on, as described by contemporary science.

Throughout the Buddha's discourses which, taken together, make up a sum of material immensely greater than the Upanishads, there is, of this kind of cosmological thinking, hardly a trace. Why? The answer is given in a discourse which tells us how a distinguished disciple reproached the Buddha with this very deficiency in his teaching, and flatly threatened to resign unless the defect was immediately repaired. But let the compilers of the Suttas tell the story in their own way.

Once upon a time the Master was in residence in the Jetavana monastery in the park which had been laid out by a rich than of charitable heart. The distinguished disciple Malunkya-putta, in solitude

and absorbed in meditation, discovered this consideration in his mind:

“There are problems which the Master has left unexplained, pushing them aside and ignoring them; for example, the problem whether the universe is eternal or not; the problem whether soul and body are the same thing, or distinct from each other; the problem whether the liberated sage can be said to have a continued existence after the death of his body, or has not such a continued existence. These problems the Master does not explain to me. And I feel aggrieved that the Master does not explain these problems. Therefore I shall go to the Master and lay the matter before him. If the Master is willing to explain to me whether the universe is eternal or non-eternal, whether the soul and the body are identical or distinct, whether the liberated sage continues to exist after the death of the body, then I am willing to go on practicing spiritual discipline under the Master. But if the Master will not explain these problems to me, then I will give up the life of spiritual discipline and return to the worldly life!”

When evening came, the distinguished disciple Malunkyaputta came forth from solitude and went to where the Master was. Dutifully greeting the Master, he took a seat respectfully beside him and laid before the Master the grievance that had arisen in his mind during his meditation, in conclusion saying that, unless the Master explained to him these problems, he would give up spiritual discipline and return to the worldly life.

The Buddha answered him with a certain restrained indignation:

“Tell me, Malunkyaputta, did I ever say to you, ‘Enter on spiritual discipline under me, and I will explain to you such problems as whether the universe is eternal or non-eternal, whether soul and body are identical or distinct, whether the liberated sage continues to exist after the death of the body, or ceases to exist?’”

“No, Sire!”

“Or did you ever say to me, ‘Sire, I am willing to enter on spiritual discipline under the Master, provided that the Master will explain to me such problems as whether the universe is eternal or non-eternal, whether soul and body are identical or distinct, whether the liberated sage continues to exist after the death of the body, or ceases to exist?’”

“No, Sire!”

“In that case, vain disciple, with what justice do you accuse me? Malunkyaputta, should anyone make up his mind not to enter spiritual discipline under the Buddha until the Buddha had explained these problems to him, such a one would be overtaken by death before the Buddha explained these problems to him.

“It is just as if a man had been wounded by a poisoned arrow, and his friends had brought to him a skilful surgeon, and the wounded man were to say, ‘I will not have this poisoned arrow extracted until I find out whether the man who shot me was a Kshatriya, a Brahman, a Vaishya or a Shudra’; or, ‘I will not have this poisoned arrow extracted until I find out whether the man who shot me was tall or short or middle-sized’; or, ‘I will not have this poisoned arrow extracted until I find out whether the bow-string was made of sinew or hemp or bamboo fibre’; or, ‘I will not have this poisoned arrow extracted until I find out whether the feather of the arrow came from a vulture, a heron, a falcon or a peacock’; or, ‘I will not have this poisoned arrow extracted until I learn whether the barb was plain or curved, made of iron or of ivory.’ The man would die, Malunkyaputta, without having learned these things.

“Exactly the same with him who says, ‘I will not undertake spiritual discipline until I have learned from the Master whether the universe is eternal or non-eternal, whether soul and body are identical or distinct, whether the liberated sage continues to exist after the death of the body.’ The man will die, Malunkyaputta, before the Master has explained these things to him.

“For spiritual discipline, Malunkyaputta, does not depend on the view that the universe is eternal, or that the universe is non-eternal; whether the universe be eternal or non-eternal, there still remain birth, decay, death, misery, lamentation and despair. I teach how to conquer these in this present life.

“So with the problem of soul and body, and the survival of the liberated sage. Spiritual discipline does not depend on the answers to these questions. In either case there remain birth, decay, death, misery, lamentation and despair. I teach how to conquer these in this present life.

“These problems, Malunkyaputta, I have not explained. Why,

Malunkyaputta, have I not explained them? Because the answers do not bear practical fruit, nor teach how to turn away from sensuality, to cleanse the heart of passions, to attain serenity, the higher powers, wisdom, liberation.

“But what, Malunkyaputta, have I explained? The origin of misery, the conquest of misery, the path to the conquest of misery. Why, Malunkyaputta, have I explained this? Because this knowledge bears practical fruit, and teaches how to turn away from sensuality, to cleanse the heart of passions, to attain serenity, the higher powers, wisdom, liberation.”

Speaking generally, therefore, the Buddha directed the hearts and minds of his disciples to problems quite other than the mysteries of cosmology. The purpose which he consistently followed was to develop, not astronomers or theologians or abstract metaphysicians, but practical disciples, valorously fighting against self and the dangerous delusions of self. He deliberately withheld any explanation of the wide vistas of spiritual life, because in his deep wisdom he knew that, until the treacherous delusions of self are conquered, there can be no real insight into spiritual life. Those who seek to penetrate these high mysteries with tainted minds, thereby distort and disfigure every dawning insight that might lead them toward the light. Let the disciple first conquer self, we can imagine the Buddha saying; after that fight is won, he will know for himself the reality of spiritual life. If he desires that wisdom, let him fight for it and win it.

But it would be a complete mistake to think that, because the Buddha did not encourage his disciples to ask large, vague questions about the stars and the ages of the past, he himself had closed his eyes to these mysteries, possessed no knowledge of them, believed that knowledge of this kind is unattainable.

On the contrary, there is clear evidence that he had penetrated in consciousness to far-off worlds and remote ages; that he held views concerning these matters, which were consistent and complete; views which, in fact, break through his practical teaching to disciples, giving, for the intuitive soul, luminous glimpses into the beyond.

On a certain occasion he set forth, in the *Discourse of Beginnings*, a valuable and vitally interesting history of the evolution of the human

race, beginning with what one may call a past of descending angels, then depicting long periods of increasing solidification and obscurity, and finally describing the differentiation of the sexes, and the gradual growth of human institutions as we are familiar with them; but it is characteristic of the Buddha's method that his purpose in this immensely interesting discourse was not simply the elucidation of a doctrine of Cosmogogenesis and Anthropogenesis; the avowed aim of this scientific sermon is to show that the Brahmans' pretension of superiority rested on a delusion; that the Kshatriya was in fact the more ancient and higher caste. To put the matter in a slightly different way: the Brahman claim of superiority was based on the dogma that the Brahman caste issued from the mouth of Brahma, while the Kshatriyas came forth from Brahma's breast. This theological dogma the Buddha opposed by a teaching of natural evolution, beginning with the palpable fact that Brahman babies are born in exactly the same way as babies of all other classes. There was probably a further reason for this scientific discourse. The young Brahman to whom it was addressed, almost of necessity had been inducted into the Brahmanical doctrines; the Buddha, to prove his case, appealed to doctrines which the Brahmans themselves held, though, for the multitude, they cloaked them with theological fables which exalted the Brahman caste.

There is, however, as was said a moment ago, a complete system of cosmology implicit in all the Buddha's teaching, a system which often breaks through the immediate practical instruction which the Buddha is imparting. For example, in the *Discourse of the Fruits of Discipleship*, when describing the higher powers to which the victorious disciple attains through courageous self-conquest, the Buddha says:

“He brings back into memory his various temporary states in times gone by, one birth, or two, or three, or four, or five births, or ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred births, or a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand births, in many a kalpa of involution, in many a kalpa of evolution . . .”

Childers, in his Pali Dictionary, thus defines kalpa:

“The term kalpa is given to certain vast periods or cycles of time, of which there are three, Maha-kalpa ('great kalpa'),

Asankhyeya-kalpa ('uncountable kalpa'), and Antara-kalpa ('intermediate time'). All the Chakravala ('spheres') are subject to an alternate process of destruction and renovation, and a Maha-kalpa is the period which elapses from the commencement of the destruction of a Chakravala to its complete restoration. Each Maha-kalpa is subdivided into four Asankhyeya-kalpas. . . . In the first the destruction (by fire, water or wind) begins and is accomplished, the Chakravala being resolved into its native elements, or consumed so that nothing remains; in the second this state of void or chaos continues; in the third the process of renovation begins and is completed, and the fourth is a period of continuance. After the end of the fourth period the dissolution recommences as before, and this alternate process of destruction and renovation goes on to all eternity."

While this system of kalpas is repeatedly alluded to by the Buddha in discourses primarily concerned with practical discipline, it is fully worked out in its details, not in the first discourses of the Buddha, but in certain treatises like the *Visuddhi Magga* ("Path of Purity"), written by Buddhaghosa some centuries later; and as there is good reason to accept the tradition that these more detailed teachings come from the Buddha himself, we shall consider them as evidence for the system of cosmology which the Buddha held and taught.

The noteworthy thing about this cosmology is that on one side it anticipates the views of the most recent science. Nowhere is the resemblance closer than in the use of enormous numbers. Whoever has looked into the books of Sir James Jeans or Arthur Stanley Eddington, must have been impressed by the way in which they deal with millions and billions, whether of years or of distances across space. And here a word of caution is necessary: the word "billion" means one thing in England and another thing in America. In England a billion is a million times a million, or a million squared (once multiplied by itself), but in America a billion has the same meaning as the French "milliard", namely, a thousand millions. In England a trillion is a million times a million times a million; or a million cubed (twice multiplied by itself); a quadrillion is a million raised to the fourth

power; a quintillion is a million raised to the fifth power, and so on. These numerical details are given because the system of numbers used in Buddhist works like the *Visuddhi Magga* closely resembles the English system, except that the starting point is not one million but ten millions (in Sanskrit and Pali “koti”, in the modern dialects of India “crore”); so that the Pali numbers are the square of ten millions, the cube of ten millions, the fourth, fifth and sixth powers of ten millions, up to the Asankhyeya already mentioned, which is the twentieth power of ten millions: that is to say, 1 followed by 140 ciphers. So that when we find Eddington saying that “the mass of the sun is 2 followed by 27 ciphers” in tons, we realize that Buddhaghosa, to say nothing of his great Master, would find himself completely at home in this kind of counting.

When we pass from numbers to broad ideas of cosmology, the likeness is impressive. We may approach the matter by taking the latest book by Sir James Jeans, *The Universe Around Us*, which runs almost parallel to Eddington’s *Stars and Atoms*, published two years ago. In what is common to the two books we may safely say that we have the last word in modern cosmological thinking.

What account do they give of the universe? Jeans takes as his point of departure what he calls Primaeval Chaos, at a time when all the substance of the present stars and nebulae was spread uniformly throughout space. He expresses the density of this tenuous substance as compared with the density of water by the fraction 1 divided by the number 1 followed by 30 ciphers. With justice he tells us that this is almost inconceivably tenuous:

“In ordinary air, at a density of one eight-hundredth that of water, the average distance between adjoining molecules is about an eight-millionth of an inch; in the primaeval gas we are now considering, the corresponding distance is two or three yards. The contrast again leads back to the theme of the extreme emptiness of space. . . . Calculation shows that if ordinary air were attenuated to this extraordinary degree, no condensation could persist and continue to grow unless it had at least 62½ million times the weight of the sun; any smaller weight of gas would exert so slight a gravitational pull on its outermost

molecules, that their normal speeds of 500 yards a second would lead to the prompt dissipation of the whole condensation . . . If there ever existed a primaeval chaos of the kind we are now considering, it would not condense into stars, but into enormously more massive condensations, each having the weight of millions of stars. . . . Now it is significant that bodies are known in space having weights equal to those just calculated, namely the great extra-galactic nebulae . . . the condensations which would first be formed out of the primaeval nebula must have been the great extra-galactic nebulae, and not mere stars. . . . These nebulae are so generally similar to one another that it seems likely that they must all have been produced by the action of the same agency. . . . As the original condensations in the primaeval gas contracted they must have produced currents, and these would hardly be likely to occur absolutely symmetrically. If the motion in each mass of condensing gas had been directly towards the centre of condensation at every point, the final result would have been a spherical nebula devoid of all motion, but any less symmetrical system of currents would result in a spin being given to each contracting mass. This spin would no doubt be very slow at first, but the well-known principle of ‘conservation of angular momentum’ requires that, as the spinning body contracts, its rate of spin must increase. Thus when the process of condensation was complete, the final product would be a series of nebulae rotating at different rates. And this is exactly what is observed; so far as our evidence goes the nebulae are in rotation, and at different rates” (pages 192-195).

Now let us turn for comparison to a part of the *Visuddhi Magga* which is avowedly based on the passage we quoted from the Buddha, concerning the memory of past kalpas:

“The upper regions of space are one with those below, and wholly dark. Now after the lapse of a long period, a great cloud arises. And first it rains with a very fine rain . . . when this cloud has filled every place throughout a hundred thousand times ten million worlds, it disappears. And then a wind arises, below and on the sides of the

water, and rolls it into one mass which is round like a drop of water on the leaf of a lotus. But how can it press such an immense volume of water into one mass? Because the water offers openings here and there for the wind. . . .”

We are evidently considering a cosmic evolution very similar to that which Sir James Jeans outlined: First, what he calls “primaeval chaos”, which the Buddhist teaching describes as a condition in which the “upper regions of space are one with those below, and wholly dark”. Next, Jeans depicts enormously large condensations of this at first almost infinitely tenuous substance. The Buddhist teaching says that “after the lapse of a long period, a great cloud arises”. And it is evident that the Buddhist teaching contemplates something immensely more extensive than the formation of a single planet, or even a single solar system: it is a question of “a hundred thousand times ten million worlds”. Sir James Jeans speaks in particular of two great extra-galactic nebulae (that is, nebulae outside the limits of the Galaxy, the Milky Way, within which our solar system is situated): the weight of one of these is estimated to be 2000 million times that of the sun, while another is even larger, 3500 million times the weight of the sun. It is evident, therefore, that the Buddhist teaching and the modern astronomer are dealing with magnitudes of the same order; the one calls them great clouds, the other calls them nebulae; which is Latin for “mist”.

We then come to an even closer parallel. Sir James Jeans shows that, if the modern understanding of the forces involved be correct, the irregular condensation of these enormous nebular masses would set up currents, and that these currents would tend to develop what he calls a “spin”, a movement of rotation, leading to the formation of immensely large revolving spheres of nebular substance. The Buddhist teaching says that when the cloud has filled every place throughout a hundred thousand times ten million worlds, “a wind arises, below and on the sides of the water, and rolls it into one mass which is round like a drop of water on the leaf of a lotus.” One may note in passing that this simile is singularly exact, since Sir James Jeans shows that the earlier revolving spheres of nebular matter would become flattened out into a shape which he compares with a watch; and this is precisely the shape of a drop of water on a lotus leaf.

One point more: the Buddhist teaching asks how it is that the wind can press such an immense volume of water into one mass, and answers that it is because the water offers openings here and there for the wind. This closely corresponds to the lack of symmetry both in shape and arrangement, which Sir James Jeans ascribes to his primal nebular condensations. There is, therefore, a general resemblance both in the fundamental processes outlined and in the magnitudes considered, between the Buddhist teaching and the present conclusions of astronomy.

One expression deserves special comment, namely, the use of the term "water" by the Buddhist teaching, to describe the substance of the primaeval nebulae. In a note to the second edition of *Stars and Atoms*, Eddington speaks of the constitution of the hypothetical Nebulium, the name given to the substance of the nebulae. "Nebulium", he says, "turns out to be an oxygen atom with two electrons missing. Singly ionized atoms of oxygen and nitrogen are responsible for the other lines in the nebular spectrum not previously identified." Hydrogen is an element found extensively in the sun and in the stars, which have condensed from the nebulae. But water is a compound of oxygen and hydrogen, so that there is nothing fundamentally unscientific in describing the substance of the nebulae as uncondensed water, as the Buddhist teachings do. We may, if we wish, think of this merely as a guess. If so, it was a brilliant guess, anticipating spectroscopic discoveries which were completed only two or three years ago, when Nebulium was found to be a form of oxygen.

It would appear, therefore, that we are justified in seeing a close parallelism between the cosmological conclusions of contemporary science and the views set forth by a great Buddhist fifteen centuries ago, and almost certainly derived from the teaching of his Master, twenty-five centuries ago. It is certain that the Buddha and his disciples came to these sane and highly philosophical conclusions without either telescope or spectroscope, the magical implements of our contemporary sages. There is an explanation in the teachings of the Buddha, but we need not consider it now.

Let us close with an interesting parallel, which carries us back to our point of departure: the comparison drawn by the Buddha between

what is, and what is not, profitable material of study for the disciple. A recent book by Eddington, published in 1929, concludes with an eloquent section on Mystical Religion, from which a few suggestive sentences may be quoted:

“We have seen that the cyclic scheme of physics presupposes a background outside the scope of its investigations. In this background we must find, first, our own personality, and then perhaps a greater personality. The idea of a universal Mind or Logos would be, I think, a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory. . . . It is obvious that the insight of consciousness, although the only avenue to what I have called intimate knowledge of the reality behind the symbols of science, is not to be trusted implicitly without control. . . . One begins to fear that after all our faults have been detected and removed there will not be any ‘us’ left. But in the study of the physical world we have ultimately to rely on our sense-organs, although they are capable of betraying us by gross illusions; similarly the avenue of consciousness into the spiritual world may be beset with pitfalls, but that does not necessarily imply that no advance is possible.”

One may conceive the Buddha answering: “The pitfalls are there; but it is the duty of the Buddha, and of all Masters, to open the eyes of the disciple to these pitfalls, to guide his feet through them, to the way of truth. After that, perhaps, the time may come to consider the building of the stars.”

Visakha: A Woman Disciple of the Buddha

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Besides the supreme figure of the Buddha and the noble personalities of his leading disciples, a host of men and women are depicted in the Pali Buddhist Scriptures, and many of them are drawn with a lively sense of reality, and often with much genuine humour. We cannot say for certain that in each case the likeness is exact, but we can say that the portrait represents a figure in the mind of the artist; what he conceived to be a genuine type among his contemporaries.

It may be interesting to consider some of the women thus pictured by Buddhist chroniclers and elders, for in this way we may gain an insight into the view of these recorders, as to the character of an ideal woman, and also into the features and manner of living among women in general, in that remote world two and a half millenniums ago. Of even greater interest is the attitude of the Buddha himself toward women, with his willingness or unwillingness to accept them as disciples, members of his Order.

Among the many women who appear in the pages of the Buddhist writings one may begin with the queens and high ladies of the court of King Suddhodana, father of Prince Siddhartha, later known as the Buddha. Suddhodana ruled over the Shakyas, having his palace in the city of Kapilavastu, so called in honour of the ancient sage Kapila, to whom is attributed the transcendental teaching later made formal in the Sankhya system. Of the ladies of the court Queen Maya stands first. A very ancient book records that, when Queen Maya gave birth

to her son, the angels sang, rejoicing. When an aged seer asked them why they rejoiced, the angels answered: "He that shall become the Buddha is born in the settlement of the Shakyas for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Therefore we are full of joy!" When the child was five days old he was named Siddhartha. Two days later his mother, Queen Maya, died, and Queen Maya's sister, who was known as Maha Pajapati Gautami, "great consort belonging to the Gautama clan", became his foster mother. When he was nineteen, Prince Siddhartha was married to his cousin, Princess Yasodhara. Ten years later their son Rahula was born, and not long after, Prince Siddhartha left his wife and son and made the great renunciation, which was the beginning of years of spiritual effort, at the end of which he became the Awakened One, the Buddha.

Some time after the Order was founded, the Buddha journeyed to Kapilavastu and paid a visit to his royal father. It is recorded that his teaching won the heartfelt adherence of the royal lady Maha Pajapati, who formed the desire of joining the Order which her foster son had established. Visiting him in the park where he was resting with his disciples, Maha Pajapati made obeisance to him, and, standing reverently at his side, begged him that he would permit women as well as men to make the great withdrawal, and to enter the Order founded by the Tathagata, following the teaching and discipline which he had given to the Order.

But, we are told, the Buddha was unwilling to grant her request, even when she pressed it on him a second and a third time. His foster mother was sorrowful and departed weeping. The Buddha on his part departed with his disciples and took up his abode with them in the forest at Vesali.

Maha Pajapati was not to be turned aside from her aspiration even by thrice repeated refusal. She took what steps were within her power to constitute herself a disciple, a member of the Order, donned the saffron-coloured robe, and with women companions of like mind, followed the Buddha on foot to Vesali. It is recorded that, coming to the Buddha's abode, she stood outside the entrance weeping.

There the noble Ananda saw her, listened to the story of her aspiration, and undertook to plead her cause with his great Master. At

first Ananda pleaded in vain, even though he repeated his plea three times. Then he bethought himself to try a flank movement. Therefore he asked his Master:

“Is it possible for women, Sire, if they make the great withdrawal, accepting the teaching and discipline of the Tathagata, to win the fruit of conversion, the fruit of returning only once to this world, the fruit of returning no more, the reward of Arhatship?”

The Buddha was compelled to admit that each one of these steps of spiritual attainment, even the noble consummation of Arhatship, was possible for women as well as for men.

Then Ananda, having established his position, made a personal appeal. He reminded the Buddha that the lady Maha Pajapati was the sister of Queen Maya; that she had been the Buddha’s foster mother; and, finally, he put his request once more, praying the Buddha to accept both Maha Pajapati and other like-minded women as members of the Order. The Buddha finally consented, but he made his consent conditional:

“If, Ananda, Maha Pajapati will accept eight stringent rules, she may be admitted to the Order.

“First, a woman disciple, even if she has been a disciple for a hundred years, shall salute, rise to meet, humbly entreat, and perform all dutiful offices for a male disciple, even though he were ordained that very day.

“Second, a woman disciple shall not keep residence in a district where there are no male disciples.

“Third, at the new moon and at the full moon a woman disciple shall wait until the congregation of male disciples have appointed the day of fasting and until one of them comes to administer the admonition.

“Fourth, at the end of residence a woman disciple shall seek criticism from the congregation of the men and from the congregation of the women, as to what may have been seen, or heard, or suspected.

“Fifth, if a woman disciple incur grave sin, she shall undergo penance toward both the congregations.

“Sixth, a woman probationer, after she has spent two years in practice of the six rules, shall seek admission into the Order from both

congregations.

“Seventh, a woman disciple shall not revile or abuse a male disciple in any way.

“Eighth, women disciples may not reprove male disciples officially, but male disciples may reprove women disciples officially.

“These rules shall be honoured, esteemed, revered and reverently obeyed; they must not be broken so long as life shall last.”

On these terms the lady Maha Pajapati was admitted to the Order, which, thereafter, included women as well as men. The words translated “male disciple” and “woman disciple” are *Bhikku* and *Bhikkuni*, literally meaning men and women who live by alms, but more especially used to indicate members of the Buddha’s Order.

There is another class of followers of the Buddha, likewise consisting of men and women, those who were called lay disciples, or, in Pali, *Upasaka*, with the feminine *Upasika*, derived from a Sanskrit word meaning “sitting near”, and, therefore, sitting at the feet of a teacher. There are many stories of pious lay disciples, both men and women, who devoutly followed the teaching of the Buddha without leaving the world or seeking admission to the Order. Among the women lay disciples the lady Visakha stands first.

A large part of the interest of her story lies in the ideal of womanhood it presents, but it is also interesting as giving a picture of society in Eastern India twenty-five centuries ago, even if there be some exaggeration in the number of millions possessed by the wealthy “men of treasure,” who may well be thought of as bankers.

The father of Visakha was a “man of treasure”, Dhananjaya by name, who was the son of the famous Mendaka, likewise a “man of treasure.” The father of Visakha was an inhabitant of the city of Bhaddiya, and in Bhaddiya, Visakha was born. Her mother was named Sumana, “well-minded”, while the name of the daughter is less clear; it may either mean “widely branching” in a sense which will later appear, or “well pruned,” a reference to the admirable fruit of discipline upon her character.

It happened that when Visakha was seven years old, the Buddha journeyed eastward and visited the city in which her father dwelt. And we are told that in the city, besides Mendaka, the “man of treasure”,

there were five other men of limitless wealth, or, as we should say, multimillionaires.

When Mendaka heard that the Buddha had come, he sent for his seven year old granddaughter, Visakha, and bade her pay a visit to the Buddha, in a procession of five hundred chariots, with five hundred attendants and five hundred servants.

The little maid obeyed, but, because she knew well what was seemly, she did not proceed in her chariot to the place where the Master was, but, driving only as far as was seemly, she dismounted from her chariot, went forward on foot, and making obeisance, stood dutifully beside the Master. And the Master imparted to her the teachings of the Law of Righteousness, so that she was won to his teaching, and her five hundred maidens with her. Her grandfather, Mendaka, had come with her to the place where the Master was. He also was won by the teaching, and invited the Buddha and the members of the Order to be his guests at the first meal on the morrow, and for two weeks he supplied them liberally, after which the Master departed from Bhaddiya.

King Bimbisara and King Pasenadi were united by close ties, since Bimbisara had married the sister of Pasenadi, while Pasenadi had married the sister of Bimbisara. And one day the thought came to King Pasenadi that, whereas there were five men of great treasure, possessing many millions each, in the territory of Bimbisara, there were no such men of boundless wealth in the territory of Pasenadi himself. Therefore he determined to persuade king Bimbisara to transfer one of the men of great treasure to his dominions. After some objection, Bimbisara consented that Dhananjaya, father of the maiden Visakha, should be thus transferred, and Dhananjaya himself agreed to the change of abode. So Dhananjaya made ready to depart with all his household when Pasenadi departed, to return to his city Savatthi. But before they reached the city, being yet seven leagues away, Dhananjaya, perceiving that the site was fair, and bethinking him that within the city there would be many people and little space, asked King Pasenadi to allow him to settle there, seven leagues from the city, and to build dwellings for his family and their attendants. And to this King Pasenadi assented.

Now it befell that in King Pasenadi's city there was a man of treasure, Migara by name, whose son had just reached man's estate. His mother admonished the young man that it was time for him to take a bride. At first he was unwilling, but at last, when they pressed upon him the duty of continuing the family, he unwillingly assented, saying that he would take only a maiden whose hair was beautiful, whose lips were beautiful, whose teeth were beautiful, whose skin was beautiful, and who possessed in addition the beauty of enduring youthfulness.

So the mother and father of the youth, undertaking to find for him a perfect maiden to be his bride, summoned many Brahmans, made them many and great presents, and sent them forth to search for her. And in due time these Brahmans found their way to the place where Dhananjaya had settled with his followers, his wealth, and his virtuous daughter, Visakha. Each year there was held a festival, when maidens even of the highest rank were wont to go forth on foot to the river with their attendants, and the wealthy sons of the warrior clans, taking up their positions beside the road that led to the river, crowned with flowers the fair maidens of equal rank. So the maiden Visakha came among them, with five hundred maidens, her attendants.

Suddenly there came a storm of rain, and the five hundred maidens of Visakha immediately began to run towards a hall by the river, where they took refuge from the rain. But Visakha did not run, but walked sedately toward the hall, even though her garments and ornaments were wet. As she approached, the Brahmans who had come in quest of a perfect maiden saw that she had beautiful hair, beautiful lips, beautiful skin and beauty of enduring youth. So, to make certain that she had also beautiful teeth, they spoke, so that she might hear:

"Our daughter is lazy; she will not take good care of her future husband!"

Hearing them, Visakha asked what they had said, and her voice was sweet and resonant. When they repeated their words, she asked why they had said so. They answered that it was because she had lagged behind her attendants, so that her garments were wet with rain.

Visakha answered: "Say not so, worthy Brahmans! Though I am a better runner than my attendants, yet I had a good reason for not

running. For there are four who do not appear at their best while running: an anointed king in the court of his palace; the king's elephant of state when richly caparisoned; a monk who has retired from the world; and, fourth, a woman, for men will ask why she rushes about like a man. And in addition, were a maiden to fall, and break a hand or a foot, it would be difficult for her parents to find her a husband. For these reasons I did not run!"

While she was talking, the Brahmans noted the beauty of her teeth. And when she was silent they set the gold wreath upon her head. Visakha, knowing that it was a wreath of betrothal, asked concerning the family from whom it came. When she learned that the family which sought her in marriage was of equal rank with her own, she sent a message to her father that a chariot might be despatched to bring her home, since it was not seemly that, after she had received the wreath of betrothal, she should return home on foot. So her father, well pleased, sent chariots for Visakha and her maidens. And the Brahmans accompanied Visakha to where her father was.

He in his turn asked concerning the senders of the wreath of betrothal, and their riches. He was told their names, and that their wealth was forty tens of millions, and, learning that they were of equal rank and of great wealth, even though far less than he himself possessed, he was well pleased and gave his consent to the union. The Brahmans returned and reported that their quest of the perfect flower of maidenhood had been crowned with success. The father of the future bridegroom was deeply impressed, and sought and received from King Pasenadi permission to go to pay a visit to his future kin. And King Pasenadi himself, remembering that he had brought the prospective father-in-law of the young Punna-vadhana to his present home, determined that it would be a graceful and appropriate thing for himself to pay the man of treasure a royal visit.

Then follow several pages of description, in which the saintly and ascetic chroniclers of Pali scripture, who have renounced all the pomps and vanities of the world, let themselves go in a series of gorgeous descriptions which mere worldly historians might envy, but could not possibly surpass. Thus we are told that the bridegroom's father, learning that King Pasenadi purposed to accompany him on his

ceremonial visit, had not unnatural misgivings that the call on the hospitality of the man of treasure might be excessive, and very tactfully sent messengers to make inquiries. The return message came: "Let ten kings come if they wish!"

And splendid preparations were in fact made, the maiden Visakha presiding over every detail of the arrangements, with a keen insight which was the reward of aspiration, not through one or two former lives, but "through a hundred thousand world-cycles". The maiden made provision for every guest of whatever degree, so that none might say: "We came to Visakha's party, and got no reward, for we spent the whole time looking after our horses and elephants!"

In the same large way the monkish recorders describe the jewelry which her father had prepared for the future bride. There was a gorgeous headdress fashioned in the likeness of a peacock, the value of which, we are told, was ninety millions, and in addition the bride received five hundred and forty millions to provide perfumes. She was further supplied with immense herds of cattle, and, when the time came to provide her with personal attendants, the entire population volunteered enthusiastically to accompany her, so that it was necessary to beat them back with staves. Then comes the note of edification. The bride had earned all this munificence by her immense gifts to the followers of the Buddhas of old. All maidens who desired like rewards should be equally generous.

Then comes a touch of universal human nature. The peerless maiden Visakha, accompanied by her retinue, and accompanying her future father-in-law, drew near to Savatthi, where she was to dwell. She was wearing her peacock head-dress, and the question arose in her mind, whether she should enter the city in a closed carriage or standing erect in a chariot. After duly pondering the problem, she decided thus:

"If I am in a covered carriage when I enter, no one will see my beautiful peacock head-dress!" Therefore she entered, standing erect in her chariot, and all the city admired. The ascetic recorders do not tell us for which of her former good works she was rewarded by this happy inspiration.

So Visakha entered the home of her father-in-law and settled down

most dutifully in her new life. It will be remembered that, when she was seven years old, she had paid a visit to the Buddha and had been won to his teaching, remaining ever thereafter a faithful Upasika. Her father-in-law did not share her views, but adhered to the old school of Brahman ascetics, who are represented in the story as both jealous and abusive, advising the man of treasure to turn his heretical daughter-in-law out of doors. But, since the daughter-in-law had brought with her a large company of her own people and much wealth, it was not easy to send her forth.

There came an occasion, however, when the man of treasure turned against her. We are told that one morning he was regaling himself with porridge in a golden bowl, with honey added as a relish, his daughter-in-law standing dutifully by his side fanning him, when an elder, a follower of the Buddha, entered the house. The man of treasure saw his visitor, but remained as one who saw not, continuing to regale himself with porridge and honey.

Visakha, for whom an elder, an honoured follower of her Master, was one to be held in reverence, skilfully expressed her sense of the situation, and rebuked the bad manners of her father-in-law:

“Pass on, venerable sir!” she said, “my father-in-law is eating stale fare!” The man of treasure was furious, and gave orders that she should be turned out of his house forthwith. But, since all the servants in the house were hers, the order fell flat, to the intense mortification of the man of treasure.

The situation which resulted finely reveals Visakha’s firmness of character and at the same time her dutifulness and strong sense of discipline.

She did not give orders, as she might easily have done, that the offending father-in-law should be turned out of doors, but she took him somewhat severely to task, saying she was no wench picked up at a bathing-place, to be summarily turned out of doors. But she opened a way of conciliation, reminding her father-in-law that her grandfather had provided for just such an occasion, by sending with her eight worthy householders as trustees or assessors, to arbitrate any disputes; that might arise between the heiress and her new family. The man of treasure was somewhat mollified and had the eight

assessors summoned. When they appeared, his feeling of hurt dignity blazed up again:

“This young woman,” he said, “when I was eating porridge in a golden bowl, said that I was eating unclean food! Condemn her and turn her out!” But the eight assessors, who recognized that their duty was to protect the interests of Visakha, asked her to give her side of the story. Visakha explained that her phrase concerning the eating of stale food was a symbolical way of saying that her father-in-law was consuming stale merit, earned in past lives, while he might have been earning new merit by courteously and generously entreating the Buddhist elder whom she revered.

This reminded Visakha’s father-in-law of something that had puzzled him earlier, and, when the eight assessors gave their verdict in her favour, he put this question:

“When she was leaving home, Visakha’s father laid ten admonitions upon her, which I happened to overhear without comprehending their meaning. Let her now explain them!”

Pressed by her friends the assessors, Visakha explained her father’s purpose. When he said to her, “The in-door fire is not to be taken out of doors”, he did not mean to withhold the fire of the hearth, but rather that, should she notice any shortcoming or fault in her home, whether in her mother-in-law, her father-in-law, or her husband, she should by no means speak of it abroad. In the same way the admonition that “Fire from without must not be brought indoors” meant that, should she hear criticism, whether by man or woman, of the members of her own household, she, must never repeat it at home. The admonition, “Give only to him who gives”, meant that she should lend only to those who would return what was lent. So, “Give not to him who does not give”, meant that one should not lend to those who do not return what is lent. But the saying, “Give both to him who gives, and to him who gives not”, had a more generous sense: relatives in want should be supplied, whether they could, or could not, make due return.

The remaining admonitions shed light on the family discipline and etiquette of that distant time and land, in certain respects sharply contrasted with “modern” views. Thus, “Sit fortunately!” meant that

the young wife should rise in the presence of her mother-in-law, her father-in-law or her husband. "Eat fortunately!" in like manner meant that she must not eat until she had waited on them. "Sleep fortunately!" meant that all their needs must be attended to, before she herself sought rest. "Wait upon the fire!" meant that she should serve these members of her household as one tends the sacred fire. "Reverence the household divinities!" had a like meaning.

The assessors, pleased with so much effective humility, asked the man of treasure whether he still found fault with his daughter-in-law. When he replied that she was without fault, they asked him why, in that case, he had sought to have his daughter-in-law turned out of doors.

At this point, the story takes an unexpected turn. Visakha, addressing her friendly assessors, says that it would have been quite wrong for her to leave her father-in-law's house while under an imputation of wrong-doing. Now, however, that she had been completely exonerated, it was her firm intention to go. Therefore she gave orders that her carriages should be made ready.

Since Visakha is represented to us as of uncommon wisdom and practical sense, we may, perhaps, infer that she foresaw what would result from her downright announcement: a profuse and abject apology from her offending father-in-law. She accepted the apology, but on her own terms: namely, that her adherence to the Buddha should be fully recognized. So we are not surprised when we learn that the man of treasure has decided to hear the Buddha's preaching, though, as a matter of form, he asks permission to sit behind a curtain. The Buddha consents. The man of treasure listens and is converted, and, thereafter, the whole family sets an example of pious generosity. Then comes the monkish delight in a good story. We are told that the lady Visakha lived to be a hundred and twenty years old, with never a grey hair among her dark tresses. She looked, indeed, like a girl of sixteen, and, when she went abroad in the midst of her numerous daughters and still more numerous granddaughters, the people asked, "Which of these is Visakha?" The devout recorders add a point of perfection which would hardly occur to a modern scribe: "Moreover, she was as strong as five elephants!" Nor are they content with

affirming the prowess of their heroine. They go on to prove it; and in doing this, they show once again their delight in a good story:

The king, we are told, had heard that Visakha possessed the strength of five elephants, and resolved to put her to the test. So, as he was returning from the dwelling-place of the Buddha and the Order of disciples, whither he had gone to hearken to the teaching of the Law of Righteousness, he released an elephant against her. The elephant raised his trunk and advanced against Visakha. She was accompanied by five hundred women. Of these, a part fled terrified, a part clung to her in fear. Visakha asked the meaning of their perturbation.

“Noble lady!” they answered, “the king, desiring to put your strength to the test, has released an elephant against you!”

Visakha, fixing her eyes upon the elephant, bethought her, “What cause is there for me to flee? It is only a question of how I shall lay hold on him. If, I grasp him too hard, I may kill him!” So, when the elephant had approached, she took his trunk between her finger and thumb and forced him backward. The elephant was unable to resist, or to keep his footing; he fell back on his haunches in the courtyard of the king. Thereupon the multitude cried aloud with joy, and Visakha and her women went safely homeward.

It is related in conclusion that Visakha bestowed largesse upon the Order, building for the disciples a noble dwelling of two stories, with five hundred chambers on each story. When the work was completed and the Buddha had graciously accepted it, the heart of Visakha was full of song, and there was song upon her lips, for a prayer that she had made ages ago was thus fulfilled.

The Doctrine of the Divine Man

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Among the discourses of the Buddha there is one named the *Lakkhana Suttanta*. The first part of the Pali name corresponds to the Sanskrit *Lakshana*, a characteristic, a distinguishing mark; and the discourse is concerned with the marks which distinguish the body of the Maha-Purusha, the Great, or Divine Man, such as grace of form, beauty of colour, and so on. The words of the Buddha suggest that the list of characteristic signs was old in his day, and the stories of his own birth represent the magicians and astrologers as identifying these signs on the body of the new-born divine infant. One may safely come to the conclusion that the tradition of these signs, thirty-two in number, is very old, far older than the period, two and a half millenniums ago, when the Buddha taught in the valley of the Ganges.

The name, Maha-Purusha, in Pali, Maha-Purisa, suggested to Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids, a series of reflections, which he did not carry to their legitimate conclusion, but which, when fully developed, are deeply significant. Let us try to see what their fuller meaning is.

The learned Pali scholar points out two things: that the term Maha-Purisa is rarely used in Pali; it is not a standard Pali term, as is, for example, Arhat; and he indicates, but does not develop, certain relations between the Buddhist use of the term Purisa, or Purusha, and its earlier use in the Vedas, especially in the celebrated hymn in the tenth book of the Rig Veda, which is called "Purusha Sukta", the Hymn of Purusha. This great hymn contains two elements: first, the

teaching of the Divine Man, the Logos in a sense personified; and, second, the even more mystical doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Divine Man. Both teachings are present in that great river of spiritual illumination which has its source in ancient Egypt; both may be recognized in the story of Osiris and in the Gospel of St. John. Finding them present in Vedic India and in prehistoric Egypt, we may safely reach the conclusion that they are an integral part of the primordial Wisdom Religion, the doctrine of the Greater Mysteries.

Following the translation of John Muir, the Purusha Sukta may be rendered as follows:

1. Purusha (the Divine Man) has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth, he overpassed it by a space of ten fingers.

2. Purusha himself, the Divine Man, is this whole universe, whatsoever has been and whatsoever shall be. He is also the Lord of immortality, since (or, when) by food he expands.

3. Such is his greatness, and Purusha is superior to this. All existences are a quarter of him; and three-fourths of him are that which is immortal in the heavens.

4. With three quarters Purusha mounted upwards. A quarter of him was again produced here. He was then diffused everywhere over things which eat and things which do not eat.

5. From him was born Viraj, and from Viraj, Purusha. When born he extended beyond the earth, both behind and before . . .

So far, the first part of this great hymn, which is concerned with the Logos as the foundation of Being, the basis of manifestation: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life. . . ."

The symbolism of the thousand heads, the thousand eyes, the thousand feet, is universal. It has its echo in the Book of Proverbs: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Much of the essence of this hymn is found also in the *Bhagavad Gita*, that treasury of wisdom. Thus Krishna, speaking as the Logos, declares that He contains the world; the world does not contain Him; one-fourth of His being is the manifested world; three-fourths

are eternal in the heavens.

The Vedic hymn says that from Purusha was born Viraj, and from Viraj, Purusha. Viraj is twofold: positive and negative, masculine and feminine, subjective and objective. Viraj thus marks the field of primordial differentiation or cleavage between Perceiver and Perceived; the cleavage which is the fundamental activity of Maya, of Cosmic Illusion, since there is in reality no cleavage, though without the semblance of cleavage there would be no manifestation. The semblance of cleavage is a vitally important activity; it is not an eternal state of Being. The hymn goes on to say that from Viraj was born Purusha, that is, the Logos as the manifested universe; the Third Logos of *The Secret Doctrine*.

We come now to the second movement of the Purusha Sukta, which introduces the Sacrifice of the Divine Man:

6. When the gods (Radiant Powers) performed a sacrifice with Purusha as the oblation, the Spring was its butter, the Summer its fuel, and the Autumn its (accompanying) offering.

7. This victim, Purusha, born in the beginning, they immolated on the sacrificial grass. With him the gods, the Sadhyas (Spirits of Light) and the rishis sacrificed.

8. From that universal sacrifice were provided curds and butter. It formed those (aerial) creatures, both wild and tame. . . .

At the beginning of the creative period, the Manvantara, the Logos contains all the powers and elements that are to be manifested: all forms and degrees of consciousness, all activities of force, all degrees of substance. But our Vedic hymn does not contemplate what may be called a purely automatic and spontaneous emanation of world-systems, worlds and their inhabitants. It contemplates rather a disposal and direction of these qualities of consciousness, of force, of substance, by divine beings, who are named in three degrees: gods, Sadhyas and rishis; that is, to use the terms of *The Secret Doctrine*, Dhyān Chohans of higher and lower degree, acting with Masters of Wisdom (rishis) who have attained supreme wisdom, power and holiness in an earlier Manvantara. Both elements of manifestation are present: the inherent tendencies of the Logos; and the directive energies of conscious

Creative Powers. Fundamentalist and Modernist may find their reconciliation here.

The sixth verse symbolizes the sacrifice of Purusha as the three seasons (since there was no winter in the Land of the Seven Rivers, that part of Northern India where this hymn may have taken form), in the circle of the year: that is, an equilateral triangle inscribed in a circle, the symbol of Triune Spirit in the Eternal. The curds and butter find their counterpart in the Third Stanza of *The Secret Doctrine*: “The Luminous Egg, which in itself is Three, curdles and spreads in milk-white Curds throughout the Depths of Mother . . .” namely, that stage of manifestation which is described in astronomy as the first formation of the great nebulae in space. In our Vedic hymn, the denizens of these shadowy worlds, the various degrees of elemental consciousness, are poetically described as “aerial creatures, both wild and tame”—those which are beginning their period of development, and those which have made some progress in an earlier world period.

The seven remaining verses of the hymn describe the manner in which the Radiant Powers bound Purusha as the sacrificial victim, and, dismembering him, formed of the fragments the races of mankind, the animals, the regions of space, the powers of perception. The meaning is clear: the powers of the manifested universe are the powers of the Logos; the substance of all beings is the substance of the Logos; there is in the manifested universe neither power, nor substance, nor consciousness, which is not of the Logos: “Without him was not any thing made that was made.”

So far the Purusha, the Divine Man, of the Vedic hymn. Our Pali scholar describes, rather than explains, this majestic hymn, and then proceeds to link it with the discourse of the Buddha. The link, as he describes it, is somewhat slender; it hardly goes beyond the identity of the words Purusha in Sanskrit, and Purisa in Pali. Yet there is a deeply significant connection between the two doctrines, as we shall try to show.

Rhys Davids begins by bringing out the fact that the term Maha-Purisa is not one of the generally accepted phrases of Pali Buddhist scriptures. He has, indeed, found it in only three passages, one of these being the *Lakkhana Suttanta*, which we shall presently consider. Of

the two remaining passages, the first is found in the *Sanyutta Nikaya*, one of the five divisions of the Pali scriptures. The Buddha declares, in this discourse, that the distinguishing mark of the Maha-Purisa, the "divine man", is liberation: liberation with regard to his body, his emotions, his mind, his thoughts: "ardent, self-possessed, recollected, he overcomes the world . . . His mind is purified, liberated, free from mental intoxication."

In the *Anguttara Nikaya*, another of the five divisions of the Pali sacred books, the term Maha-Purisa occurs again. The Master says:

"Him I call a Maha-Purisa, a divine man, who possesses four qualities: first, he seeks the welfare of all mankind, establishing them in the beauty of holiness, as set forth in the Noble Path; next, he perfectly controls his mind and thought, thinking only what he wishes to think; third, he can enter the four degrees of meditation and contemplation which are above the discursive mind, whenever he desires, even in this present life; fourth, he has put away the intoxication which arises from lust, the confusion which arises from ignorance. Thus does he attain and abide in that liberation of heart and mind which is gained even in this present life."

The *Dhammapada* adds that "The Arhat is the supreme Maha-Purisa," but does not explain or comment upon this declaration. Still more must it be true that the Buddha, the Arhat among Arhats, is a Maha-Purisa.

So far, the Pali texts bearing on this teaching, with the exception of the Suttanta presently to be introduced. It is evident at a glance that Rhys Davids has established no strong bridge of connection between the Vedic Purusha and the Buddhist Maha-Purisa; there is little to relate the two teachings except the name, so far as his explanation goes. His great merit is, that he has suggested a connection, even though he stops there, and sheds no light whatever upon its nature or the principles which underlie it. Perhaps he felt instinctively that, once this connection established, it would be impossible any longer to try to conceal the profound esoteric character of the Buddha's teaching, even if we limit that teaching to the written records of the Pali scriptures. For the basis of relation is deeply mystical and esoteric; it is, in fact, the very foundation of mystical esotericism.

That the Buddha had studied the Vedic Upanishads is proved by his quoting passages which are unmistakable, and which, further, bear the hall-mark of esotericism. It might fairly be assumed that he was equally familiar with this famous Vedic hymn, even if we had not the tradition of his studying with Vedic teachers, during the earlier stages of his spiritual conflict. He would thus have had clearly in mind the real connection between his own teaching of the Maha-Purisa, the "divine man" who attained Arhatship and Buddhahood, and the Vedic teaching of the Purusha, the "divine man" eternal in the heavens, who was offered as a sacrifice by the gods, that sacrifice being the basis and cause of the manifested worlds. The connection is as simple as it is profound: The Maha-Purisa so becomes by assimilating, incarnating and manifesting the essence, the powers, the qualities of the heavenly Purusha; the Master becomes a Master by incarnating, or awaking, within himself the essential being, the consciousness, the powers of the Logos. Here is the entire essence of philosophical and practical esotericism. The wonder is, not that the distinguished Pali scholar did not draw this inevitable conclusion, which would have illuminated for him and for his followers the whole teaching of the Buddha; the wonder is that he should have come so close to it, even arranging in their true order the links of the chain.

So we come to the remaining Pali scripture which speaks of the Maha-Purisa, the "divine man", namely, the *Lakkhana Suttanta*, the Discourse of Characteristic Marks. It has already been said that this teaching of the characteristic marks of supreme genius is not of the Buddha's making, but is evidently one of those older traditions which he adopted and to which he gave a new meaning; for his own purposes. Into the original teaching went various elements: a certain mystical basis, namely, the thought that seers are able to distinguish, by direct perception, the incarnating soul possessed of elements of supreme greatness; there is also something of physiognomy, of palmistry, such as is practised to this day among some of the Lamas of Tibet, as well as fragments of folk-lore. Thus even today, among the Western nations, one may find the idea that blue eyes are a mark of spiritual candour, that curly hair is in some way indicative of innocence and truth. In passing, one may note that the inclusion of blue eyes as one of the thirty-two mystical characteristics makes it not

improbable that the Buddha himself had blue eyes; for one can hardly think of his followers accepting as an authentic sign of sainthood a characteristic that their beloved Master did not possess. The *Lakkhana Suttanta* begins:

Once upon a time, the Master was dwelling at Savitri, in the Wood of Victory, in the park of Anathapindaka, the generous giver. The Master thus addressed his disciples, saying, Disciples! The disciples responded to the Master, saying, Yes, Sire! The Master said:

Thirty-two, disciples, are these characteristic marks of the Maha-Purisa, the divine man, which the divine man possesses, and for the divine man possessing them, there are two ways, and no other: Should he live the life of a householder, he becomes a King, a universal monarch, turning the wheel of sovereignty, righteous, a lord of righteousness, who has extended his conquests in the four directions of space, whose dominions are well protected, who possesses the seven treasures: namely, the treasure of the wheel of sovereignty, the treasure of elephant-herds, the treasure of troops of horses, the treasure of rich jewels, the treasure of fair women, the treasure of a great household, the treasure of wise counsellors, as his seventh treasure. More than a thousand sons will be his, heroes, vigorous of form, vanquishers of the enemy. He, when he has conquered the world to the margin of the ocean, reigns not by the mace, not by weapons, but by righteousness. But if he should go forth from the life of the householder to the homeless life of the disciple, he becomes a Buddha supreme, who draws back the veil that darkens the world.

But what, disciples, are these thirty-two characteristic marks of the Maha-Purisa, the divine man, through possessing which, these two ways, and no other, are open before the Maha-Purisa? . . .

It has already been suggested that elements of folk-lore, of chiromancy, of physiognomy, enter into the list of characteristic marks. It is possible that they have genuine spiritual correspondences; it is fairly certain that the more significant of them have these correspondences. But they are not worked out in the Pali scriptures, nor would much be gained by industriously trying to find these

correspondences, since that is not the point or purpose of the Buddha's discourse. He takes it for granted that these bodily characteristics are the outward and visible sign of so many inward and spiritual graces, which he has enumerated again and again in his sermons; and, accepting these marks as genuinely representing spiritual possessions, he goes on to show in what manner these spiritual graces are gained, and have in fact been gained by those who, like himself, have attained to supreme liberation.

The first characteristic mark, "The Maha-purisa stands firm upon his feet," has so evidently a spiritual meaning, that it has passed into all languages as indicating moral and spiritual firmness. The second characteristic mark, "The Maha-purisa has, on the soles of his feet, the mark of the wheel, the chakra, with a thousand spokes, with nave and tire complete," suggests not so much universal metaphor, as palmistry, with its tradition of significant marks upon the palms of the hand; lines of life, of fortune, of fate, and so on. Even if we invoke palmistry, it is not easy to interpret the third characteristic mark, "The Maha-purisa has long heels," unless the meaning be once more that the divine man stands firm. Then come characteristic marks that have been generally recognized as signs of aristocratic birth, such as finely shaped hands with long fingers, soft and tender skin, as contrasted with the hard integument of the labourer, "ankles like rounded shells . . . legs as graceful as an antelope's, a complexion of the hue of gold, skin so delicately smooth that no dust will cleave to his body": then there are more virile characteristics, such as a form divinely straight, a leonine jaw, a body rounded like the sacred fig tree, and so forth. Since there appears to be no consistent symbolism underlying the list of divine signs we need not recount them all, nor enlarge upon their meaning.

Their significance is not the point which the Buddha wishes to make in his discourse. His purpose is in reality quite different. He seeks to show that each of these thirty-two miraculous signs is not come by fortuitously, nor is it the gift of fortune or of some supernatural being. On the contrary, each one of these outward and visible signs which mark the body of the Maha-Purisa, the divine man (and which, if we are to believe the tradition of his disciples, marked the body of the Buddha himself), is acquired by working for and

developing the inward and spiritual grace of which it is the hall-mark. The Discourse puts the matter thus:

These are the thirty-two signs in virtue of which the Maha-Purisa born possessing them has open before him two ways and no other: he will either become a universal monarch, righteous, a lord of righteousness, or, should he give up the life of a householder and enter the homeless life, he will become a supreme Buddha. The Rishis who are without (the Buddhist Order) possess a knowledge of these thirty-two signs, but they do not know through the doing of what work, through what Karma, each of these signs is acquired.

In whatever former birth, former condition, former abode, the Tathagata, being a man, set himself to fulfil all righteousness in deed, in word, in thought, in giving gifts to the needy, in gaining virtues, in keeping holy days, in honouring father and mother, in keeping a right attitude toward ascetics and Brahmans (seekers of the Eternal), in due respect for elders, and other kindred graces—the Tathagata, by accomplishing such works, by acquiring such Karma, when he was separated from his body, was reborn after death in a heavenly world. There he was endowed with graces surpassing those of other Radiant Beings, in ten treasures, namely, in length of divine span of being, in divine beauty, in divine joy, in divine glory, in divine dominion, in perception of divine forms, sounds, perfumes, tastes, contacts.

Descending from that paradise and once more entering the world of men, he is endowed with this characteristic mark of the Maha-Purisa, the divine man: he sets his feet firmly and evenly upon the earth, placing each foot evenly upon the earth, evenly raising it again, setting the entire surface of his foot upon the earth.

If, possessing this characteristic mark, he should follow the life of a householder, he will become a universal monarch. But if he should enter the homeless life, he will become a supreme Buddha. Should he become a monarch, what reward does he gain? He becomes irresistible by any force of man, disaffected or hostile. Or, entering the homeless life, and becoming a Buddha, what reward does he gain? He becomes irresistible by any power without or within, disaffected or hostile, by lust or fault or delusion, by ascetic or Brahman, by god, demon, or

great Brahma himself, by any power whatever in the universe. As a Buddha this reward he gains.

In whatever former birth, former condition, former abode, the Tathagata, being a man, lived for the happiness of the many, dispelling perturbation and terror and fear, providing righteous guardianship and protection, a bestower of gifts upon his followers—the Tathagata, by accomplishing such works, by acquiring such Karma, when he was separated from his body, was reborn after death in a heavenly world. There he was endowed with graces surpassing those of other Radiant Beings, in the ten treasures.

Descending from that paradise and once more entering the world of men, he is endowed with this characteristic mark of the Maha-Purisa, the divine man: on the soles of his feet are the circles, the *chakras*, with a thousand spokes, with nave and tire complete, in every respect complete and well delineated. If, possessing this characteristic mark, he should follow the life of a householder, he will become a universal monarch. But if he should enter the homeless life, he will become a supreme Buddha. Should he become a monarch, he will have many followers, Brahmans, householders, merchants, country folk, treasurers, ministers, warriors, warders, councillors, feudatories, kings, noble princes. As monarch, this is the reward that he gains. But should he follow the homeless life and become a supreme Buddha, he will have many followers, disciples, both men and women, lay disciples, both men and women, gods, men, demons, dragons and seraphs. As a Buddha, this is the reward that he gains. . . .

Following this well-marked course, the sermon takes its leisurely way, with many pleasing iterations, and at the same time with a defined progression, recounting power after power, virtue after virtue, of which the characteristic marks are the outward signs.

Of that calmly flowing stream, we have followed the course long enough to draw certain conclusions. The first is the general correspondence between the kingly and the saintly virtues and attainments. The monarch, by spiritual striving and aspiration in one life, gains, in the next, the power to overcome the resistance of his enemies, within his kingdom and without. By the attainment of

exactly the same virtues the saint gains the power to overcome his ghostly enemies, both those which are within and those which are without. There is an exact equivalence, on the two planes of effort. The saint is not a saint through negative qualities. He has all the kingly attributes, valour, nobility, justice—and something more. He is not less than the king, but greater. So the kingly virtues lead on to the divine virtues.

The next general conclusion is that all virtues and spiritual qualities, whatever their nature or rank may be, are to be earned, to be worked for, striven for, sacrificed for; they do not drop like too ripe fruit into the hands of those who merely sit at the foot of the tree of life. Perfection is marvellous and beyond price, both the perfection of the just and valorous king and the perfection of the saint, of the Arhat, of the supreme Buddha. But every element, every detail of these perfections is to be earned, and we are here, in this world of men, to earn them. For the persevering, for the valorous, all is possible.

Through what divine dispensations are these marvellous attainments within the reach of every valorous man and woman, disciples and lay disciples of either sex? Here, if our understanding be justly based, is the essence of the whole matter. These graces and spiritual treasures are within our reach because they are the qualities and powers, the very being, of the heavenly Purusha, the Divine Man, the Logos; they are within our reach, because the Heavenly Man, who might have dwelt apart in celestial solitude, submitted instead to sacrifice, offering his life and being, giving that life as the sustenance of many. If this view be just, then the Logos doctrine, with its inevitable corollary, the divine sacrifice, is the very heart of the Buddha's teaching.

The Sevenfold Counsels of Perfection

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The manner in which the Buddhist scriptures came into being has set its mark on them in two ways. First, since those scriptures with which we have been engaged were sermons or addresses delivered often to general audiences of villagers, they have a popular interest; many of them, besides being good doctrine, are good stories. Second, as they were not written down at the time, as were, for example, the *Bhagavad Gita*, or the many treatises attributed to the great Sankara Acharya, it was expedient to give them a form which would lend itself to easy recollection, and this was attained by the repetition of passages, so that the discourses are exceedingly easy to remember.

The firm tradition among the Buddhists, a tradition which we are fully justified in accepting, is that this process of handing on the discourses orally was continued until after the death of the Buddha; that a Great Council was held at Rajagriha, capital city of Magadha, in the year 543 B.C., immediately after the death of the Buddha, and that at this Council the disciples recorded what they remembered of their Master's discourses, the noble Ananda, who had been attached to the Buddha as spiritual aide-de-camp, contributing many vivid details of the time, place and persons concerned with each of the addresses. Besides the rich material incorporated in the sermons themselves, there was also a great body of tradition, recording further incidents, discourses and teachings, as, for example, the mass of material which forms the Commentaries on the *Dhammapada*, the "Sentences of the Law of Righteousness", which had been reduced to writing not later

than the year 307 B.C., and which were carried in that year to Ceylon by the great missionary Mahendra. After he had taught the doctrine of the Buddha to the Sinhalese who were emigrants from Magadha on the Ganges, and who spoke a dialect very like that in which the Buddha delivered his teachings, Mahendra translated the Commentaries into this popular dialect, from which the modern Sinhalese is derived. This version was re-translated, some eight centuries later, into the older language of Magadha by the great Buddhist teacher and scholar Buddhaghosha, whose name means "the voice of the Buddha". The name Pali, "series", which was at first applied to the series of Buddhist scriptures, was in time transferred to the dialect of Magadha which the Buddha had spoken, and which, as the vehicle of his recorded discourses, became the sacred language of Buddhism studied today in Ceylon, Siam and Burma, but not in Magadha, which is today a part of the province of Bihar. This name, it may be noted, is identical with Vihara, a Buddhist monastery, and the district was so called because Buddhist Viharas were so numerous there in ancient days. While the alphabets of Ceylon, Burma and Siam, though differing slightly among themselves, are all derived from the same source as the alphabet in which Sanskrit and Hindi are written, these Buddhist alphabets have at first sight a very different appearance. This apparent difference has a very simple cause. The material used for writing is generally the same, namely, strips of the leaf of the palmyra palm. The writing was done in Northern India and the Ganges valley, as it is done in the village schools today, with a reed cut to a point. Its Hindi name is *kalam*, identical with the Greek *kalamos*, which means both "reed" and "pen", and the Latin *calamus*, so that *lapsus calami* means literally "a slip of the reed". With the reed is used ink made of soot or lamp-black, the original Indian ink. And, as the tip of the *kalam* is comparatively soft, it does not tear the fibre of the palm leaf strip. As a result, it is possible to draw horizontal or vertical lines without tearing the material, so that Sanskrit and Hindi have a square look. The Southern Indian languages, as also Sinhalese, are generally written with a steel stylus, so that care must be taken not to tear the fibre. As a result, the letters of these scripts tend to run into curves; they are rounded rather than square, though the characteristic parts of the letters are much the same as in Hindi.

Incidentally, in view of the fact that palm leaves and reeds, with a simple ink made of soot, are, as they have been for ages, the ordinary materials used for writing in India, the suggestion of Professor T. W. Rhys Davids that, in the time of the Buddha, "the lack of writing materials made lengthy books impossible," sounds somewhat absurd. The great American Orientalist, W. D. Whitney, writes more wisely when, discussing the transmission of the Veda, he says:

"While oral tradition continued to be the exoteric practice, writing might still be resorted to esoterically; collections might be made and arranged, treatises composed, texts compared and studied, by the initiated, while the results were communicated to the schools by oral teaching, and memorized by the neophytes."

This memorizing, as we have seen, is consciously made easier in the case of the Buddhist discourses, by constant repetition, while the popular appeal of the teaching is secured by introducing a good story. In the discourse with which we are at present concerned, the story element is provided by Ajatashatru, King of the land of Magadha, whose visit to the Buddha on an earlier occasion has been already recorded. It may be remembered that Ajatashatru, whose title recalls a Vedic king, many millenniums earlier, gave the Buddha a vivacious account of other teachers whose doctrines he had studied, that the teaching of Buddha appealed to him as being altogether superior, that he offered himself as a disciple of the Buddha and became, in fact, a lay disciple. The Buddha expressed his admiration for the young king, and said that he might have attained to a high degree of spiritual achievement, if he had not sinned by putting his own father to death. That is only one of several incidents recounted in the Buddhist scriptures, which show Ajatashatru as fiery, warlike and despotic in temper. This side of his character, and at the same time his great reverence for the Buddha, is made the starting point of our discourse.

Once upon a time, we are told, the Master was living at Rajagriha, the capital city of Magadha, on the mountain known as Vulture Peak. At that time the King of Magadha, Ajatashatru, son of the princess of Videha, had determined to attack the community of the Vajjians, against whom his anger had been aroused, so that he said: "What though the Vajjians be possessed of great power and might, I will

uproot the Vajjians, I will utterly destroy the Vajjians, I will bring utter ruin upon the Vajjians!”

So much for the violent spirit of King Ajatashatru. Now for his deep reverence for the Buddha, and his willingness to profit by the Buddha’s limitless wisdom and insight. Having thus declared his hatred of the Vajjians, Ajatashatru, King of Magadha, thus addressed his Brahman Chief Minister, whose name in the dialect of Magadha was Vassakara, that is, Rain-maker:

“Go thither, Brahman, where the Buddha is in residence, and having gone thither, on my behalf bow down at the feet of the Buddha, and wish him health and well-being, bodily vigour and ease. Then say to him, ‘Sir, the King of Magadha, Ajatashatru, son of the princess of Videha, is determined to attack the Vajjians, to uproot the Vajjians, utterly to destroy the Vajjians, to bring utter ruin upon the Vajjians.’ When you have said this, pay close attention to whatever the Master says, and bring word of it to me, for a Tathagata, one who has come as his predecessors came, cannot possibly speak anything but the truth!”

“So be it, Sire!” said Vassakara the Brahman, the Chief Minister of Magadha, obedient to King Ajatashatru; and causing carriages to be made ready, he entered one of the carriages and set forth from the city of Rajagriha toward the mountain Vulture Peak. So far as the way was passable for carriages, he proceeded in his carriage; then descending from his carriage, he went forward on foot to the place where the Master had his abode. Approaching the Master, he proffered to him the greetings of courtesy and friendship, and, having courteously greeted him, he seated himself at one side. And when he had seated himself at one side, the Brahman Vassakara, Magadha’s Chief Minister, thus addressed the Master:

“Sir Gautama, Ajatashatru of Magadha, son of the Videha princess, is determined to attack the Vajjians, to uproot the Vajjians, utterly to destroy the Vajjians, to bring utter ruin upon the Vajjians!”

At that time it happened that the noble Ananda was standing behind the Master, fanning the Master with a palm-leaf fan. The Master thus addressed the noble Ananda:

“Have you happened to hear, Ananda, whether the Vajjians meet

together frequently in concord and harmony?”

“I have heard, Sire, that the Vajjians meet together frequently in concord and harmony!”

“So long, Ananda, as the Vajjians continue to meet together frequently in concord and harmony, so long, Ananda, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline. Have you happened to hear, Ananda, whether the Vajjians meet together in full accord, rise up together in full accord, and carry out their work in full accord?”

“I have heard, Sire, that the Vajjians meet together in full accord, rise up together in full accord, and carry out their work in full accord!”

“So long, Ananda, as the Vajjians continue to meet together in full accord, rise up together in full accord, and carry out their work in full accord, so long, Ananda, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline. Have you happened to hear, Ananda, whether the Vajjians refrain from making laws that have not hitherto been made, and at the same time refrain from breaking the laws that have been made, acting in accordance with the ancient Vajjian laws of righteousness?”

“I have heard, Sire, that the Vajjians refrain from making laws that have not hitherto been made, and at the same time refrain from breaking the laws that have been made, acting in accordance with the ancient Vajjian laws of righteousness!”

“So long, Ananda, as the Vajjians refrain from making laws that have not hitherto been made, and at the same time refrain from breaking the laws that have been made, acting in accordance with the ancient Vajjian laws of righteousness, so long, Ananda, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline. Have you happened to hear, Ananda, whether the Vajjians, regarding such revered ancients as may be among the Vajjians, confer benefits upon them, greatly esteem them, showing them honour and respect, and give due weight to their wise judgements?”

“I have heard, Sire, that the Vajjians, regarding such revered ancients as may be among the Vajjians, confer benefits upon them, greatly esteem them, showing them honour and respect, and give due weight to their wise judgements!”

“So long, Ananda, as the Vajjians, regarding such revered ancients as may be among them, confer benefits upon them, greatly esteem them, showing them honour and respect, and give due weight to their wise judgements, so long, Ananda, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline. Have you happened to hear, Ananda, whether among the Vajjians there is forcible abduction of the women and girls of their families?”

“I have heard, Sire, that there is no forcible abduction of the women and girls among the Vajjians!”

“So long, Ananda, as there is no forcible abduction of the women and girls among the Vajjians, so long, Ananda, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline. Have you happened to hear, Ananda, regarding the shrines that are among the Vajjians, whether within their abodes or without, whether the Vajjians confer offerings upon them, greatly esteem them, showing them honour and respect, not stinting the offerings and service which have been offered and rendered from of old?”

“I have heard, Sire, regarding the shrines that are among the Vajjians, whether within their abodes or without, that the Vajjians confer offerings upon them, greatly esteem them, showing them honour and respect, not stinting the offerings and service which have been offered and rendered from of old!”

“So long, Ananda, as, regarding the shrines that are among the Vajjians, whether within their abodes or without, the Vajjians confer offerings upon them, greatly esteem them, showing them honour and respect, not stinting the offerings and service which have been offered and rendered from of old, so long, Ananda, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline. Have you happened to hear, Ananda, whether among the Arhats of the Vajjians the law of righteousness is kept, concerning things enjoined or forbidden, whether Arhats from other regions come to their realm, while those Arhats who have thus come, dwell serenely in their realm?”

“I have heard, Sire, that among the Arhats of the Vajjians the law of righteousness is kept, concerning things enjoined or forbidden, that Arhats from other regions come to their realm, while those Arhats who have thus come, dwell serenely in their realm!”

“So long, Ananda, as among the Arhats of the Vajjians the law of righteousness is kept, concerning things enjoined or forbidden, so long as Arhats from other regions come to their realm, while those Arhats who have thus come, dwell serenely in their realm, so long, Ananda, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline.”

And so the Master addressed Vassakara the Brahman, the Chief Minister of Magadha:

“Once upon a time, Brahman, I was at the city of Vesali, at the Sarandada temple, and there I taught these seven salutary rules of righteousness to the Vajjians; and so long, Brahman, as these seven salutary rules of righteousness shall stand among the Vajjians, so long as the Vajjians shall continue in these seven salutary rules of righteousness, so long, Brahman, may the increase of the Vajjians be looked for, and not their decline.”

When the Master had thus spoken, the Brahman Vassakara, the Chief Minister of Magadha, said this:

“By keeping even a single one of these salutary rules of righteousness, Sir Gautama, the increase of the Vajjians might be looked for, and not their decline; much more when they keep all seven righteous rules. Therefore it is certain, Sir Gautama, that the Vajjians cannot be overcome in war by Ajatashatru, king of Magadha, except through diplomacy or by fomenting discord among them. So now, Sir Gautama, we must be going, for we have many things which must be done!”

“Do whatever thou judgest to be timely, Brahman!”

And so the Brahman Vassakara, Chief Minister of Magadha, well pleased and approving what the Master had said, arose from his seat and departed.

There is a highly coloured and enthusiastic account of the visit which the Buddha spoke of, to the city of Vesali, in the *Dhammapada* Commentary already referred to. We are told that the town was magnificent and wealthy, that it was ruled by seven thousand, seven hundred and seven princes, the same Vajjians whom King Ajatashatru had it in his heart to attack and subdue; that these princes, who took turns in exercising supreme power, had each his palace and his park. The city was close to the bank of the Ganges, and the Buddha made his approach by boat, along the great river, attended by five hundred

disciples and splendidly received by the princes and peoples of Vesali.

The sevenfold precepts which he framed for the Vajjians are of great interest and value. We remember that, before reaching supreme enlightenment, Siddhartha had been a prince, the heir apparent of a kingdom. In these precepts we have the rules of government which he might have followed, had he become a temporal ruler. But there is a still deeper interest. Underlying each of these rules of policy there is a spiritual principle, a principle of conservation, valid for such a movement as that in which we ourselves are taking part. Each one of the rules may well be considered in this light, with the question, to what degree we are adhering to the spiritual principle involved.

Some such reflection concerning the spiritual application of the rules he had just formulated, seems to have come into the Buddha's mind, for the story continues:

And so the Master, not long after the Brahman Vassakara, the Chief Minister of Magadha, had departed, thus addressed the noble Ananda:

"Go thou, Ananda, and as many disciples as are in residence in Rajagriha, do thou assemble them in the hall of services!"

"So be it, Sire!" the noble Ananda replied, obedient to the word of the Master, and as many disciples as were in residence in Rajagriha, all these he assembled in the hall of services; then, coming to the place where the Master was, and making salutation to the Master, he stood on one side and spoke thus to the Master:

"Sire, the Order of disciples is assembled. Let the Master now carry out his purpose!"

And so the Master arose from his seat and, going to the hall of services, seated himself on the seat which was prepared for him, and, having seated himself, the Master thus addressed the disciples:

"I shall teach you seven salutary rules of righteousness, disciples; heed them well and inscribe them on your hearts as I speak them!"

"So be it, Sire!" the disciples responded to the Master. The Master spoke thus:

"So long, disciples, as the disciples shall meet together frequently, holding frequent meetings, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

"So long, disciples, as the disciples shall meet in harmony, shall rise

up together in harmony, and in harmony shall carry out the works of the Order, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples refrain from making laws that have not hitherto been made, and at the same time refrain from breaking the laws that have been made, and shall remain steadfast in the performance of the precepts of the teaching which have been laid down, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples confer honour upon the seniors who have served long, the fathers of the Order, the leaders of the Order, greatly esteeming them, showing them honour and respect, and giving due weight to their wise judgements, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall not come under the sway of the desire of sensation, which arises within them, and which leads to the bondage of rebirth, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall prefer their quiet dwellings in the forest, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples, each one of them, shall practise recollection so that qualified co-disciples may come to join them, and that co-disciples may dwell among them in quietude and well-being, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as these seven salutary rules of righteousness remain among the disciples, so long as the disciples stand firm in these seven salutary rules of righteousness, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“Yet other seven salutary rules of righteousness, disciples, I declare to you; heed them well and inscribe them on your hearts as I speak them!”

“So be it, Sire!” the disciples responded to the Master. The Master spoke thus:

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall not make themselves a pleasure garden of rites and ceremonies, so long as they shall not

delight in rites and ceremonies, so long as they shall not be absorbed in rites and ceremonies, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall not make themselves a pleasure garden of talk, so long as they shall not delight in talk, so long as they shall not be absorbed in talk, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall not make themselves a pleasure garden of dreaming, so long as they shall not delight in dreaming, so long as they shall not be absorbed in dreaming, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall not make themselves a pleasure garden of society, so long as they shall not delight in society, so long as they shall not be absorbed in society, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall not harbour sinful desires, so long as they shall not come under the sway of sinful desires, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall abstain from evil friendships, evil companionships, evil associations, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall not seek success in this lower world as their goal, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as these seven salutary rules of righteousness remain among the disciples, so long as the disciples stand firm in these seven salutary rules of righteousness, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“Yet other seven salutary rules of righteousness, disciples, I declare to you; heed them well and inscribe them on your hearts as I speak them!”

“So be it, Sire!” the disciples responded to the Master. The Master spoke thus:

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall be full of faith, so long as they shall be full of humility, so long as they shall shrink from evil-doing, so long as they shall follow after wisdom, so long as they shall be valorous in effort, so long as they shall be instant in recollection, so

long as they shall possess discrimination, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as these seven salutary rules of righteousness remain among the disciples, so long as the disciples stand firm in these seven salutary rules of righteousness, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“Yet other seven salutary rules of righteousness, disciples, I declare to you; heed them well and inscribe them on your hearts as I speak them!”

“So be it, Sire!” the disciples responded to the Master. The Master spoke thus:

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall diligently practise the seven members of wisdom, namely, recollection, careful search into the law of righteousness, valour of heart, joy, serenity, contemplation and detachment, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as these seven salutary rules of righteousness remain among the disciples, so long as the disciples stand firm in these seven salutary rules of righteousness, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“Yet other seven salutary rules of righteousness, disciples, I declare to you; heed them well and inscribe them on your hearts as I speak them!”

“So be it, Sire!” the disciples responded to the Master. The Master spoke thus:

“So long, disciples, as the disciples shall cultivate discernment of the impermanency of worldly things, shall cultivate discernment of the unreality of the separate self, shall cultivate discernment of the impurity of lust, shall cultivate discernment of the evil fruit of sin, shall cultivate discernment of the abandonment of sorrow, shall cultivate discernment of revulsion from desire, shall cultivate discernment of the cessation of desire, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“So long, disciples, as these seven salutary rules of righteousness remain among the disciples, so long as the disciples stand firm in these seven salutary rules of righteousness, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

“Six salutary rules of righteousness, disciples, I declare to you; heed

them well and inscribe them on your hearts as I speak them!"

"So be it, Sire!" the disciples responded to the Master. The Master spoke thus:

"So long, disciples, as the disciples shall establish and preserve among co-disciples brotherly love in bodily acts, brotherly love in acts of speech, brotherly love in acts of mind, both openly and secretly, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

"So long, disciples, as the disciples, concerning whatever good things they may receive, righteously gained, in the case of such things received, even if it be only a bowl of food, shall divide them without partiality, considering them as joint possessions of the co-disciples, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

"So long, disciples, as the disciples shall keep the precepts unbroken, inviolate, undistorted, unspotted, the precepts which make for liberation, which are revered by the wise, uncoloured by desire, conducive to contemplation, accepted by all, guarding them among the co-disciples both openly and secretly, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

"So long, disciples, as the disciples shall preserve the noble teaching which leads to salvation, to the complete destruction of sorrow for him who lives obedient to it, so long as this teaching shall be accepted by all the co-disciples both openly and secretly, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline.

"So long, disciples, as these six salutary rules of righteousness remain among the disciples, so long as the disciples stand firm in these six salutary rules of righteousness, so long may the increase of the disciples be looked for, and not their decline."

There, verily, the Master, dwelling at Rajagriha, on the mountain called Vulture Peak, addressed to his disciples this teaching abounding in righteousness, saying: "This is right conduct, this is contemplation, this is wisdom; contemplation enriched by right conduct bears much fruit and many blessings; wisdom enriched by contemplation bears much fruit and many blessings; the heart which is enriched by wisdom is altogether set free from the poisons, to wit, the poison of lust, the poison of the desire of life, the poison of false beliefs; the poison of unwisdom."

A High Disciple, a Prophecy, and a Miracle

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The passages of the Buddhist Suttas here translated contain many things which illumine different sides of the Buddha's character. There is, first, an often repeated formula which compresses counsels of supreme wisdom into a sentence. There is an illustration of the Buddha's fine irony, this time directed to the chief among his high disciples. There is a prophecy, a very interesting comment on which was made a good many years ago in *The Theosophist*, while it was still under the guidance of its heroic foundress. Then there is the story of what it is customary to call a miracle—in reality an illustration of a Master's command of natural forces. First in order comes the counsel of wisdom:

And so, when the Master had remained at Rajagriha as long as seemed good to him, he addressed the noble Ananda, saying: "Let us go, Ananda, let us betake ourselves to Ambalattika."

"So be it, Sire!" the noble Ananda responded. And so the Master, with a great company of disciples, departed to Ambalattika.

There, at Ambalattika, the Master dwelt in the king's palace. While the Master was dwelling there at Ambalattika in the king's palace, he addressed to his disciples this teaching abounding in righteousness, saying: "This is right conduct, this is contemplation, this is wisdom; contemplation enriched by right conduct bears much fruit and many blessings; wisdom enriched by contemplation bears

much fruit and many blessings; the heart which is enriched by wisdom is altogether set free from the poisons, to wit, the poison of lust, the poison of the desire of life, the poison of false beliefs, the poison of unwisdom." It has been said of Masters that they are great in wisdom, even greater in holiness, since right conduct, of which holiness is the perfect flower, is the first and indispensable step toward wisdom. It would be both interesting and profitable to consider how far the clouds of materialistic science, which are now beginning to break, owe their obscuration to the ignoring of this fundamental principle. The word just translated "heart" is *chittam*, which means the whole consciousness; only when developed and expanded equally can consciousness discern that reality, the perception of which is wisdom, and consciousness not responsive to the law of righteousness is not fully developed, it is lop-sided and incomplete. A good many scientists, especially those who are in the lower ranks, speak and think rather disparagingly of "mere morality"; they do not realize that they are thereby defining the limits of their perception. They may gather the fruit of knowledge, but not of wisdom. Right conduct is the first step, and is indispensable. The seeker for wisdom who is founded upon right conduct may then wisely enter into meditation, the patient brooding of the mind on a subject of thought, which leads to wisdom. A wise distinction is drawn by students of Western mysticism between meditation and contemplation: meditation is the preliminary work of the purified mind, distributing and setting in the best order the parts of a problem, and making thoughtful comparison with kindred problems; contemplation is the serene insight, kindled by the inner light, which falls upon the parts of a problem thus thoughtfully considered. But, for any true ordering of a problem, right conduct must come first. There must be white light. If the light be coloured by "lust, the desire of life, false beliefs, unwisdom", the elements of the lower self, there can be no true seeing. Scientists take infinite pains, and, rightly, to exclude all foreign factors from a critical experiment; disciples must take equal pains to exclude the "poisons", if they seek right perception. They must build upon right conduct. This is fundamental, and therefore we find the Buddha repeating these sentences again and again, so that they may be engraved on the memories and hearts of his disciples.

The story brings us next to the finely ironical reproof of Sariputta. The chief of the Buddha's disciples, to whom tradition gives the title, "Leader of the Army of the Law of Righteousness", held in the inner circle about the Buddha a position like that of Peter, traditionally named "Prince of the Apostles", in the group of disciples chosen by Christ. There is a profoundly interesting contrast in tone between the reproof administered to Sariputta and the rebukes which the impulsive Peter drew down upon himself. The narrative of the incident begins:

And so, when the Master had remained at Ambalathika as long as seemed good to him, he addressed the noble Ananda, saying: "Let us go, Ananda, let us betake ourselves to Nalanda."

"So be it, Sire!" the noble Ananda responded. And so the Master, with a great company of disciples, departed to Nalanda. There, at Nalanda, the Master dwelt in the Pavarika mango grove.

Before going on with the story it is interesting to note that a famous university was later established at Nalanda by the followers of the Buddha; for a long time it was the centre of religious and philosophical culture in northern India. Pending that foundation, the Buddha and his disciples camped in the mango grove, a huge cavern of green coolness, with the dark brown stems of the mangoes growing in sandy soil and holding up the wide canopy of glossy leaves. So deep is the shade that there is little grass, but a smooth floor fitted for the setting up of booths well protected from the blaze of the Indian sky. The Buddha, as the "Birth Stories" show, was a lover and keen observer of birds, attributing to himself such births as the "Wise Partridge"; in the green gloom of the mango grove he would have seen the gold and black orioles flitting to and fro, uttering eloquent things in their rich contralto tones—the orioles of India are close kin to the golden orioles of France; he would have seen striped hoopoes magnificent in their war-bonnets, stepping sedately across the sandy floor; he would have seen grey squirrels darting from tree to tree, chattering at each other excitedly. And, while so resting among these lovely things, he would have seen the approach of his chief disciple:

And so the noble Sariputta, coming near to where the Master was, and drawing near to the Master, respectfully saluted him and seated

himself at one side. Thus seated at one side, the noble Sariputta spoke thus to the Master:

“So full of faith am I, Sire, in the Master, that I am persuaded that never has there been, never shall there be, nor in the present is there found any other, whether ascetic or Brahman, greater and wiser than my Master, that is, respecting the supreme illumination!”

The Master answered: “Lofty and magnificent are the words that thou hast spoken, O Sariputta, uttering, as it were, the triumphant roar of a lion: ‘So full of faith am I, Sire, in the Master, that I am persuaded that never has there been, never shall there be, nor in the present is there found any other, whether ascetic or Brahman, greater and wiser than my Master, that is, respecting the supreme illumination!’ Without doubt, O Sariputta, whatever Arhats, perfect Buddhas, there have been in the far-reaching pathway of the past, these Masters thou hast known, encompassing them in thy consciousness, so as to perceive that such was the righteousness of these Masters, such was their knowledge of the Law of Righteousness, such was their illumination, such was their conduct, so far had they attained to liberation?”

“Not so, of a truth, Sire!”

“Well then, Sariputta, whatsoever Arhats, perfect Buddhas, there shall be in the far-reaching pathway of the future, all these Masters thou hast known, encompassing them in thy consciousness, so as to perceive that such shall be the righteousness of these Masters, such their knowledge of the Law of Righteousness, such their illumination, such their conduct, so far shall they attain to liberation?”

“Not so, of a truth, Sire!”

“Well then, Sariputta, have I, as Arhat, as perfect Buddha of the present time, been so well known by thee, encompassing me with thy consciousness, that thou hast been able to say, ‘Such is the righteousness of the Master, such is his knowledge of the Law of Righteousness, such is his illumination, such is his conduct, so far has he attained to liberation?’”

“Not so, of a truth, Sire!”

“So, then, Sariputta, thou hast not a complete knowledge of the consciousness of the Arhats, perfect Buddhas, of the past, the future,

and of the present time. Why, then, Sariputta, hast thou uttered these lofty and magnificent words, roaring, as it were, the roar of a lion?"

The Buddha conveyed more than one lesson in this rather crushing reproof administered to his chief apostle. He wished Sariputta to come to a realization of the real scope of his own words; it is, first of all, a lesson in meditation. At the same time, the Buddha awakens some intuition of the might, majesty, dominion and power of the Great Lodge of Masters, backward along the far-reaching pathway of the past, forward along the far-reaching pathway of the future, and in the everlasting Now; of the holiness, the wisdom, the liberation of the Masters. But there is one lesson more: their splendid humility. With fine irony the Buddha reproves the ecstatic outpouring of the overzealous Sariputta; at the same time he rebukes the great disciple's flattery, however sincere it may be. There is an inner unity of spirit here with the reply of Christ: "Why callest thou me good?"

Sariputta accepts the reproof, and makes a rejoinder which does credit at once to his devotion and to the quickness of his mind:

"It is true, Sire, that I have not a complete knowledge of the consciousness of the Arhats, perfect Buddhas, of the past, the future and of the present time. But I have a perception of the lineage of the Law of Righteousness. It is, Sire, as though a king possessed a city on the frontier, firmly founded, with firm walls and towers, and with one gate. There the king's warden kept the gate, a man learned, experienced, possessing wisdom, so that he kept out those who were unknown, and admitted those who were known. So making the complete circuit of that city's walls, the warden might not scrutinize every joint in the wall, every crevice in the wall, through which only a cat could find its way out. But he would know of a certainty that every considerable living being which entered the city or departed from it—every one of them must enter or depart by the gate which he guarded. In just this way, Sire, is the lineage of the Law of Righteousness known to me. Whatsoever Arhats, perfect Buddhas, Sire, were on the far-reaching pathway of the past, dispelling the five obscurities (envy, passion, vacillation, sloth, and unbelief), these faults which darken the understanding, firmly established in the four degrees of recollection and meditation, thoroughly exercising themselves in the seven

members of awakened spiritual intelligence (that is to say, in recollection, examination, valour, joy, serenity, contemplation, detachment), thereby enjoyed the unsurpassable supreme illumination. And I know that the same thing will be true of the Arhats, perfect Buddhas, on the far-reaching pathway of the future. I know, too, that this is true, Sire, of the Master in the present!”

No comment of the Buddha on this fine piece of special pleading has been recorded. But he must have smiled in serene enjoyment of his great disciple’s intellectual resourcefulness. The narrative continues:

There, at Nalanda, the Master dwelt in the Pavarika mango grove. And there he addressed to his disciples this teaching abounding in righteousness, saying: “This is right conduct, this is contemplation, this is wisdom; contemplation enriched by right conduct bears much fruit and many blessings; wisdom enriched by contemplation bears much fruit and many blessings; the heart which is enriched by wisdom is altogether set free from the poisons, to wit, the poison of lust, the poison of the desire of life, the poison of false beliefs, the poison of un wisdom.”

And so, when the Master had dwelt at Nalanda as long as seemed good to him, he addressed the noble Ananda, saying: “Let us go, Ananda, let us betake ourselves to Pataligama.”

“So be it, Sire!” the noble Ananda responded. And so the Master, with a great company of disciples, departed to Pataligama.

The lay-disciples who were at Pataligama heard that the Master had come to Pataligama. Therefore these lay-disciples betook themselves to the place where the Master was, and, respectfully saluting the Master, seated themselves at one side. Being thus seated at one side, the lay-disciples of Pataligama said: “Sire, let the Master take up his abode in the rest-house!” The Master by his silence gave consent.

And so the lay-disciples of Pataligama, seeing that the Master had consented to be their guest, rose from their seats, respectfully saluted the Master, keeping the right hand toward him, and betook themselves to the rest-house. Betaking themselves thither, and fully preparing the rest-house for occupation, they set seats in order, brought a jar of pure water, set up an oil lamp, and, having completed their preparations, went back to the place where the Buddha was, and, respectfully

saluting him, stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, these lay-disciples of Pataligama spoke thus to the Master:

“Sire, the rest-house is fully prepared for occupation, seats have been set in order, a jar of pure water has been brought, an oil lamp has been set up. The time has come for the Master to do what he thinks fitting!”

And so the Master, donning his robe and taking his bowl, went with the company of his disciples to the rest-house, washed his feet, and entered the rest-house, taking his seat at the central pillar and sitting with his face toward the East. The disciples of the Order thereupon also washed their feet, and entered the rest-house, taking their seats against the Western wall, setting themselves with the Master in front of them. Finally, the lay-disciples of Pataligama washed their feet also, entered the rest-house and seated themselves against the Eastern wall, facing the West, and respectfully taking their places with regard to the Master.

And so the Master thus addressed the lay-disciples of Pataligama: “There are five miseries which beset the wrong-doer because he has fallen from right conduct. What are the five?”

“First, householders, because the wrong-doer fallen from right conduct is overcome by sloth, he incurs the loss of his possessions. This is the first misery that besets him.

“Once again, householders, the wrong-doer fallen from right conduct is overtaken by ill repute. This is the second misery that besets him.

“Once again, householders, concerning the wrong-doer fallen from righteous conduct, whatever society he enters, whether a gathering of Kshatriyas, a gathering of Brahmans, a gathering of householders, or a gathering of ascetics, he enters that gathering devoid of confidence, downcast. This is the third misery that besets him.

“Once again, householders, the wrong-doer fallen from right conduct, when he reaches his appointed time, is afflicted with dismay. This is the fourth misery that besets him.

“Once again, householders, the wrong-doer fallen from right conduct, when he is separated from the body after death, finds himself in an unhappy state of affliction, woe, punishment,

retribution. This is the fifth misery that besets him. These, then, householders, are the five miseries that overtake the wrong-doer who has fallen from right conduct.

“And likewise there are five blessings which rest upon the man of good conduct, who follows after righteousness. What are the five?”

“First, householders, the man of good conduct who follows after righteousness, since he does not fall into sloth, gains much stored-up wealth. This is the first blessing that rests on him.

“Once again, householders, the man of good conduct who follows after righteousness, gains fair fame and repute. This is the second blessing that rests upon him.

“Once again, householders, concerning the man of good conduct who follows after righteousness, whatever society he enters, whether a gathering of Kshatriyas, a gathering of Brahmans, a gathering of householders, or a gathering of ascetics, he is confident, not downcast. This is the third blessing that rests upon him.

“Once again, householders, the man of good conduct who follows after righteousness, when he reaches his appointed time, is serene of heart. This is the fourth blessing that rests upon him.

“Once again, householders, the man of good conduct who follows after righteousness, when he is separated from the body after death, finds himself in a happy state of blessedness. This is the fifth blessing that rests upon him. These, then, householders, are the five blessings that rest upon the man of good conduct who follows after righteousness.”

And so, when the Master had instructed the lay-disciples of Pataligama far into the night, encouraging them in good works, filling them with vigour and delight, he dismissed them, saying: “The night is far gone, householders! It is time for you to do what is fitting!”

“So be it, Sire!” responded the lay-disciples of Pataligama, answering the Master, and rising from their seats they respectfully saluted the Master, keeping the right hand toward him, and took their departure. And the Master, not long after the lay-disciples of Pataligama had taken their departure, entered the chamber in which he might enjoy solitude.

So far, the journey to Pataligama, which, being interpreted, means

the Village of the Sweet-scented Trumpet-vine. Two aspects of this incident are worth noting: first, the sense of courtesy and order which invariably ruled all acts of the Buddha and the members of the Order, illustrated here by the seating of the Buddha, his full disciples, and the lay-disciples of Pataligama, whom he was visiting, as well as in the careful preparations which these lay-disciples made for his reception; second, the directly practical nature of his teaching at Pataligama, exactly suited to the problems of men who, adhering to his spiritual leadership, yet remained in their own homes, and there met the ordinary problems of daily life. The clear distinction between the members of the Order who were seeking the transmutation of full discipleship, and these excellent and devoted lay-disciples, who were not directly seeking that transmutation, is fully brought out by the scope and character of the lessons in the rest-house. And here, as always, the Buddha used iteration to make it easy for his hearers to remember—to make it almost impossible for them to forget. The narrative resumes:

At that very time Sunidha and Vassakara, chief ministers of Ajatashatru, King of Magadha, were building a stronghold at Pataligama as a defence against the Vajjians. At that time also many thousand *devatas* (ethereal powers) had taken possession of the region of Pataligama. In whatever place *devatas* of great power take possession of the region, they turn the hearts of rulers and chief ministers of great power to build residences in that place. And so the *devatas* of middle power or of lesser power constrain the hearts of rulers and chief ministers of middle or lesser power to build dwellings.

So it befell that the Master with divine vision, pure, surpassing the vision of the sons of men, saw these thousands of *devatas* that had taken possession of the places in Pataligama. And so, as night was lightening to dawn, the Master arose and said to the noble Ananda:

“Ananda, who is building a stronghold at Pataligama?”

“Sunidha and Vassakara, Sire, the chief ministers of Magadha, are building a stronghold at Pataligama as a defence against the Vajjians!”

“They act, Ananda, as though they had taken counsel with the Thirty-three Celestials, these chief ministers of Magadha, Sunidha and Vassakara, in building a stronghold at Pataligama as a defence against

the Vajjians. In this very place, Ananda, I beheld with divine vision, pure, surpassing the vision of the sons of men, thousands of *devatas* who have taken possession of the region of Pataligama. And in whatever place ethereal powers of great influence take possession of the region, they turn the hearts of great rulers and chief ministers to build residences in that place, and so with the ethereal powers of middle or lesser influence, who constrain the hearts of rulers and ministers of middle or lesser power. to build dwellings. So far, Ananda, as the Aryan people have their dwellings, so far as merchants wend their way, this shall be the chief city, Pataliputra, a central city. Nevertheless, Ananda, three dangers shall threaten Pataliputra—the dangers of fire, of water and of dissension between friends!”

Pataligama, the Village of the Sweet-scented Trumpet-vine, was on the south bank of the Ganges, just below the point where the Son river enters it from the south, close to longitude 85° East, not far from the modern city of Patna. As the Buddha foresaw and foretold, the village became a great and wealthy city, under circumstances thus set forth in an authoritative historical study entitled “Shakya Muni’s Place in History”, which was printed in *The Theosophist* and reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy*:

“Quite independently of the Buddhist version, there exists the historical fact recorded in the Brahmanical as well as in the Burmese and Tibetan versions, that in the year 63 of Buddha, Susinago of Benares was chosen king by the people of Pataliputra, who made away with Ajatashatru’s dynasty. Susinago removed the capital of Magadha from Rajagriha to Vaisali, while his successor Kalashoka removed it in his turn to Pataliputra. It was during the reign of the latter that the prophecy of Buddha concerning Patalibat or Pataliputra—a small village during His time—was realized.”

The prophecy has just been quoted. King Ajatashatru appears several times in these Suttas: as the king who visited and revered the Buddha, but was debarred from becoming a full disciple because he had slain his father. Perhaps it was the karmic retribution for this parricide that led the people of Pataliputra to “make away with Ajatashatru’s dynasty”: he appears again as fulminating against the

Vajjians and as sending his Brahman minister Vassakara, the Rain-maker, to find out from the Buddha whether he could hope to overcome them. Evidently the oracle which the Rain-maker brought back dissuaded him from making his contemplated attack, but he determined to build a fortress at Pataligama to prevent the Vajjians from attacking him. Therefore he sent his two ministers to see to the building of a new stronghold near the village. The year 63 of Buddha, that is, 63 years after the Great Decease, corresponds to the year 480 before our era. The Kalashoka mentioned in the historical essay cited, who is also called Chandragupta, belonged to the Rajput family of the Moryas. At a later date Pataliputra is named in the fifth Edict inscribed on the rocks at Girnar by order of Dharmashoka, the great Buddhist convert and emperor. The excellent monograph, *Asoka: The Buddhist Emperor of India*, by Vincent A. Smith, late of the Indian Civil Service, tells us that:

“The ancient city of Pataliputra, like its modern successor (Patna), was a long and narrow parallelogram, about nine miles in length and a mile and a half in breadth. The wooden walls seen by Megasthenes, which were protected by a wide and deep moat, were pierced by sixty-four gates and crowned by five hundred and seventy towers. Asoka built an outer masonry wall, and beautified the city with innumerable stone buildings so richly decorated, that in after ages they were ascribed to the genii.”

Thus the first part of the Buddha's prophecy was fulfilled. The small village, in whose rest-house he and his disciples were so hospitably welcomed by the lay-disciples, became the first city of the Indian world, the imperial capital of Asoka. Concerning the three dangers which threatened the great city, still unbuilt, we may quote from the monograph already cited:

“The greater part of the ancient city (Pataliputra) still lies buried in the silt of the rivers under Patna and Bankipore at a depth of from ten to twenty feet. In several places the remains of the wooden palisade mentioned by Megasthenes have been exposed by casual excavations, and numerous traces have been found of massive brick and magnificent stone buildings. The

excavations, as far as they have been carried, fully confirm the accuracy of the accounts given by Megasthenes and the Chinese pilgrims of the extent and magnificence of the Maurya capital.”

So far the prophecy and its fulfilment. Now concerning the miracle. Since King Ajatashatru had great reverence for the Buddha, and had expressed this reverence to his chief minister, the Rain-maker, it was wholly natural for the Rain-maker and his ministerial colleague to show the Buddha every attention, to press hospitality upon him, which he accepted, graciously returning thanks on behalf of himself and his disciples. The narrative goes on:

And so the Master, having thanked Sunidha and Vassakara, chief ministers of Magadha, arose and departed. And the two chief ministers followed after the Master, saying: “By what gate the ascetic Gautama departs, that shall be named Gautama Gate; and by what ferry the ascetic Gautama shall cross the river Ganga, that shall be called Gautama Ferry.” So the gate by which the Master went out was named Gautama Gate.

And so the Master went on to the Ganga river. At that time the Ganga river was full to the brink, so that a crow standing on the bank might drink. Some of the men who were there sought a boat, some of them sought a raft, some of them sought a float of branches, desiring to cross to the other shore. But the Master, just as a mighty man might stretch forth his arm, or, having stretched it forth, draw it back again, disappeared from the hither bank of the Ganga river and immediately was standing on the farther bank, with the company of his disciples.

The Master saw the men seeking boat or raft or float, and, seeing them, sang this song:

“They who cross the watery waste, after building a causeway,
While fools seek floats of boughs,-they are indeed the wise.”

The story of this crossing of the Ganges may remind us of the story of another Master, who likewise had command over the wind and the waves:

“Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.”

Thus that Master carried his disciples with him to the other shore.

Those who are ready to accept the view that great Masters have such power over the elements, will see in both narratives a record of that power. Others may be content to see in the two events an eloquent symbol of a Master's protective power over his children, whom he takes with him to the farther shore, the shore of salvation, across the "watery waste" of psychical illusion.

Some Parables of the Buddha

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It has been well said that when a great Master incarnates, his whole life is a parable. Not only does he teach spiritual law; he visibly lives spiritual law at every moment of his existence. And, since the central spiritual fact of our lives on earth is struggle, conflict, trial, it is natural and inevitable that, in the life of a great Master incarnated in the world, there should be formal representation of trial and conflict, in order to make more intelligible to mankind the struggles through which we must all pass, the temptations which we must face and overcome, if we are to go forward on the heavenly way.

The temptations of Christ in the wilderness are of this nature: a rendering visible and intelligible of trials and conflicts which all men must face, because they are inherent in the very nature of our life, with its necessary adjustment between the strong tendencies of the personal and the universal self. The individual life must first be evolved to full consciousness and freedom of action. It must then be subordinated to the universal life, its fate merged in the larger destinies of the universal. And that transition, that transformation, can hardly take place without conflict. If accomplished wholly without resistance, the result would probably be limp, negative, without spiritual force.

Therefore, in the history of Christ, we have the temptation of the Master by Satan, with the offer of "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them"; and it is of great interest to find a similar trial recorded of the Buddha, before he had attained to full illumination.

There is, further, a subtle ingenuity in the proposal made by Mara, the tempter, in the trial of Prince Siddhartha, in contrast with the brazen suggestion of Satan, that Jesus should fall down and worship him.

The story goes that Prince Siddhartha had renounced his royal heritage, his family, every tie that bound him to the world; and that, after inflicting upon his body the extremes of self-discipline and privation, he had retired to a forest hut among the Himalaya mountains, there to meditate and search for illumination. The region which he chose was not a solitude of ice, forests and rocks. There were hill tribes at no great distance, with their chieftains and rulers, as there are today, even high among the hills. And we are told that at that time the chieftains and princes of the tribes ruled oppressively over the tribesmen. When Prince Siddhartha saw men persecuted and punished by these wicked princes, in contrast with the just and orderly government to which he had been habituated at Kapilavastu, under his royal father's rule, he was moved to compassion. And being moved to compassion he considered thus within himself:

“Is it not possible to exercise sovereignty without killing or causing to kill, without conquering or causing to conquer, without grieving or causing grief, with justice and with righteousness?”

Now it happened that Mara, the evil tempter, perceived within himself the thought that was passing in the mind of Prince Siddhartha, and reflected thus: “The ascetic of the Gautama clan is considering within himself: ‘Is it not possible to exercise sovereignty?’ It must therefore be that he harbours within him a desire for sovereignty. And this desire for sovereignty may well cause a loss of recollection. If he does exercise sovereignty, I may be able to catch him off his guard. I will, therefore, draw near to him and fan the spirit of ambition within him!”

Therefore Mara, the tempter, drew near to Prince Siddhartha and thus addressed him:

“Noble Sir! Would it not be well for you yourself to exercise sovereignty? For it would be possible for you to exercise sovereignty without killing or causing to kill, without conquering or causing to conquer, without grieving or causing to grieve, with justice and righteousness!”

Prince Siddhartha thus replied to Mara, the tempter:

“Evil One, what do you see in me that causes you to speak to me thus?”

Mara, the tempter, answered Prince Siddhartha:

“Noble Sir! You have fully developed the four principles of magic power. If you should formulate the resolve: ‘Let the Himalaya, the king of mountains, be turned to gold!’ the Himalaya would straightway become gold. And, assuming sovereignty, you could work with this gold unlimited good!”

But Prince Siddhartha replied: “I admonish you, Evil One! I have nothing in common with you!”

Since it is improbable that the discomfited Mara brought this story to the recorders of the Buddhist scriptures, the narrative must come from the Buddha himself. It is evident that he dramatized and made objective an inner experience. The story of Mara, the tempter, is a parable.

And in fact, apart from the more formal discourses delivered upon set occasions, as when the Buddha was called on to address visitors who came to inquire concerning his teaching, we shall find that much of his doctrine took the form of parable, of vivid stories so perfectly formed as to be readily understood and remembered without effort.

Among these parables, many of which are touched with humour, is one which conveys a vital lesson in a highly original way. It concerns a girl who, making the acquaintance of eggs, conceived such a liking for them that she would thenceforth be content with no other kind of food. At first she was willing to wait until her mother gave her an egg. But presently the craving for eggs grew upon her, so that she went to the hens’ nests and helped herself to their eggs.

A certain hen had made a secluded nest, and was beginning to lay, looking forward to a happy brood of chicks. But the girl, alert in her search, discovered the nest, and day by day, as a fresh egg was laid, appropriated it and regaled herself.

The hen was incensed against the girl, and expressed her hostility in this earnest wish: “When my term comes to an end, and I pass out of this existence, may I be reborn as a destroyer, so that I may be able to devour your children!”

So her term was fulfilled and she died, and in that very house she was reborn as a cat. And the girl likewise reached her term and died, and in that very house she was reborn as a chicken which grew into a hen. When the time came for her to lay eggs, the cat discovered them and ate them; and this happened not once only, but a second time and a third.

Then said the hen who had been the girl: "Three times have you eaten my eggs, and you would eat me also! When I have passed out of this state of existence, may I be reborn in such a shape that I can devour you and your children!"

So, when her term was fulfilled and she passed out of existence, she was reborn as a leopardess. And the cat which had been a hen likewise passed out of existence and was reborn as a doe. And when the doe brought forth fawns, the leopardess came and devoured both the fawns and the doe. And thus it continued through five hundred existences; each in turn devoured the other and brought suffering upon the other. And finally they were reborn as women, the enmity still persisting between them.

At this time it happened that they heard the teaching of the Buddha, and were converted. Wherefore it is said: "Hatred ceases not by hatred. Hatred ceases only by love."

Sometimes the Buddha wove into a parable the incidents that happened in the training of disciples, as in the following story, which teaches a lesson of great profundity and beauty.

It may be remembered that the senior disciple, Sariputra, was somewhat satirically taken to task by the Buddha, when he broke out into ecstasies concerning the supreme wisdom of his Master. In the following incident, Sariputra's zeal seems once again to have outstripped his wisdom. He had in his care, it seems, a younger disciple, a happy and vigorous youth, well disposed toward the teaching, always obedient and ready to undertake generous efforts. Sariputra, thinking only of the young disciple's vigour, and of the temptations which naturally beset one of his years, set him to meditate on the truth of bodily corruption and decay, thinking that in this way revulsion would be aroused and possible temptation anticipated and overcome.

The youth cheerfully accepted the subject of meditation which Sariputra proposed to him, and, retiring to a refuge in the forest, set himself to conjuring up images of corruption and decay.

But the harder he tried, the less progress he made, his mind and imagination swerving aside, and refusing to dwell upon the repellent themes that had been set him. And, when he described the matter to his preceptor, Sariputra was perplexed and brought to a stand. So he determined to have recourse to the supreme wisdom of the Buddha. Therefore, taking the young disciple, he went to the dwelling at Jetavana where the Buddha was.

When Sariputra had related the matter to the Buddha, the Master made clear to the senior disciple that the mind of man is complex and mysterious, and that it is given only to the fully enlightened to penetrate all its mysteries. Having thus reconciled Sariputra to his failure, the Buddha set himself to study the mind of the young disciple. With clear and penetrating vision surpassing the vision of mortals, he surveyed the previous states of existence of the youth, and asked Sariputra from what family the young disciple had come in his present birth. Sariputra answered that the boy's father was a goldsmith, and that the youth himself had gained considerable skill in the goldsmith's art. Then the Buddha, further studying the past existences of the young disciple, perceived that through five hundred past existences he had been born in the goldsmith's family and in no other, and that through five hundred births he himself had worked as a goldsmith, moulding the ruddy gold into forms like the golden-yellow cassia blossom, or the yellow water-lily. For this reason, the Buddha saw that subjects of meditation, repellent and calculated to cause revulsion, were unsuited to the young disciple. The only subject of meditation appropriate for him would be one with elements of beauty.

Therefore the Buddha, exercising his magical creative power, formed a golden lotus as large as the wheel of a cart, with clear drops of water on the leaves and stalk, saying:

"Disciple, take this golden lotus and, going to the outskirts of the rest-house, set its stem in a heap of sand. Then, seated before it in the posture of meditation, repeat the words, 'Rose-red! Rose-red!'"

The young disciple took the great golden lotus from the Master,

and, as he took it, his heart was filled with peace. Going to the outskirts of the rest-house where there was a heap of sand, he set the stem of the golden flower in the sand and, seated before it in the posture of meditation, began to repeat the words, "Rose-red! Rose-red!"

And, as he repeated the words, he entered into the successive stages of contemplation. The Buddha, following the course of the young disciple, raised with himself the question whether the young disciple, having already gone so far, could proceed unaided to the end. And, raising the question, the Buddha perceived that the young disciple could not gain the goal unaided.

Therefore, once more exerting his magical creative power, the Buddha caused the petals of the lotus of gold to shrivel and grow black, as though they had been trampled upon and broken. And beholding them thus withered, the young disciple thus bethought him:

"If creatures which, like this golden lotus, have no attachments to earthly things, are thus subject to fading and decay, much more must hearts and minds filled with attachments to earthly things suffer age, decay and death."

So he took the first step toward that realization of the impermanence of all separate things which, when it reaches fullness, leads to supreme detachment.

Now, it happened that, on the outskirts of the rest-house, there was a pond in which grew lotuses, the petals of whose buds were rose-red. And a group of boys, descending into the lotus-pond, plucked the buds, and after no long time threw them upon the bank to wither. Then the young disciple saw that the tips of their petals became brown and sere, no longer rose-red like the petals of the buds that still grew in the pond. So he thought once again:

"If creatures which, like the rose-petalled lotuses, have no attachments to earthly things, are nevertheless subject to fading and decay, much more must the hearts and minds of men filled with attachments to earthly things, suffer age, decay and death."

Thus was the young disciple perfected in detachment. And the Buddha, perceiving that the young disciple had attained the goal of contemplation, manifested himself to him as a luminous image, saying:

“Cut off the love of self, even as you would break off a lotus bud with your hand. Advance along the path of peace. This is the way to Nirvana.”

While it is altogether probable that this incident of the youthful disciple happened much as it has been recorded, yet in a deeper sense the Buddha turned the essence of it into a parable, and one of great depth and beauty. His supreme insight may well have penetrated the story of the disciple's past existences, yet it is more probable that he schematized them in the story of five hundred lives as a goldsmith, occupied life after life in moulding with ruddy gold the fair forms of the golden-yellow cassia blossom and of the yellow water-lily; and that he did this in order to make more intelligible to the senior disciple, Sariputra, the quality of an artistic nature, which is repelled and rendered inert by ugliness, but which, in compensation, may be led by visible forms of beauty to the threshold of the hidden, everlasting beauty.

In somewhat the same way, the Buddha turns into a parable a question addressed to him by the noble Ananda, another leader among the disciples, who was particularly close to the Buddha, and thus came within the circle of the Buddha's radiant humour. For, if the truth be told, the noble Ananda asked a rather futile and foolish question, and his great Master, turning it into a parable, made it a vehicle of enduring wisdom.

The noble Ananda was seated one evening engaged, as he supposed, in meditation, but in reality allowing his thoughts to drift hither and thither, with no very definite goal.

“There are”, considered within himself the noble Ananda, “three perfumes of the highest excellence: the perfume of sandal wood, the perfume extracted from roots, and the perfume of flowers. All these perfumes of the highest excellence the Master possesses. But each of these perfumes travels with the wind and not against the wind. But the question is, whether there may be some perfume that travels against the wind, or even some perfume that travels both with the wind and against the wind.”

No doubt, the noble Ananda herein manifested a certain aptitude for experimental physics, but, strictly speaking, he was not pursuing

spiritual wisdom. However, he soon came to himself and said:

“What use is there in my seeking to settle this question by myself? Let me ask the Master!”

So, on a certain evening, when a favourable occasion had arisen, the noble Ananda drew near to the Buddha, and, when he had drawn near, he addressed the Master thus:

“Sire, there are three perfumes which travel with the wind, but not against the wind. What are the three? The perfume of sandal wood, the perfume extracted from roots, and the perfume of flowers. These three perfumes, Sire, travel with the wind, but in no case do they travel against the wind. But, Sire, this question arises: whether there may be some perfume that travels against the wind, or even some perfume that travels both with the wind and against the wind.”

The Master replied: “Ananda, there is a substance whose perfume goes both with the wind and against the wind.”

“But, Sire, what is the substance whose perfume goes both with the wind and against the wind?”

“Ananda, if there be any follower of the Buddha, one who goes to the Buddha as refuge, to the Law of Righteousness as refuge, to the Order as refuge; one who refrains from taking life, from theft, from sensuality, from lying, from intoxicants that destroy recollection; one who follows virtue and righteousness, whose heart is free from avarice, a generous giver to those who have need in all parts of the world, followers of holiness will utter his praise. These good acts of that follower of the Buddha are the substances, Ananda, whose perfume travels both with the wind and against the wind.”

Yet one more parable, this time concerning a member of a family which the Buddha greatly admired, and with some of whom he formed relations of peculiar intimacy: the parable of an elephant. When the Buddha was dwelling with his disciples in the rest-house at Jetavana, he told the disciples this story concerning an old war elephant that had belonged to the King of Kosala.

In his younger days, this elephant possessed great strength, but as the years passed, old age came upon him, and he was buffeted by the winds of time. One day, being thus oppressed with years, he waded out into the lake, and, becoming mired in the thick and sticky mud,

was brought to a stand amid the waters, able neither to go forward nor to go back.

The people along the shore of the lake, seeing the old elephant in this grievous plight, began to exclaim:

“Is it not strange that an elephant, once so powerful and valorous, should become so weak!”

Word of the elephant’s mishap came to the King of Kosala, and, summoning the keeper, he bade him draw the elephant forth from the mire of the lake.

Now the keeper was a wise man, understanding thoroughly the mind of elephants.

Therefore he set upon his head a helmet, and, bringing to the shore of the lake, one whose duty it was to sound the drum for battle, bade him now beat the battle-drum.

When the elephant heard the drum and saw the helmet on his driver’s head, his valorous heart was enkindled, and, quickly setting himself free, he walked up out of the lake and stood upon dry ground.

Then said the Buddha to his disciples: “That elephant freed himself from the mud of the lake. But you have flung yourselves into the mire of evil passions. Therefore strive with all your might to set yourselves free, rejoicing in recollection!”