

THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA

compiled from ancient records

by Paul Carus

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Cover Art: Maitreya, the future Buddha, Gandharan Art, grey schist, circa 3rd - 4th century. The Gandhara Kingdom flourished in what is now northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.

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Publisher's Foreword

PAUL CARUS WROTE "THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA" a hundred years ago in the language of his time and in a pattern similar to the New Testament. His intention was to start a debate about Buddhism in a Christian society. To publish again this book in the 21st century we feel necessary to update the text (not the message) in order to reach a broader audience, specially the young audience of our times.

The text was renewed whenever possible. Archaic pronouns usage were updated and some obsolete words were changed for their current counterparts. Footnotes were introduced in the text explaining historic hints and some Hindu concepts that pervades the Buddha's teachings. We would like to express our gratitude to the technical team and the community of the Online Wikipedia Encyclopedia from where most of the footnotes were extracted. We urge everyone to support with knowledge and money this useful resource.

This new edition of the "The Gospel of Buddha" has the same goal of the first: to bring the Buddha teachings to the western world. In this beginning 21st century many discuss the essence of Buddhism. Most people say it is a religion, but others say it's a philosophy or even a framework of ethical principles. We let to the readers the final conclusion.

But we are sure that Buddha taught how men and women of all ages can raise their consciousness to a higher state of mind and that everyone is born fully equipped to achieve this goal, no matter if you call it Nirvana, Enlightenment, Salvation, Paradise or Happiness. We don't need complex theories or special tools to follow the Buddha's footsteps but we need to get on the road and this book is a signpost marking the beginning of the path.

The Publisher.

Biographical Note

PAUL CARUS, PH.D. (1852-1919) WAS A GERMAN-AMERICAN AUTHOR, editor, a student of comparative religion and professor of philosophy. Born at Ilsenburg, Germany, and educated at the University of Strassburg, France and the University of Tübingen, Germany, where he obtained his Ph. D. in 1876.

He left Bismarck's Germany for the United States, "because of his liberal views". After he immigrated to the USA (in 1884) he lived in Chicago, and in LaSalle, Illinois, where he married and had six children.

In America Carus edited a German-language journal on the philosophy of science, "The Monist", still published today and wrote articles for the Free Religious Association. He became the first managing editor of the Open Court Publishing Company, founded in 1887, whose goals were to provide a forum for the discussion of philosophy, science, and religion.

During his lifetime, Carus published 75 books and 1500 articles. He wrote books and articles on history, politics, philosophy, religion, logic, mathematics, anthropology and science. In addition, Carus corresponded with many of the greatest minds of the late 19th and early 20th century like Leo Tolstoy, Thomas Edison, Nichola Tesla and Booker T. Washington.

Carus considered himself a theologian rather than a philosopher. He is proposed to be a pioneer in the promotion of interfaith dialogue, explored the relationship of science and religion, and was instrumental in introducing Eastern traditions and ideas to the West.

Carus believed that religions evolve over time and he expected a "cosmic religion of universal truth" to emerge from the ashes of traditional beliefs. He holds that truth was independent of time, human desire, and human action. Therefore, science was not a human invention, but a human revelation. For him discovery meant apprehension; it was the result or manifestation of the cosmic order in which all truth were ultimately harmonious.

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Introduction

1 • Rejoice

Rejoice at the glad news!
The Buddha, our Lord, has found the root of all evil;
He has shown us the way to Nirvana¹.

The Buddha dispels the illusions of our mind
And redeems us from the terror of death.

The Buddha brings comfort to the weary and sorrow-laden;
He restores peace to those who are broken down under the burden of
life.
He gives courage to the weak when they would rather give up self-
reliance and hope.

You that suffer from the tribulations of life,
You that have to struggle and endure,
You that yearn for a life of truth,
Rejoice at the glad news!

There is balm for the wounded, and there is bread for the hungry.
There is water for the thirsty, and there is hope for the despairing.
There is light for those in darkness,
And there is inexhaustible blessing for the upright.

¹ **Nirvana:** (or Nibbana in Pali) is a Sanskrit word to describe the perfect peace of the mind that is free from craving, anger and other afflictive states. Literally means "to cease blowing" (as when a candle flame ceases to flicker). The Indo-european roots are: *nir* 'out', 'away' and *vati* 'it blows'.

Heal your wounds, you wounded and eat your fill, you hungry.
Rest, you weary, and you who are thirsty quench your thirst.
Look up to the light, you that sit in darkness;
Be full of good cheer, you that are lost and hopeless.

Trust in truth, you that love the truth,
For the kingdom of righteousness is founded upon earth.
The darkness of error is dispelled by the light of truth.
We can see our way and take firm and certain steps.

The Buddha has revealed the truth.

The truth cures our diseases and redeems us from darkness;
The truth strengthens us in life and in death;
The truth alone can conquer the evils of error.

Rejoice at the glad news!

2 • Samsara and Nirvana

Look about and contemplate life!

Everything is transient and nothing endures.
There is birth and death, growth and decay;
There is combination and separation.

The glory of the world is like a flower:
It stands in full bloom in the morning and fades in the heat of the day.

Wherever you look, there is a rushing and struggling, and an eager
pursuit of pleasure.
There is a panic flight from pain and death, and hot are the flames of
burning desires.
The world is vanity fair, full of changes and transformations.
All is Samsara.*

Is there nothing permanent in the world?
Is there in the universal turmoil no resting-place where our troubled

* **Samsara:** Sanskrit term for 'continuous movement' that refers to the continuous cycle of reincarnation or rebirth.

heart can find peace?
Is there nothing everlasting?

Oh, that we could have cessation of anxiety,
That our burning desires would be extinguished!
When shall the mind become tranquil and composed?

The Buddha, our Master, was grieved at the ills of life.
He saw the vanity of worldly happiness
And sought salvation in the one thing that will not fade or perish,
But will abide for ever and ever.

You who long for life, know that immortality is hidden in transience.
You who wish for happiness without the sting of regret,
Lead a life of righteousness.
You who yearn for riches, receive treasures that are eternal.
Truth is wealth, and a life of truth is happiness.

All compounds will be dissolved again,
But the verities which determine all combination and separations
As laws of nature endure forever and aye.
Bodies fall to dust, but the truths of the mind will not be destroyed.

Truth knows neither birth nor death;
It has no beginning and no end.
Welcome the truth. The truth is the immortal part of mind.

Establish the truth in your mind,
For the truth is the image of the eternal;
It portrays the immutable;
It reveals the everlasting;
The truth gives unto mortals the blessing of immortality.

The Buddha has proclaimed the truth;
Let the truth of the Buddha dwell in your hearts.
Extinguish in yourselves every desire that antagonizes the Buddha,
And in the perfection of your spiritual growth you will become like
unto him.

That of your heart that cannot or will not develop into Buddha must
perish;
For it is mere illusion and unreal;
It is the source of your error;

It is the cause of your misery.

You attain to immortality by filling your minds with truth.
Therefore, become like unto vessels fit to receive the Master's words.
Cleanse yourselves of evil and sanctify your lives.
There is no other way of reaching truth.

Learn to distinguish between Self and Truth.
Self is the cause of selfishness and the source of evil;
Truth cleaves to no self;
It is universal and leads to justice and righteousness.

Self, that which seems to those who love their selves as their being,
Is not the eternal, the everlasting, the imperishable.
Seek not self,
But seek the truth.

If we liberate our souls from our petty selves, wish no ill to others,
And become clear as a crystal diamond reflecting the light of truth,
What a radiant picture will appear in us mirroring things as they are,
Without the admixture of burning desires,
Without the distortion of erroneous illusion,
Without the agitation of clinging and unrest.

Yet you love self and will not abandon self-love.
So be it, but then, verily,
You should learn to distinguish between the false self and the true self.
The ego with all its egotism is the false self.
It is an unreal illusion and a perishable combination.
He only who identifies his self with the truth will attain Nirvana;
And he who has entered Nirvana has attained Buddhahood;
He has acquired the highest good;
He has become eternal and immortal.

All compound things shall be dissolved again,
Worlds will break to pieces and our individualities will be scattered;
But the words of the Buddha will remain for ever.

The extinction of self is salvation;
The annihilation of self is the condition of enlightenment;
The blotting out of self is Nirvana.
Happy is he who has ceased to live for pleasure and rests in the truth.

Verily his serenity and tranquility of mind are the highest bliss.

Let us take our refuge in the Buddha,
For he has found the everlasting in the transient.
Let us take refuge in that which is the immutable in the changes of
existence.

Let us take our refuge in the truth that is established through the
enlightenment of the Buddha.

Let us take our refuge in the community of those who seek the truth
and endeavor to live in the truth.

3 • Truth, the Savior

The things of the world and its inhabitants are subject to change.
They are combinations of elements that existed before,
And all living creatures are what their past actions made them;
For the law of cause and effect is uniform and without exceptions.

But in the changing things there is a constancy of law,
And when the law is seen there is truth.
The truth lies hidden in Samsara as the permanent in its changes.

Truth desires to appear;
Truth longs to become conscious;
Truth strives to know itself.

There is truth in the stone, for the stone is here;
And no power in the world, no god, no man, no demon, can destroy
its existence.
But the stone has no consciousness.

There is truth in the plant and its life can expand;
The plant grows and blossoms and bears fruit.
Its beauty is marvelous, but it has no consciousness.

There is truth in the animal; it moves about and perceives its
surroundings;
It distinguishes and learns to choose.
There is consciousness, but it is not yet the consciousness of Truth.
It is a consciousness of self only.

The consciousness of self dims the eyes of the mind and hides the truth.

It is the origin of error, it is the source of illusion, it is the germ of evil.

Self begets selfishness.

There is no evil but what flows from self.

There is no wrong but what is done by the assertion of self.

Self is the beginning of all hatred,

Of iniquity and slander, of impudence and indecency,

Of theft and robbery, of oppression and bloodshed.

Self is Mara^{*}, the tempter, the evildoer, the creator of mischief.

Self entices with pleasures. Self promises a fairy's paradise.

Self is the veil of Maya[†], the enchanter.

But the pleasures of self are unreal,

Its paradisiacal labyrinth is the road to misery,

And its fading beauty kindles the flames of desires

That never can be satisfied.

Who shall deliver us from the power of self?

Who shall save us from misery?

Who shall restore us to a life of blessedness?

There is misery in the world of Samsara;

There is much misery and pain.

But greater than all the misery is the bliss of truth.

Truth gives peace to the yearning mind;

It conquers error;

It quenches the flames of desires;

It leads to Nirvana.

Blessed is he who has found the peace of Nirvana.

He is at rest in the struggles and tribulations of life;

He is above all changes; he is above birth and death;

He remains unaffected by the evils of life.

Blessed is he who has found enlightenment.

^{*} **Mara:** The goddess of death in Hindu mythology. A male demon in Buddhism.

[†] **Maya:** Illusion. A veiling of the truth. The limited, purely physical and mental reality in which our everyday consciousness has become entangled.

He conquers, although he may be wounded;
He is glorious and happy, although he may suffer;
He is strong, although he may break down under the burden of his
work;
He is immortal, although he may die.
The essence of his being is purity and goodness.

Blessed is he who has attained the sacred state of Buddhahood,
For he is fit to work out the salvation of his fellow beings.
The truth has taken its abode in him.
Perfect wisdom illumines his understanding,
And righteousness ensouls the purpose of all his actions.

The truth is a living power for good, indestructible and invincible!
Work the truth out in your mind, and spread it among mankind,
For truth alone is the savior from evil and misery.
The Buddha has found the truth and the truth has been proclaimed
by the Buddha!

Blessed be the Buddha!

Prince Siddhartha Becomes Buddha

4 • The Bodhisattva's Birth

There was in Kapilavastu^{*} a Sakya king[†],
Strong of purpose and revered by all men,
A descendant of the Okkakas[‡], who call themselves Gautama[§],
And his name was Suddhodana or Pure-Rice.

His wife Maya-devi^{**} was beautiful as the water-lily and pure in mind
as the lotus.
As the Queen of Heaven, she lived on earth, untainted by desire, and
immaculate.

The king, her husband, honored her in her holiness,
And the spirit of truth, glorious and strong in his wisdom
like unto a white elephant, descended upon her.

When she knew that the hour of motherhood was near,
She asked the king to send her home to her parents;

^{*} **Kapilavastu:** The capital of the Sakya Kingdom. An ancient Indian city, now in Nepal, near Lumbini (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:NepalMap1.jpg>).

[†] **Sakya:** The Sakyas formed independent tribes or kingdoms near the foothills of the Himalayas. Sanskrit word meaning 'capable, able'.

[‡] **Okkakas:** A lineage of kings, the 'Sun Dynasty of Ikshvaku'.

[§] **Gautama:** A ruling clan of Lumbini,

^{**} **Maya-devi:** A Koliyan princess, later queen Maha Maya. The Sakyas and Koliyan kingdoms were established on the opposite banks of the Rohini river.

And Suddhodana, anxious about his wife and the child she would bear him, willingly granted her request.

At Lumbini there is a beautiful grove,
And when Maya-devi passed through it the trees were one mass of
fragrant flowers
And many birds were warbling in their branches.
The Queen, wishing to stroll through the shady walks, left her golden
palanquin, and,
When she reached the giant Sala* tree in the midst of the grove,
Felt that her hour had come.
She took hold of a branch.
Her attendants hung a curtain about her and retired.
When the pain of labor came upon her,
Four pure-minded angels of the great Brahma held out a golden net
to receive the baby,
Who came forth from her right side like the rising sun bright and
perfect.

The Brahma-angels took the child and placing him before the mother
said: "Rejoice, O queen, a mighty son has been born to you."

At her couch stood an aged woman imploring the heavens to bless the
newborn child†.

All the worlds were flooded with light.
The blind received their sight by longing to see the coming glory of
the Master; the deaf and dumb spoke with one another
Of the good omens indicating the birth of the Buddha to be.
The crooked became straight; the lame walked.
All prisoners were freed from their chains
And the fires of all the hells were extinguished.

No clouds gathered in the skies and the polluted streams became
clear,
While celestial music rang through the air
And the angels rejoiced with gladness.

* **Sala Tree:** An Indian medicinal plant, now primarily ornamental, planted in many Buddhist Temples. This site in Lumbini today is marked by the Ashokan Pillar with its inscription mentioning that ' here the Buddha was born'.

† **Date of Birth:** Officially Buddha was born in 563 BC but some scholars, comparing the Vedic Scriptures, say the date was earlier, around 1800 BC.

With no selfish or partial joy but for the sake of the law they rejoiced,
For creation engulfed in the ocean of pain was now to obtain release.

The cries of beasts were hushed;
All malevolent beings received a loving heart, and peace reigned on
earth.

Mara, the evil one, alone was grieved and rejoiced not.

The Naga kings[°], earnestly desiring to show their reverence for the
most excellent law,

As they had paid honor to former Buddhas, now went to greet the
Bodhisattva[†].

They scattered before him mandara[‡] flowers,
Rejoicing with heartfelt joy to pay their religious homage.

The royal father, pondering the meaning of these signs,
Was now full of joy and now sore distressed.

The queen mother, beholding her child and the commotion which
his birth created,

Felt in her timorous heart the pangs of doubt.

Now there was at that time in a grove near Lumbini,

A rishi[§] called Asita, leading the life of a hermit.

He was a Brahman of dignified attitude,

Famed not only for wisdom and scholarship,

But also for his skill in the interpretation of signs.

And the king invited him to see the royal baby.

The seer, beholding the prince, wept and sighed deeply.

And when the king saw the tears of Asita he became alarmed and
asked:

"Why has the sight of my son caused you grief and pain?"

But Asita's heart rejoiced,

And, knowing the king's mind to be perplexed, he addressed him,
saying:

[°] **Naga Kings:** Super-natural beings cited in the Hindu epic Mahabharata.

[†] **Bodhisattva:** Sanskrit word, 'enlightened (bodhi) existence (sattva)'.

[‡] **Mandara:** A flower said to bloom in heaven.

[§] **Rishi:** Sanskrit word meaning a Hindu 'saint' or 'sage'.

"The king, like the moon when full, should feel great joy,
For he has begotten a extremely noble son.

"I do not worship Brahma, but I worship this child;
And the gods in the temples will descend from their places of honor,
to adore him.

"Banish all anxiety and doubt.
The spiritual omens manifested indicate that the child now born
Will bring deliverance to the whole world.

"Recollecting that I myself am old,
On that account I could not hold my tears;
For now my end is coming on and I shall not see the glory of this
baby.
For your son will rule the world.

"The wheel of empire^{*} will come to him.
He will either be a king of kings to govern all the lands of the earth,
Or verily will become a Buddha.
He is born for the sake of everything that lives.

"His pure teaching will be like the shore that receives the ship-
wrecked.
His power of meditation will be like a cool lake;
And all creatures parched with the drought of lust may freely drink
thereof.

"On the fire of greed he will cause the cloud of his mercy to rise,
So that the rain of the law may extinguish it.
The heavy gates of depression will be open,
And give deliverance to all creatures entrapped in the self-entwined
meshes of folly and ignorance.

"The king of the law has come forth
To rescue from bondage all the poor, the miserable, the helpless."

When the royal parents heard Asita's words they rejoiced in their
hearts
And named their new-born infant Siddhartha,
That is, "he who has accomplished his purpose."

* **Wheel of Empire:** A royalty symbol.

And the queen said to her sister, Pajapati:
"A mother who has borne a future Buddha will never give birth to another child.
I shall soon leave this world, my husband, the king, and Siddhartha, my child.
When I am gone, be you a mother to him."

And Pajapati wept and promised.

When the queen had departed from the living,
Pajapati took the boy Siddhartha and reared him.
And as the light of the moon increases little by little,
So the royal child grew from day to day in mind and in body;
And truthfulness and love resided in his heart.

When a year had passed Suddhodana the king made Pajapati his queen and there was never a better stepmother than she.

5 • The Ties of Life

When Siddhartha had grown to youth, his father desired to see him married,
And he sent to all his clan, commanding them to bring their princesses
That the prince might select one of them as his wife.

But the members of his clan replied and said:
"The prince is young and delicate;
Nor has he learned any of the sciences.
He would not be able to maintain our daughter,
And should there be war he would be unable to cope with the enemy."

The prince was not fierce, but contemplative in his nature.
He loved to stay under the great jambu-tree in the garden of his father,
And, observing the ways of the world,
Gave himself up to meditation.

And the prince said to his father:
"Invite our clan that they may see me and put my strength to the test."

And his father did as his son bade him.

When the members of his clan came, and the people of the city
Kapilavastu had assembled
To test the skillfulness and scholarship of the prince,
He proved himself manly in all the exercises both of the body and of
the mind,
And there was no rival among the youths and men of India
Who could surpass him in any test, bodily or mental.

He replied to all the questions of the sages;
But when he questioned them,
Even the wisest among them were silenced.

Then Siddhartha chose himself a wife.
He selected Yasodhara, his cousin, the gentle daughter of the king of
Koli.
And Yasodhara was engaged to the prince.

In their wedlock was born a son whom they named Rahula which
means "fetter" or "tie",
And King Suddhodana, glad that an heir was born to his son, said:

"The prince having begotten a son, will love him as I love the prince.
This will be a strong tie to bind Siddhartha's heart to the interests of
the world,
And the kingdom of the Sakyas will remain under the scepter of my
descendants."

With no selfish aim, but regarding his child and the people at large,
Siddhartha, the prince, attended to his religious duties,
Bathing his body in the holy Ganges
And cleansing his heart in the waters of the law.
Even as men desire to give happiness to their children,
So did he long to give peace to the world.

6 • The Three Woes

The palace which the king had given to the prince
Was resplendent with all the luxuries of India;
For the king was anxious to see his son happy.

All sorrowful sights, all misery,
And all knowledge of misery were kept away from Siddhartha,
For the king desired that no troubles should come nigh him;
He should not know that there was evil in the world.

But as the chained elephant longs for the wilds of the jungles,
So the prince was eager to see the world,
And he asked his father, the king,
For permission to do so.

And Suddhodana ordered a jewel-fronted chariot with four stately
horses to be held ready,
And commanded the roads to be adorned where his son would pass.

The houses of the city were decorated with curtains and banners,
And spectators arranged themselves on either side,
Eagerly gazing at the heir to the throne.
Thus Siddhartha rode with Channa, his charioteer,
Through the streets of the city,
And into a country watered by rivulets and covered with pleasant
trees.

There by the wayside they met an old man with bent frame,
Wrinkled face and sorrowful brow, and the prince asked the
charioteer:
"Who is this?
His head is white,
His eyes are bleared,
And his body is withered.
He can barely support himself on his staff."

The charioteer, much embarrassed, hardly dared speak the truth.
He said: "These are the symptoms of old age.
This same man was once a suckling child,
And as a youth full of sportive life;
But now, as years have passed away,
His beauty is gone and the strength of his life is wasted."

Siddhartha was greatly affected by the words of the charioteer,
And he sighed because of the pain of old age.
"What joy or pleasure can men take," he thought to himself,
"When they know they must soon wither and pine away!"

And lo! while they were passing on,
A sick man appeared on the way-side, gasping for breath,
His body disfigured, convulsed and groaning with pain.

The prince asked his charioteer:

"What kind of man is this?"

And the charioteer replied and said: "This man is sick.

The four elements of his body are confused and out of order.

We are all subject to such conditions:

The poor and the rich, the ignorant and the wise,

All creatures that have bodies, are liable to the same calamity."

And Siddhartha was still more moved.

All pleasures appeared stale to him,

And he loathed the joys of life.

The charioteer speed the horses on to escape the dreary sight,
When suddenly they were stopped in their fiery course.

Four persons passed by, carrying a corpse;

And the prince, shuddering at the sight of a lifeless body,

Asked the charioteer: "What is this they carry?"

There are streamers and flower garlands;

But the men that follow are overwhelmed with grief!"

The charioteer replied:

"This is a dead man:

His body is stark;

His life is gone;

His thoughts are still;

His family and the friends who loved him

Now carry the corpse to the grave."

And the prince was full of awe and terror:

"Is this the only dead man," he asked,

"Or does the world contain other instances?"

With a heavy heart the charioteer replied:

"All over the world it is the same.

He who begins life must end it.

There is no escape from death."

With bated breath and stammering accents the prince exclaimed:

"O worldly men! How fatal is your delusion!
Inevitable your body will crumble to dust,
Yet carelessly, unheedingly, you live on."

The charioteer observing the deep impression
These sad sights had made on the prince,
Turned his horses and drove back to the city.

When they passes by the palaces of the nobility,
Kisa Gotami, a young princess and niece of the king,
Saw Siddhartha in his manliness and beauty, and,
Observing the thoughtfulness of his face, said:
"Happy the father that begot you,
Happy the mother that nursed you,
Happy the wife that calls husband this lord so glorious."

The prince hearing this greeting, said:
"Happy are they that have found deliverance.
Longing for peace of mind,
I shall seek the bliss of Nirvana."

Then asked Kisa Gotami: "How is Nirvana attained?"
The prince paused,
And to him whose mind was estranged from wrong the answer came:
"When the fire of lust is gone out, then Nirvana is gained;
When the fires of hatred and delusion are gone out, then Nirvana is
gained;
When the troubles of mind, arising from blind credulity,
and all other evils have ceased, then Nirvana is gained!"
Siddhartha handed her his precious pearl necklace
As a reward for the instruction she had given him,
And having returned home looked with disdain
Upon the treasures of his palace.

His wife welcomed him and press him to tell her the cause of his
grief.
He said: "I see everywhere the impression of change;
Therefore, my heart is heavy.
Men grow old, sicken, and die.
That is enough to take away the zest of life."

The king, his father, hearing that the prince had become alienate
from pleasure, was greatly overcome with sorrow and like a sword it

pierced his heart.

7 • The Bodhisattva's Renunciation

It was night.

The prince found no rest on his soft pillow;

He arose and went out into the garden.

"Alas!" he cried, "all the world is full of darkness and ignorance;

There is no one who knows how to cure the ills of existence."

And he groaned with pain.

Siddhartha sat down beneath the great jambu-tree and gave himself to thought,

Pondering on life and death and the evils of decay.

Concentrating his mind he became free from confusion.

All low desires vanished from his heart and perfect tranquility came over him.

In this state of ecstasy he saw with his mental eye

All the misery and sorrow of the world;

He saw the pains of pleasure and the inevitable certainty of death

That hovers over every being;

Yet men are not awakened to the truth.

And a deep compassion seized his heart.

While the prince was pondering on the problem of evil,

He beheld with his mind's eye under the jambu-tree

A lofty figure endowed with majesty, calm and dignified.

"Where do you come from, and who may you be?" asked the prince.

In reply the vision said: "I am a samana"^{*}.

Troubled at the thought of old age, disease, and death

I have left my home to seek the path of enlightenment.

All things hasten to decay;

Only the truth stay forever.

Everything changes, and there is no permanency;

Yet the words of the Buddhas are immutable.

I long for the happiness that does not decay;

* Samana: A wandering ascetic from India.

The treasure that will never perish;
The life that knows of no beginning and no end.
Therefore, I have destroyed all worldly thought.
I have retired into an unfrequented dell to live in solitude;
And, begging for food, I devote myself to the one thing needful."

Siddhartha asked: "Can peace be gained in this world of unrest?
I am struck with the emptiness of pleasure and have become disgusted
with lust.
All oppresses me, and existence itself seems intolerable."

The samana replied:
"Where heat is, there is also a possibility of cold;
Creatures subject to pain possess the faculty of pleasure;
The origin of evil indicates that good can be developed.
For these things are correlatives.
Thus where there is much suffering, there will be much bliss,
If you but open yours eyes to see it.
Just as a man who has fallen into a heap of filth
Ought to seek the great pond of water covered with lotuses, which is
nearby:
Even so seek you for the great deathless lake of Nirvana
To wash off the pollution of wrong.
If the lake is not sought, it is not the fault of the lake.
Even so when there is a blessed road
Leading the man held fast by wrong to the salvation of Nirvana,
If the road is not walked upon,
It is not the fault of the road, but of the person.
And when a man who is oppressed with sickness,
There being a physician who can heal him,
Does not avail himself of the physician's help,
That is not the fault of the physician.
Even so when a man oppressed by the malady of wrong-doing
Does not seek the spiritual guide of enlightenment,
That is no fault of the evil-destroying guide."

The prince listened to the noble words of his visitor and said:
"You bring good news,
For now I know that my purpose will be accomplished.
My father advises me to enjoy life and to undertake worldly duties,
Such as will bring honor to me and to our house.
He tells me that I am too young still,
That my pulse beats too full to lead a religious life."

The venerable figure shook his head and replied:
"You should know that for seeking a religious life no time can be inopportune."

A thrill of joy passed through Siddhartha's heart.
"Now is the time to seek religion," he said;
"Now is the time to sever all ties
That would prevent me from attaining perfect enlightenment;
Now is the time to wonder into homelessness and, leading a mendicant's life,
To find the path of deliverance."

The celestial messenger heard the resolution of Siddhartha with approval.

"Now, indeed," he added, "is the time to seek religion.
Go, Siddhartha, and accomplish your purpose.
For you are Bodhisattva, the Buddha-elect;
You are destined to enlighten the world.

"You are the Tathagata^{*}, the great master,
For you will fulfill all righteousness and be Dharmaraja[†], the king of truth.
You are the Bhagavat[‡], the Blessed One,
For you are called upon to become the savior and redeemer of the world.

"Fulfill you the perfection of truth.
Though the thunderbolt descend upon your head,
Yield you never to the temptations that take men away from the path of truth.
As the sun at all seasons pursues his own course, nor ever goes on another,

^{*} **Tathagata:** Sanskrit. Tat 'the absolute' and gata 'gone-onto', 'attainment of, 'arrival-at'. 'The sage who has arrived at the absolute'. Gautama Buddha used this word as his preferred personal appellation. Instead of saying 'me' or 'myself' he says 'The Tathagata is such...' emphasizing that he has gone beyond human personality.

[†] **Dharmaraja:** Sanskrit, 'Just Ruler'.

[‡] **Bhagavat:** This word has been used to describe the Buddha in the earliest Buddhist Pali texts. Can be translated as 'Full of God' or 'Divine' and also by 'fortunate', 'blessed', 'holy'. The noun 'bhaga' meaning "fortune, wealth", cognate to the Slavic word 'bog' that have turned into actual 'god'.

Even so if you forsake not the straight path of righteousness,
You shall become a Buddha.

"Persevere in your quest and you shall find what you seek
Pursue your aim straight and you shall gain the prize.
Struggle earnestly and you shall conquer.
The blessing of all deities, of all saints,
Of all that seek light is upon you,
And heavenly wisdom guides your steps.
You shall be the Buddha, our Master, and our Lord;
You shall enlighten the world and save mankind from ignorance."

Having thus spoken, the vision vanished,
And Siddhartha's heart was filled with peace.
He said to himself:

"I have awakened to the truth
And I am resolved to accomplish my purpose.
I will sever all ties that bind me to the world,
And I will go out from my home to seek the way to enlightenment.

"The Buddhas are beings whose words cannot fail:
There is no departure from truth in their speech.

"For as the fall of a stone thrown into the air,
As the death of a mortal,
As the sunrise at dawn,
As the lion's roar when he leaves his lair,
As the delivery of a woman with child,
As all these things are sure and certain -
Even so the word of the Buddhas is sure and cannot fail.

"Verily I shall become a Buddha."

The prince returned to the bedroom of his wife to take a last farewell
glance
At those whom he dearly loved above all the treasures of the earth.
He longed to take the infant once more into his arms and kiss him
with a parting kiss.
But the child lay in the arms of his mother
And the prince could not lift him without awakening both.

There Siddhartha stood gazing at his beautiful wife and his beloved

son,
And his heart grieved.
The pain of parting overcame him powerfully.
Although his mind was determined,
So that nothing, be it good or evil, could shake his resolution,
The tears flowed freely from his eyes,
And it was beyond his power to check their stream.
But the prince tore himself away with a manly heart,
Suppressing his feelings but not extinguishing his memory.

The Bodhisattva mounted his noble steed Kanthaka,
And when he left the palace, Mara stood in the gate and stopped him:
"Depart not, O my Lord," exclaimed Mara.
"In seven days from now the wheel of empire will appear,
And will make you sovereign over the four continents and the two
thousand adjacent islands.
Therefore, stay, my Lord."

The Bodhisattva replied:
"Well do I know that the wheel of empire will appear to me;
But it is not sovereignty that I desire.
I will become a Buddha and make all the world shout for joy."

Thus Siddhartha, the prince, renounced power and worldly pleasures,
Gave up his kingdom, severed all ties, and went into homelessness.
He rode out into the silent night,
Accompanied only by his faithful charioteer Channa.

Darkness lay upon the earth,
But the stars shone brightly in the heavens.

8 • King Bimbisara

Siddhartha had cut his waving hair
And had exchanged his royal robe for a mean dress of the color of the
ground.
Having sent home Channa, the charioteer,
Together with the noble steed Kanthaka,
To king Suddhodana to bear him the message that the prince had left
the world,
The Bodhisattva walked along on the highroad with a beggar's bowl in

his hand.

Yet the majesty of his mind was ill-concealed under the poverty of his appearance.

His erect gait betrayed his royal birth and his eyes beamed with a fervid zeal for truth.

The beauty of his youth was transfigured by holiness and surrounded his head like a halo.

All the people who saw this unusual sight gazed at him in wonder.

Those who were in haste arrested their steps and looked back;

And there was no one who did not pay him homage.

Having entered the city of Rajagaha,

The prince went from house to house silently waiting till the people offered him food.

Wherever the Bhagavat came, the people gave him what they had;

They bowed before him in humility and were filled with gratitude

Because he condescended to approach their homes.

Old and young people were moved and said:

"This is a noble muni[†]!

His approach is bliss.

What a great joy for us!"

And king Bimbisara, noticing the commotion in the city,

Inquired the cause of it,

And when he learned the news sent one of his attendants to observe the stranger.

Having heard that the muni must be a Sakya and of noble family,

And that he had retired to the bank of a flowing river

In the woods to eat the food in his bowl,

The king was moved in his heart;

He donned his royal robe,

Placed his golden crown upon his head

And went out in the company of aged and wise counselors

to meet his mysterious guest.

The king found the muni of the Sakya race seated under a tree.

[†] Muni: Sage.

Contemplating the calmness of his face
And the gentleness of his demeanor,
Bimbisara greeted him reverently and said:

"O samana, your hands are fit to grasp the reins of an empire
And should not hold a beggar's bowl.
I am sorry to see you wasting your youth.
Believing that you are of royal descent,
I invite you to join me in the government of my country
And share my royal power.
Desire for power is becoming to the noble-minded,
And wealth should not be despised.
To grow rich and lose religion is not true gain.
But he who possesses all three,
Power, wealth and religion,
Enjoying them in discretion and with wisdom,
Him I call a great master."

The great Sakyamuni lifted his eyes and replied:

"You are known, O king, to be liberal and religious,
And your words are prudent.
A kind man who makes good use of wealth
Is rightly said to possess a great treasure,
But the miser who hoards up his riches will have no profit.

"Charity is rich in returns;
Charity is the greatest wealth,
For though it scatters,
It brings no repentance.

"I have severed all ties because I seek deliverance.
How is it possible for me to return to the world?
He who seeks religious truth, which is the highest treasure of all,
Must leave behind all that can concern him or draw away his
attention,
And must be bent upon that one goal alone.
He must free his soul from greed and lust,
And also from the desire for power.

"Indulge in lust but a little,
And lust like a child will grow.
Wield worldly power

And you will be burdened with cares.

"Better than sovereignty over the earth,
Better than living in heaven,
Better than lordship over all the worlds,
Is the fruit of holiness.

"The Bodhisattva has recognized the illusory nature of wealth
And will not take poison as food.

"Will a fish that has been baited still crave the hook,
Or an escaped bird love the net?

"Would a rabbit rescued from the serpent's mouth go back to be eaten?
Would a man who has burnt his hand with a torch take up the torch
after he had dropped it to the earth?
Would a blind man who has recovered his sight desire to spoil his
eyes again?

"The sick man suffering from fever seeks for a cooling medicine.
Shall we advise him to drink that which will increase the fever?
Shall we quench a fire by heaping fuel upon it?

"I pray you, pity me not.
Rather pity those who are burdened with the cares of royalty
And the worry of great riches.
They enjoy them in fear and trembling,
For they are constantly threatened with a loss of those blessings
On whose possession their hearts are set,
And when they die they cannot take along
Either their gold or the kingly diadem.

"My heart longs no vulgar profit,
So I have put away my royal inheritance
And prefer to be free from the burdens of life.

"Therefore, try not to entangle me in new relationships and duties,
Nor hinder me from completing the work I have begun.

"I regret to leave you.
But I will go to the sages who can teach me religion
And so find the path on which we can escape evil.

"May your country enjoy peace and prosperity,
And may wisdom be shed upon your rule
Like the brightness of the noon day sun.
May your royal power be strong
And may righteousness be the scepter in your hand."

The king, clasping his hands with reverence,
Bowed down before Sakyamuni and said:
"May you obtain that which you seek,
And when you have obtained it, come back, I pray you,
And receive me as your disciple."

The Bodhisattva parted from the king in friendship and goodwill,
And decided in his heart to grant his request.

9 • The Bodhisattva's Search

Alara and Uddaka were renowned as teachers among the Brahmins[°],
And there was no one in those days who surpassed them
In learning and philosophical knowledge.

The Bodhisattva went to them and sat at their feet.
He listened to their doctrines of the atman[†] or self,
Which is the ego of the mind and the doer of all doings.
He learned their views of the transmigration of souls and the law of
karma;
How the souls of bad men had to suffer
By being reborn in men of low caste, in animals, or in hell,
While those who purified themselves by libations, by sacrifices, and
by self-mortification
Would become kings, or Brahmins, or devas[‡],
So as to rise higher in the grades of existence.
He studied their incantations and offerings
And the methods by which they attained deliverance of the ego

[°] **Brahman:** A priest of the Hindu religion. Brahma = God.

[†] **Atman:** Sanskrit: atman literally means 'self', used in common-sense as 'soul' or 'ego' but it is a philosophical term used in the Vedas to identify the one's true self beyond identification with the phenomenal reality of worldly existence.

[‡] **Devas:** Sanskrit: 'angels' or 'deities'.

From material existence in states of ecstasy.

Alara said: "What is that self
Which perceives the actions of the five roots of mind,
Touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing?
What is that which is active in the two ways of motion,
In the hands and in the feet?
The problem of the soul appears in the expressions 'I say,'
'I know and perceive,'
'I come,' and 'I go'
or 'I will stay here.'
The soul is not your body;
It is not your eye, not your ear, not your nose,
Not your tongue, nor is it your mind.
The I is the one who feels the touch in your body.
The I is the smeller in the nose, the taster in the tongue,
The seer in the eye, the hearer in the ear, and the thinker in the
mind.
The I moves your hands and your feet.
The I is your soul.
Doubt in the existence of the soul is irreligious,
And without discerning this truth there is no way of salvation.
Deep speculation will easily involve the mind;
It leads to confusion and unbelief;
But a purification of the soul leads to the way of escape.
True deliverance is reached by removing from the crowd and leading
a hermit's life,
Depending entirely on alms for food.
Putting away all desire and clearly recognizing the non-existence of
matter,
We reach a state of perfect emptiness.
Here we find the condition of immaterial life.
As the munja grass when freed from its case,
As a sword when drawn from its scabbard,
Or as the wild bird escaped from its prison,
So the ego, liberating itself from all limitations, finds perfect release.
This is true deliverance, but those only who will have deep faith will
learn."

The Bodhisattva found no satisfaction in these teachings.
He replied: "People are in bondage,
Because they have not yet removed the idea of the ego.

"The thing and its quality are different in our thought, but not in reality.

Heat is different from fire in our thought,
But you cannot remove heat from fire in reality.
You say that you can remove the qualities and leave the thing,
But if you think your theory to the end,
You will find that this is not so.

"Is not man an organism of many aggregates?
Are we not composed of various attributes?
Man consists of the material form, of sensation,
Of thought, of dispositions, and, lastly, of understanding.
That which men call the ego when they say 'I am'
Is not an entity behind the attributes;
It originates by their cooperation.
There is mind; there is sensation and thought,
And there is truth;
And truth is mind when it walks in the path of righteousness.
But there is no separate ego-soul outside of behind the thought of man.
He who believes that the ego is a distinct being has no correct conception of things.
The very search for the atman is wrong;
It is a wrong start and it will lead you in a false direction.

"How much confusion of thought comes from our interest in self,
And from our vanity when thinking 'I am so great,'
Or 'I have done this wonderful deed?'
The thought of your ego stands between your rational nature and truth;
Banish it, and then you will see things as they are.
He who thinks correctly will rid himself of ignorance and acquire wisdom.
The ideas 'I am' and 'I shall be' or 'I shall not be'
Do not occur to a clear thinker.

"Moreover, if our ego remains, how can we attain true deliverance?
If the ego is to be reborn in any of the three worlds,
Be it in hell, upon earth, or be it in heaven,
We shall meet again and again the same inevitable doom of sorrow.
We shall remain chained to the wheel of individuality
And shall be implicated in egotism and wrong.

"All combinations is subject to separation,
And we cannot escape birth, disease, old age, and death.
Is this a final escape?"

Said Uddaka: "Consider the unity of things.
Things are not their parts, yet they exist.
The members and organs of your body are not your ego,
But your ego possesses all these parts.
What, for instance, is the Ganges?
Is the sand the Ganges?
Is the water the Ganges?
Is the near bank the Ganges?
Is the farther bank the Ganges?
The Ganges is a mighty river and it possesses all these several
qualities.
Exactly so is our ego."

But the Bodhisattva replied: "Not so, sir!
If we except the water, the sand, the near bank and the farther bank,
where can we find any Ganges?
In the same way I observe the activities of man in their harmonious
union, but there is no ground for an ego outside it parts."

The Brahman sage, however, insisted on the existence of the ego,
saying:
"The ego is the doer of our deeds.
How can there be karma without a self as its performer?
Do we not see around us the effects of karma?
What makes men different in character, station, possessions, and fate?
It is their karma, and karma includes merit and demerit.
The transmigration of the soul is subject to its karma.
We inherit from former existences the evil effects of our evil deeds
And the good effects of our good deeds.
If that were not so, how could we be different?"

The Tathagata meditated deeply on the problems of transmigration
and karma,
And found the truth that lies in them.

"The doctrine of karma," he said, "is undeniable,
But your theory of the ego has no foundation.

"Like everything else in nature,

The life of man is subject to the law of cause and effect.
The present reaps what the past has sown,
And the future is the product of the present.
But there is no evidence of the existence of an immutable ego-being,
Of a self that remains the same and migrates from body to body.
There is rebirth but no transmigration.

"Is not this individuality of mine a combination, material as well as mental?
Is it not made up of qualities that sprang into being by a gradual evolution?
The five roots of sense-perception in this organism
Have come from ancestors who performed these functions.
The ideas which I think, came to me partly from others who thought them,
And partly they rise from combinations of the ideas in my mind.
Those who have used the same sense-organs, and have thought the same ideas
Before I was composed into this individuality of mine are my previous existences;
They are my ancestors as much as the I of yesterday is the father of the I of today,
And the karma of my past deeds conditions the fate of my present existence.

"Supposing that were an atman that performs the actions of the senses,
Then if the door of sight were torn down and the eye plucked out,
That atman would be able to peep through the larger aperture
And see the forms of its surroundings better and more clearly than before.
It would be able to hear sounds better if the ears were torn away;
Smell better if the nose were cut off;
Taste better if the tongue were pulled out;
And feel better if the body were destroyed.

"I observe the preservation and transmission of character;
I perceive the truth of karma,
But see no atman whom your doctrine makes the doer of your deeds.
There is rebirth without the transmigration of a self.
For this atman, this self, this ego in the 'I say' and in the 'I will' is an illusion.
If this self were a reality, how could there be an escape from selfhood?

The terror of hell would be infinite, and no release could be granted. The evils of existence would not be due to our ignorance and wrongdoing, but would constitute the very nature of our being."

And the Bodhisattva went to the priests officiating in the temples. But the gentle mind of the Sakyamuni was offended At the unnecessary cruelty performed on the altars of the gods. He said:

"Ignorance only can make these men prepare festivals
And hold vast meetings for sacrifices.
Far better to revere the truth than try to appease the gods by shedding blood.

"What love can a man possess
Who believes that the destruction of life will compensate for evil deeds?
Can a new wrong expiate old wrongs?
And can the slaughter of an innocent victim blot out the evil deeds of mankind?
This is practicing religion by the neglect of moral conduct.

"Purify your hearts and cease to kill,
That is true religion.

"Rituals have no efficacy;
Prayers are vain repetitions;
And incantations have no saving power.
But to abandon greed and lust,
To become free from evil passions,
And to give up all hatred and ill-will,
That is the right sacrifice and the true worship."

10 • Uruvela, The Place of Mortification

The Bodhisattva went in search of a better system
And came to a settlement of five bhikkhus^{*}
In the jungle of Uruvela;
And when the Bhagavat saw the life of those five men,

^{*} **Bhikkhu:** Monk, literally 'beggar' or more broadly as 'one who lives by alms'.

Virtuously keeping in check their senses,
Subduing their passions, and practicing austere self-discipline,
He admired their earnestness and joined their company.

With holy zeal and a strong heart,
The Sakyamuni^{*} gave himself up to meditative thought
And rigorous mortification of the body.
Whereas the five bhikkhus were severe, the Sakyamuni was severer
still, and they revered him, their junior, as their master.

So the Bodhisattva continued for six years
Patiently torturing himself and suppressing the wants of nature.
He trained his body and exercised his mind
In the modes of the most rigorous ascetic life.
At last, he ate each day one hemp-grain[†] only,
Seeking to cross the ocean of birth and death
And to arrive at the shore of deliverance.

And when the Bodhisattva was very hungry,
Lo! Mara, the Evil One, approached him and said:
"You are emaciated from fasts, and death is near.
What good is your exertion?
Do not disdain life, and you will be able to do good works."
But the Sakyamuni made reply:
"O you friend of the indolent, you wicked one;
For what purpose have you come?
Let the flesh waste away,
If but the mind becomes more tranquil
And attention more steadfast.
What is life in this world?
Death in battle is better to me
Than that I should live defeated."

And Mara withdrew, saying:
"For seven years I have followed the Bhagavat step by step,
But I have found no fault in the Tathagata."

The Bodhisattva was shrunken and attenuated,

^{*} **Sakyamuni:** 'Sage of the Sakyas'.

[†] **Hemp-grain:** A variety of the Cannabis Sativa plant that contains no psychoactive substances and is grown for fiber and seed. The hemp seed has 2 mm in diameter and contains oil and protein and humans have been consuming it for centuries.

And his body was like a withered branch;
But the fame of his holiness spread in the surrounding countries
And people came from great distances to see him
And receive his blessing.

However, the Holy One was not satisfied.
Seeking true wisdom he did not find it,
And he came to the conclusion that mortification would not
extinguish desire
Nor afford enlightenment in ecstatic contemplation.

Seated beneath a jambu-tree,
He considered the state of his mind
And the fruits of his mortification.
His body had become weaker,
Nor had his fasts advanced him in his search for enlightenment,
And therefore when he saw that it was not the right path,
He proposed to abandon it.

He went to bathe in the Neranyjaro river,
But when he strove to leave the water
He could not rise on account of his weakness.
Then seeing the branch of a tree and taking hold of it,
He raised himself and left the stream.
But while returning to his abode,
He staggered and fell to the ground,
And the five bhikkhus thought he was dead.

There was a chief herdsman living near the grove
Whose eldest daughter was called Nanda;
And Nanda happened to pass by the spot where the Bhagavat had
fainted,
And bowing down before him she offered him rice-milk and he
accepted the gift.
When he had partaken of the rice-milk all his limbs were refreshed,
His mind became clear again,
And he was strong to receive the highest enlightenment.

After this occurrence, the Bodhisattva again took some food.
His disciples, having witnessed the scene of Nanda
And observing the change in his mode of living, were filled with
suspicion.
They were convinced that Siddhartha's religious zeal was flagging

And that he whom they had hitherto revered as their master
Had become oblivious of his high purpose.

When the Bodhisattva saw the bhikkhus turning away from him,
He felt sorry for their lack of confidence,
And was aware of the loneliness in which he lived.

Suppressing his grief he wandered on alone,
And his disciples said:
"Siddhartha leaves us to seek a more pleasant abode."

11 • Mara, The Evil One

The Holy One directed his steps to that blessed Bodhi-tree*
Beneath whose shade he was to accomplish his search.

As he walked, the earth shook and a brilliant light transfigured the
world.

When he sat down the heavens resounded with joy
And all living beings were filled with good cheer.

Mara alone, lord of the five desires,
Bringer of death and enemy of truth,
Was grieved and rejoiced not.
With his three daughters,
Tanhaa†, Ragaa and Arati, the tempters,
And with his host of evil demons,
He went to the place where the great samana sat.
But Sakyamuni heeded him not.

Mara uttered fear-inspiring threats and raised a whirl-wind
So that the skies were darkened and the ocean roared and trembled.
But the Bhagavat under the Bodhi-tree remained calm and feared not.
The Enlightened One knew that no harm could befall him.

The three daughters of Mara tempted the Bodhisattva, but he paid no

* **Bodhi Tree:** Also known as Bo. A large and very old specimen of the sacred fig (Ficus Religiosa) under which Siddhartha attained enlightenment or 'Bodhi'.

† **Tanhaa** (craving, desire), **Ragaa** (luxury, lechery), **Arati** (aversion, boredom),

attention to them,
And when Mara saw that he could kindle no desire in the heart of the
victorious samana,
He ordered all the evil spirits at his command to attack him and
overawe the great muni.

But the Bhagavat watched them as one would watch the harmless
games of children.
All the fierce hatred of the evil spirits was of no avail.
The flames of hell became wholesome breezes of perfume,
And the angry thunderbolts were changed into lotus-blossoms.

When Mara saw this, he fled away with his army from the Bodhi-tree,
While from above a rain of heavenly flowers fell,
And voices of good spirits were heard:

"Behold the great muni! his heart unmoved by hatred.
The wicked Mara's host 'gainst him did not prevail.
Pure is he and wise, loving and full of mercy.

"As the rays of the sun drown the darkness of the world,
So he who perseveres in his search will find the truth
and the truth will enlighten him."

12 • Enlightenment

The Bodhisattva, having put Mara to flight,
Gave himself up to meditation.
All the miseries of the world, the evils produced by evil deeds
And the sufferings arising there from,
Passed before his mental eye, and he thought:

"Surely if living creatures saw the results of all their evil deeds,
They would turn away from them in disgust.
But selfhood blinds them, and they cling to their obnoxious desires.

"They crave pleasure for themselves and they cause pain to others;
When death destroys their individuality, they find no peace;
Their thirst for existence abides
And their selfhood reappears in new births.

"Thus they continue to move in the coil
And can find no escape from the hell of their own making.
And how empty are their pleasures, how vain are their endeavors!
Hollow like the plantain-tree and without contents like the bubble.

"The world is full of evil and sorrow, because it is full of lust.
Men go astray because they think that delusion is better than truth.
Rather than truth they follow error,
Which is pleasant to look at in the beginning
But in the end causes anxiety, tribulation, and misery."

And the Bodhisattva began to expound the Dharma^{*}.
The Dharma is the truth.
The Dharma is the sacred law.
The Dharma is religion.
The Dharma alone can deliver us from error,
From wrong and from sorrow.

Pondering on the origin of birth and death,
The Enlightened One recognized that ignorance was the root of all
evil;
And these are the links in the development of life,
Called the Twelve Nidanas[†]:

In the beginning there is existence blind and without knowledge;
And in this sea of ignorance there are stirrings, formative and
organizing.
From stirrings, formative and organizing, rises awareness or feelings.
Feelings beget organisms that live as individual beings.
These organisms develop the six fields,
That is, the five senses and the mind.
The six fields come in contact with things.
Contact begets sensation.
Sensation creates the thirst of individualized being.
The thirst of being creates a cleaving to things.

^{*} **Dharma:** Sanskrit word. Literally means 'that which upholds or supports'; 'Natural Law or Reality'; what is considered to be 'right' or in truest accord with the deepest realities of nature. With respect to spirituality, Dharma might be considered the 'Way of the Higher Truths'. In the sphere of morality and ethics Dharma means 'right way of living', 'proper conduct', 'duty' or 'righteousness'.

[†] **Nidanas:** From the Pali word 'nidana', 'cause', 'foundation' or 'source'.

The cleaving produces the growth and continuation of selfhood.
Selfhood continues in renewed births.

The renewed births of selfhood
Are the cause of suffering, old age, sickness, and death.
They produce lamentation, anxiety, and despair.

The cause of all sorrow lies at the very beginning;
It is hidden in the ignorance from which life grows.
Remove ignorance and you will destroy the wrong appetencies that
rise from ignorance;
Destroy these appetencies and you will wipe out the wrong perception
that rises from them.
Destroy wrong perception and there is an end of errors in
individualized beings.
Destroy the error in individualized beings
And the illusions of the six fields will disappear.
Destroy illusions and the contact with things will cease to bring forth
misconception.
Destroy misconception and you do away with thirst.
Destroy thirst and you will be free of all morbid cleaving.
Remove the cleaving and you destroy the selfishness of selfhood.
If the selfishness of selfhood is destroyed
You will be above birth, old age, disease, and death,
And you will escape all suffering.

The enlightened One saw the four noble truths
Which point out the path that leads to Nirvana
Or the extinction of self:

The first noble truth is the existence of sorrow.

The second noble truth is the cause of suffering.

The third noble truth is cessation of sorrow.

The fourth noble truth is the eightfold path that leads to the cessation
of sorrow.

This is the Dharma.
This is the truth.
This is religion.
And the Enlightened One uttered this stanza:

"Through many births I sought in vain
The Builder of this House of Pain.
Now, Builder, you I plainly see!
This is the last abode for me.
Your gable's yoke and rafters broke,
My heart has peace. All lust will cease."

There is self and there is truth.
Where self is, truth is not.
Where truth is, self is not.
Self is the fleeting error of samsara;
It is individual separateness and that egotism which begets envy and hatred.
Self is the yearning for pleasure and the lust after vanity.
Truth is the correct comprehension of things;
It is the permanent and everlasting,
The real in all existence,
The bliss of righteousness.

The existence of self is an illusion,
And there is no wrong in this world,
No wise, no evil,
Except what flows from the assertion of self.

The attainment of truth is possible only when self is recognized as an illusion.
Righteousness can be practiced only when we have freed our mind from passions of egotism.
Perfect peace can dwell only where all vanity has disappeared.

Blessed is he who has understood the Dharma.
Blessed is he who does no harm to his fellow-beings.
Blessed is he who overcomes wrong and is free from passion.
To the highest bliss has he attained who has conquered all selfishness and vanity.
He has become the Buddha, the Perfect One, the Bhagavat, the Holy One.

13 • The First Converts

The Bhagavat stayed in solitude seven times seven days,

Enjoying the bliss of emancipation.

At that time Tapussa and Bhallika, two merchants, came traveling on the road near by,
And when they saw the great samana, majestic and full of peace,
They approached him respectfully and offered him rice cakes and honey.

This was the first food that the Enlightened One ate after he attained Buddhahood.

And the Buddha addressed them and pointed out to them the way of enlightenment.

The two merchants, conceiving in their minds the holiness of the conqueror of Mara,

Bowed down in reverence and said:

"We take our refuge, Lord, in the Bhagavat and in the Dharma."

Tapussa and Bhallika were the first that became followers of the Buddha and they were lay disciples.

14 • Brahma's Request

The Bhagavat having attained Buddhahood while resting under the shepherd's Nigrodha tree on the banks of the river Neranyjara, pronounced this solemn utterance:

"How blest in happy solitude
Is he who hears of truth the call!
How blest to be both kind and good,
To practice self-restraint to all!
How blest from passion to be free,
All sensuous joys to let pass by!
Yet highest bliss enjoys he
Who quits the pride of 'I am I.'

"I have recognized the deepest truth,
Which is sublime and peace-giving,
But difficult to understand;
For most men move in a sphere of worldly interests
And find their delights in worldly desires.

"The worldling will not understand the doctrine,
For to him there is happiness in selfhood only,
And the bliss that lies in a complete surrender to truth
Is unintelligible to him.

"He will call resignation what to the enlightened mind is the purest joy.
He will see annihilation where the perfected one finds immortality.
He will regard as death what the conqueror of self knows to be life everlasting.

"The truth remains hidden from him who is in the bondage of hate and desire.
Nirvana remains incomprehensible and mysterious
To the vulgar whose minds are clouded with worldly interests.
Should I preach the doctrine and mankind not comprehend it,
It would bring me only fatigue and trouble."

Mara, the Evil One, on hearing the words of the Blessed Buddha, Approached and said: "Be greeted, you Holy One.
You have attained the highest bliss
And it is time for you to enter into the final Nirvana*."

Then Brahma Sahampati[†] descended from the heavens
And, having worshipped the Bhagavat, said:

"Alas! The world must perish,
Should the Holy One, the Tathagata, decide not to teach the Dharma.

"Be merciful to those that struggle;
Have compassion for the sufferers;
Pity the creatures who are hopelessly entangled in the snares of sorrow.

"There are some beings that are almost free from the dust of worldliness.
If they hear not the doctrine preached, they will be lost.

* **Final Nirvana:** To leave the body after enlightenment and enter Nirvana.

† **Brahma Sahampati:** The senior of the Mahabrahmas deities. It is said that he was a monk named Sahaka, a follower of a former Buddha named Kasyapa Buddha.

But if they hear it, they will believe and be saved."

The Bhagavat, full of compassion,
Looked with the eye of a Buddha upon all sentient creatures,
And he saw among them beings whose minds were but scarcely
covered by the dust of worldliness,
Who were of good disposition and easy to instruct.
He saw some who were conscious of the dangers of lust and wrong
doing.

And the Bhagavat said to Brahma Sahampati:
"Wide open be the door of immortality to all who have ears to hear.
May they receive the Dharma with faith."

And the Bhagavat turned to Mara, saying:
"I shall not pass into the final Nirvana, O Evil One,
Until there be not only brethren and sisters of an Order,
But also lay-disciples of both sexes,
Who shall have become true hearers, wise, well-trained, ready and
learned,
Versed in the scriptures, fulfilling all the greater and lesser duties,
Correct in life, walking according to the precepts -
Until they, having thus themselves learned the doctrine,
Shall be able to give information to others concerning it,
Preach it, make it known, establish it,
Open it, minutely explain it, and make it clear -
Until they, when others start vain doctrines,
Shall be able to vanquish and refute them,
And so to spread the wonder-working truth abroad.
I shall not die until the pure religion of truth shall have become
successful,
Prosperous, widespread and popular in all its full extent,
Until, in a word, it shall have been well proclaimed among men!"

Then Brahma Sahampati understood that the Bhagavat had granted
his request and would preach the doctrine.

The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness

15 • Upaka

Now the Bhagavat thought:

"To whom shall I preach the doctrine first? My old teachers are dead.
They would have received the good news with joy.
But my five disciples are still alive.
I shall go to them,
And to them shall I first proclaim the gospel of deliverance."

At that time the five bhikkhus dwelt in the Deer Park at Benares,
And the Bhagavat rose and journeyed to their abode,
Not thinking of their unkindness in having left him
At a time when he was most in need of their sympathy and help,
But mindful only of the services which they had ministered unto him,
And pitying them for austerities which they practiced in vain.

Upaka, a young Brahman and a Jain^{*}, a former friend of Siddhartha,
Saw the Bhagavat while he journeyed to Benares,
And, amazed at the majesty and sublime joyfulness of his appearance,
said:

"Your expression, friend, is serene;
Your eyes are bright and indicate purity and blessedness."

The Holy Buddha replied: "I have obtained deliverance by the
extinction of self."

^{*} **Jain:** A follower of Jainism, an old religion and philosophy of ancient India.

My body is chastened, my mind is free from desire,
And the deepest truth has taken abode in my heart.
I have obtained Nirvana,
And this is the reason why my expression is serene and my eyes are
bright.
I now desire to found the kingdom of truth upon earth,
To give light to those who are enshrouded in darkness
And to open the gate of deathlessness."

Upaka replied: "You declares then, friend, to be Jina^{*},
The conqueror of the world, the absolute one and holy one."

The Bhagavat said:
"Jinas are all those who have conquered self and the passions of self,
Those alone are victors who control their minds and abstain from evil.
Therefore, Upaka, I am the Jina."

Upaka shook his head. "Venerable Gautama," he said,
"your way lies yonder," and taking another road, he went away.

16 • The Sermon at Benares

On seeing their old teacher approach,
The five bhikkhus agreed among themselves not to salute him,
Nor to address him as a master, but by his name only.
"For," so they said, "he has broken his vow and has abandoned
holiness.
He is no bhikkhu but Gautama,
And Gautama has become a man who lives in abundance
And indulges in the pleasures of worldliness."

But when the Bhagavat approached in a dignified manner,
They involuntarily rose from their seats
And greeted him in spite of their resolution.
Still they called him by his name and addressed him as "friend
Gautama."

When they had thus received the Bhagavat, he said:

^{*} **Jina**; 'conqueror', a man who achieves enlightenment through ascetism, that have conquered anger, pride, deceit, desire, etc. Jainism is the 'Religion of the Jinas'.

"Do not call the Tathagata by his name
Nor address him as 'friend,'
For he is the Buddha, the Holy One.
The Buddha looks with a kind heart equally on all living beings,
And they therefore call him 'father.'
To disrespect a father is wrong; to despise him, is wicked.

"The Tathagata," the Buddha continued,
"Does not seek enlightenment in austerities,
But neither does he for that reason indulge in worldly pleasures, nor
live in abundance.
The Tathagata has found the middle path.

"There are two extremes, O bhikkhus,
Which the man who has given up the world ought not follow -
The habitual practice, on the one hand,
Of self-indulgence which is unworthy vain and fit only for the
worldly-minded -
And the habitual practice, on the other hand,
Of self-mortification, which is painful, useless and unprofitable.

"Neither abstinence from fish or flesh, nor going naked,
Nor shaving the head, nor wearing matted hair ,
Nor dressing in a rough garment, nor covering oneself with dirt,
Nor sacrificing to Agni, will cleanse a man
Who is not free from delusions.

"Reading the Vedas, making offering to priests,
Or sacrifices to the gods, self-mortification by heat or cold,
And many such penances performed for the sake of immortality,
These do not cleanse the man who is not free from delusions.

"Anger, drunkenness, obstinacy, bigotry, deception, envy, self-praise,
Disparaging others, superciliousness and evil intentions constitute
uncleanness;
Not verily the eating of flesh.

"A middle path, O bhikkhus,
Avoiding the two extremes, discovered by the Tathagata -
A path which opens the eyes, and brings understanding,

* **Matted hair:** A common costume of ascetic monks of ancient India.

Which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom,
To full enlightenment, to Nirvana!

"What is that middle path, O bhikkhus,
Avoiding these two extremes, discovered by the Tathagata -
That path which opens the eyes, and brings understanding,
Which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom,
To full Enlightenment, to Nirvana?"

"Let me teach you, O bhikkhus, the middle path,
Which keeps aloof from both extremes.
By suffering, the emaciated devotee produces confusion and sickly
thoughts in his mind.
Mortification is not useful even to worldly knowledge;
How much less to a triumph over the senses!"

"He who fills the lamp with water will not dispel the darkness,
And he who tries to light a fire with rotten wood will fail.
And how can any one be free from self by leading a wretched life,
If he does not succeed in quenching the fires of lust,
If he still hankers after either worldly or heavenly pleasures.
But he in whom self has become extinct is free from lust;
He will desire neither worldly nor heavenly pleasures,
And the satisfaction of his natural wants will not pollute him.
However, let him be moderate,
Let him eat and drink according to the needs of the body.

"Sensuality is weakening, the self-indulgent man is a slave to his
passions, and pleasure-seeking is degrading and vulgar.

"But to satisfy the necessities of life is not evil.
To keep the body in good health is a duty,
For otherwise we shall not be able to trim the lamp of wisdom,
And keep our mind strong and clear.
Water surrounds the lotus-flower,
But does not wet its petals.

"This is the middle path, O bhikkhus,
that keeps aloof from both extremes."

And the Bhagavat spoke kindly to his disciples,
Pitying them for their errors,
And pointing out the uselessness of their endeavors,

And the ice of ill-will that chilled their hearts
Melted away under the gentle warmth of the Master's persuasion.

Now the Bhagavat set the wheel of the most excellent law rolling,
And he began to preach to the five bhikkhus,
Opening to them the gate of immortality,
And showing them the bliss of Nirvana.

The Buddha said:

"The spokes of the wheel are the rules of pure conduct:
Justice is the uniformity of their length;
Wisdom is the tire;
Modesty and thoughtfulness are the hub
In which the immovable axle of truth is fixed.

"He who recognizes the existence of suffering,
Its cause, its remedy, and its cessation
Has come to understand the four noble truths.
He will walk in the right path.

"Right views will be the torch to light his way.
Right aspirations will be his guide.
Right speech will be his dwelling-place on the road.
His gait will be straight, for it is right behavior.
His refreshments will be the right way of earning his livelihood.
Right efforts will be his steps; right thoughts his breath;
And right contemplation will give him the peace that follows in his
footprints.

"Now, this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering:

"Birth is attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death
is painful.
Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the
pleasant,
And any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful.
In brief, bodily conditions which spring from attachment are painful.

"This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering.

"Now this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of
suffering:

"Verily, it is that craving which causes the renewal of existences,
Accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now
there,

The craving for the gratification of the passions,
The craving for a future life,
And the craving for happiness in this life.

"This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of
suffering.

"Now this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction
of suffering:

"Verily, it is the destruction, in which no passion remains, of this very
thirst;

It is the laying aside of, the being free from, the dwelling no longer
upon this thirst.

"This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the
destruction of suffering.

"Now this, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the way which
leads to the destruction of sorrow.

Verily! it is this noble eightfold path;

That is to say:

“Right views;
Right aspirations;
Right speech;
Right behavior;
Right livelihood;
Right effort;
Right thoughts;
And right contemplation.

"This, then, O bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the
destruction of sorrow.

"By the practice of loving kindness I have attained liberation of heart,
And thus I am assured that I shall never return in renewed births.
I have even now attained Nirvana."

And the Bhagavat had thus set the royal chariot-wheel of truth rolling

onward,
A rapture thrilled through all the universes.

The devas left their heavenly abodes to listen to the sweetness of the truth;
The saints that had parted from life crowded around the great teacher to receive the glad news;
Even the animals of the earth felt the bliss that rested upon the words of the Tathagata:
And all the creatures of the host of sentient beings, gods, men, and beasts,
Hearing the message of deliverance, received and understood it in their own language.

And when the doctrine was proposed, the venerable Kondannya,
The oldest one among the five bhikkhus,
Discerned the truth with his mental eye, and he said:
"Truly, O Buddha, our Lord, you have found the truth!"
Then the other bhikkhus too, joined him and exclaimed:
"Truly, you are the Buddha, you have found the truth."

And the devas and saints and all the good spirits of the departed generations
That had listened to the sermon of the Tathagata,
Joyfully received the doctrine and shouted:
"Truly, the Bhagavat has founded the kingdom of righteousness.
The Bhagavat has moved the earth;
He has set the Wheel of Truth rolling,
Which by no one in the universe, be he god or man,
Can ever be turned back.
The kingdom of Truth will be preached upon earth;
It will spread; and righteousness, good-will, and peace
Will reign among mankind."

17 • The Sangha

Having pointed out to the five bhikkhus the truth, the Buddha said:

"A man that stands alone, having decided to obey the truth,
May be weak and slip back into his old ways.
Therefore, stand you together, assist one another,

And strengthen one another's efforts.

"Be like unto brothers;
One in love, one in holiness,
And one in your zeal for the truth.

"Spread the truth and preach the doctrine in all quarters of the world,
So that in the end all living creatures will be citizens
Of the kingdom of righteousness.

"This is the holy brotherhood; this is the church,
The congregation of the saints of the Buddha;
This is the Sangha^{*} that establishes a communion
Among all those who have taken their refuge in the Buddha."

And Kondannya was the first disciple of the Buddha
Who had thoroughly grasped the doctrine of the Holy One,
And the Tathagata looking into his heart said:
"Truly, Kondannya has understood the truth."
Hence venerable Kondannya received the name "Annyata-
Kondannya,"
That is, "Kondannya who has understood the doctrine."

Then the venerable Kondannya spoke to the Buddha and said:
"Lord, let us receive the ordination from the Bhagavat."

And the Buddha said:
"Come, O bhikkhus!
Well taught is the doctrine.
Lead a holy life for the extinction of suffering."

Then Kondannya and the other bhikkhus uttered three times these
solemn vows:

"To the Buddha I will look in faith:
He, the Perfect One, is holy and supreme.
The Buddha conveys to us instruction, wisdom, and salvation;
He is the Bhagavat, who knows the law of being;
He is the Lord of the world, who yokes men like oxen,
The Teacher of gods and men, the Exalted Buddha.
Therefore, to the Buddha I will look in faith.

^{*} **Sangha:** Pali/Sanskrit word that can be translated as 'association' or 'community'.

"To the doctrine I will look in faith;
Well-preached is the doctrine by the Exalted One.
The doctrine has been revealed so as to become visible;
The doctrine is above time and space.
The doctrine is not based upon hearsay,
It means 'Come and see';
The doctrine leads to welfare;
The doctrine is recognized by the wise in their own hearts.
Therefore to the doctrine I will look in faith.

"To the community I will look in faith;
The community of the Buddha's disciples instructs us how to lead
a life of righteousness;
The community of the Buddha's disciples teaches us how to
exercise honesty and justice;
The community of the Buddha's disciples shows us how to practice
the truth.
They form a brotherhood in kindness and charity, and their saints
are worthy of reverence.
The community of the Buddha's disciples is founded as a holy
brotherhood
In which men bind themselves together to teach the behests of
rectitude and to do good.
Therefore, to the community I will look in faith."

And the gospel of the Bhagavat increased from day to day,
And many people came to hear him
And to accept the ordination to lead thenceforth a holy life
For the sake of the extinction of suffering.

And the Bhagavat seeing that it was impossible to attend to all
Who wanted to hear the truth and receive the ordination,
Sent out from the number of his disciples
Such as were to preach the Dharma
And said unto them:

"The Dharma and the Vinaya* proclaimed by the Tathagata
Shine forth when they are displayed, and not when they are
concealed.
But let not this doctrine, so full of truth and so excellent,

* Vinaya: 'education', 'discipline'; the regulatory framework of Buddhist monks.

Fall into the hands of those unworthy of it,
Where it would be despised and condemned,
Treated shamefully, ridiculed and censured.

"I now grant you, O bhikkhus, this permission.
Confer henceforth in the different countries the ordination upon
those who are eager to receive it,
When you find them worthy.

"Go ye now, O bhikkhus, for the benefit of the many,
For the welfare of mankind, out of compassion for the world.
Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning,
Glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end,
In the spirit as well as in the letter.
There are beings whose eyes are scarcely covered with dust,
But if the doctrine is not preached to them they cannot attain
enlightenment.
Proclaim to them a life of holiness.
They will understand the doctrine and accept it."

And it became an established custom that the bhikkhus went out
Preaching while the weather was good,
But in the rainy season they came together again and joined their
master, to listen to the exhortations of the Tathagata.

18 • Yasa, The Youth of Benares

At that time there was in Benares a noble youth,
Yasa by name, the son of a wealthy merchant.
Troubled in his mind about the sorrows of the world,
He secretly rose up in the night and stole away to the Bhagavat.

The Bhagavat saw Yasa, the noble youth, coming from afar.
And Yasa approached and exclaimed:
"Alas, what distress! What tribulations!"

The Bhagavat said to Yasa:
"Here is no distress; here are no tribulations.
Come to me and I will teach you the truth,
And the truth will dispel your sorrows."

And when Yasa, the noble youth,
Heard that there were neither distress,
Nor tribulations, nor sorrows, his heart was comforted.
He went into the place where the Bhagavat was, and sat down near
him.

Then the Bhagavat preached about charity and morality.
He explained the vanity of the thought "I am";
The dangers of desire, and the necessity of avoiding the evils of life
In order to walk on the path of deliverance.

Instead of disgust with the world,
Yasa felt the cooling stream of holy wisdom,
And, having obtained the pure and spotless eye of truth,
He looked at his person,
Richly adorned with pearls and precious stones,
And his heart was filled with shame.

The Tathagata, knowing his inward thoughts, said:

"Though a person be ornamented with jewels,
The heart may have conquered the senses.
The outward form does not constitute religion or affect the mind.
Thus the body of a samana may wear an ascetic's garb
While his mind is immersed in worldliness.

"A man that dwells in lonely woods
And yet desires worldly vanities, is a worldling,
While the man in worldly garments
May let his heart soar high to heavenly thoughts.

"There is no distinction between the layman and the hermit,
If but both have banished the thought of self."

Seeing that Yasa was ready to enter upon the path,
The Bhagavat said to him: "Follow me!"
And Yasa joined the brotherhood,
And having put on a bhikkhu's robe, received the ordination.

While the Bhagavat and Yasa were discussing the doctrine,
Yasa's father passed by in search of his son;
And in passing he asked the Bhagavat:
"Pray, Lord, have you seen Yasa, my son?"

And the Bhagavat said to Yasa's father:
"Come in, sir, you will find your son";
And Yasa's father became full of joy and he entered.
He sat down near his son,
But his eyes were closed and he knew him not;
And the Lord began to preach.
And Yasa's father understanding the doctrine of the Bhagavat, said:

"Glorious is the truth, O Lord!
The Buddha, the Holy One, our Master,
Sets up what has been overturned;
He reveals what has been hidden;
He points out the way to the wanderer who has gone astray;
He lights a lamp in the darkness
So that all who have eyes to see
Can discern the things that surround them.
I take refuge in the Buddha, our Lord:
I take refuge in the doctrine revealed by him:
I take refuge in the brotherhood which he has founded.
May the Bhagavat receive me from this day forth while my life lasts as
a lay disciple who has taken refuge in him."

Yasa's father was the first lay-member
Who became the first lay disciple to the Buddha
By pronouncing the threefold formula of refuge.

When the wealthy merchant had taken refuge in the Buddha,
His eyes were opened and he saw his son sitting at his side in a
bhikkhu's robe.
"My son, Yasa," he said,
"Your mother is absorbed in lamentation and grief.
Return home and restore your mother to life."

Then Yasa looked at the Bhagavat, and the Bhagavat said:
"Should Yasa return to the world
And enjoy the pleasures of a worldly life as he did before?"

And Yasa's father replied:
"If Yasa, my son, finds it a gain to stay with you, let him stay.
He has become delivered from the bondage of worldliness."

When the Bhagavat had cheered their hearts with the words of truth
and righteousness,

Yasa's father said: "May the Bhagavat, O Lord,
Consent to take his meal with me together with Yasa as his
attendant?"

The Bhagavat, having donned his robes,
Took his alms-bowl and went with Yasa to the house of the rich
merchant.
When they had arrived there, the mother and also the former wife of
Yasa
Saluted the Bhagavat and sat down near him.

Then the Bhagavat preached,
And the women having understood his doctrine, exclaimed:
"Glorious is the truth, O Lord!
We take refuge in the Buddha, our Lord.
We take refuge in the doctrine revealed by him.
We take refuge in the brotherhood which has been founded by him.
May the Bhagavat receive us from this day forth while our life lasts
As lay disciples who have taken refuge in him."

The mother and wife of Yasa, the noble youth of Benares,
Were the first women who became lay disciples
And took their refuge in the Buddha.

Now there were four friends of Yasa belonging to the wealthy families
of Benares.
Their names were Vimala, Subahu, Punnyaji, and Gavampati.

When Yasa's friends heard that Yasa had cut off his hair and put on
bhikkhu robes
To give up the world and go forth into homelessness, they thought:
"Surely that cannot be a common doctrine,
That must be a noble renunciation of the world,
If Yasa, whom we know to be good and wise,
Has shaved his hair and put on bhikkhu robes
To give up the world and go forth into homelessness."

And they went to Yasa, and Yasa addressed the Bhagavat, saying:
"May the Bhagavat administer exhortation and instruction
to these four friends of mine."
And the Bhagavat preached to them,
And Yasa's friends accepted the doctrine
And took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

19 • Kassapa

At that time there lived in Uruvela the Jatilas,
Brahman hermits with matted hair,
worshipping the fire and keeping a fire-dragon;
and Kassapa was their chief.

Kassapa was renowned throughout all India,
And his name was honored as one of the wisest men on earth
And an authority on religion.

And the Bhagavat went to Kassapa of Uruvela, the Jatila, and said:
"Let me stay a night in the room where you keep your sacred fire."

Kassapa, seeing the Bhagavat in his majesty and beauty, thought to himself:

"This is a great muni and a noble teacher.
Should he stay over night in the room where the sacred fire is kept,
The serpent will bite him and he will die."

And he said:

"I do not object to your staying over-night
In the room where the sacred fire is kept,
But the serpent lives there; he will kill you
And I should be sorry to see you perish."

But the Buddha insisted
And Kassapa admitted him to the room where the sacred fire was kept.

And the Bhagavat sat down with his body erect,
Surrounding himself with watchfulness.

In the night the dragon came to the Buddha, belching forth in rage
his fiery poison,
And filling the air with burning vapor, but could do him no harm,
And the fire consumed itself while the World-honored One remained
serene.

And the venomous fiend became very wrathful so that he died in his
anger.

When Kassapa saw the light shining forth from the room he said:

"Alas, what misery!

Truly, the expression of Gautama the great Sakyamuni is beautiful,
But the serpent will destroy him."

In the morning the Bhagavat showed the dead body of the beast to Kassapa, saying:
"His fire has been conquered by my fire."

And Kassapa thought to himself:
"Sakyamuni is a great samana
And possesses high powers,
But he is not holy like me."

There was in those days a festival, and Kassapa thought:
"The people will come here from all parts of the country and will see the great Sakyamuni.
When he speaks to them, they will believe in him and abandon me."
And he grew envious.

When the day of the festival arrived, the Bhagavat retired and did not come to Kassapa.
And Kassapa went to the Buddha on the next morning and said:
"Why did the great Sakyamuni not come?"

The Tathagata replied:
"Did you not think, O Kassapa,
That it would be better if I stayed away from the festival?"

And Kassapa was astonished and thought:
"Great is Sakyamuni; he can read my most secret thoughts, but he is not holy like me."

And the Bhagavat addressed Kassapa and said:
"You see the truth,
but accept it not because of the envy that dwells in your heart.
Is envy holiness?
Envy is the last remnant of self that has remained in your mind.
You are not holy, Kassapa; you have not yet entered the path."

And Kassapa gave up his resistance.
His envy disappeared, and, bowing down before the Master, he said:
"Lord, let me receive the ordination from the Bhagavat."

And the Bhagavat said:
"You, Kassapa, are chief of the Jatilas.
Go, then, first and inform them of your intention,
and let them do as you think fit."

Then Kassapa went to the Jatilas and said:
"I am anxious to lead a religious life under the direction of the great Sakyamuni,
Who is the Enlightened One, the Buddha. Do as you think best."

And the Jatilas replied:
"We have conceived a profound affection for the great Sakyamuni,
And if you will join his brotherhood, we will do likewise."

The Jatilas of Uruvela now flung their paraphernalia of fire-worship into the river and went to the Bhagavat.

Nadi Kassapa and Gaya Kassapa, brothers of the great Uruvela Kassapa,
Powerful men and chieftains among the people, were dwelling below on the stream,
And when they saw the instruments used in fire-worship floating in the river, they said:
"Something has happened to our brother."
And they came with, their fold to Uruvela.
Hearing what had happened, they, too, went to the Buddha.

The Bhagavat seeing that the Jatilas of Nadi and Gaya,
Who had practiced severe austerities and worshipped fire,
Were now come to him, preached a sermon on fire, and said:

"Everything, O Jatilas, is burning.
The eye is burning, all the senses are burning, thoughts are burning.
They are burning with the fire of lust. There is anger, there is ignorance, there is hatred,
And as long as the fire finds inflammable things upon which it can feed, so long will it burn,
And there will be birth and death, decay, grief, lamentation, suffering, despair, and sorrow.
Considering this, a disciple of the Dharma will see the four noble truths
And walk in the eightfold path of holiness.
He will become wary of his eye, wary of all his senses, wary of his thoughts.
He will divert himself of passion and become free.
He will be delivered from selfishness and attain the blessed state of Nirvana."

And the Jatilas rejoiced and took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma,
and the Sangha.

20 • The Sermon at Rajagaha

And the Bhagavat having dwelt some time in Uruvela went forth to
Rajagaha,
Accompanied by a great number of bhikkhus, many of whom had
been Jatilas before;
And the great Kassapa, chief of the Jatilas and formerly a
fireworshipper, went with him.

When the Magadha king, Seniya Bimbisara, heard of the arrival of
Gautama Sakyamuni,
Of whom the people said, "He is the Holy One, the blessed Buddha,
Guiding men as a driver curbs bullocks, the teacher of high and low,"
He went out surrounded with his counselors and generals
And came to the grove where the Bhagavat was.

There they saw the Bhagavat in the company of Kassapa,
The great religious teacher of the Jatilas,
And they were astonished and thought:
"Has the great Sakyamuni placed himself under the spiritual direction
of Kassapa,
Or has Kassapa become a disciple of Gautama?"

And the Tathagata, reading the thoughts of the people, said to
Kassapa:
"What knowledge have you gained, O Kassapa,
And what has induced you to renounce the sacred fire
And give up your austere penances?"

Kassapa said:
"The profit I derived from adoring the fire
Was continuance in the wheel of individuality
With all its sorrows and vanities.
This service I have cast away,
And instead of continuing penances and sacrifices
I have gone in quest of the highest Nirvana.
Since I have seen the light of truth,
I have abandoned worshipping the fire."

The Buddha, perceiving that the whole assembly
Was ready as a vessel to receive the doctrine,
Spoke thus to Bimbisara the king:

"He who knows the nature of self
And understands how the senses act,
Finds no room for selfishness,
And thus he will attain peace unending.
The world holds the thought of self,
And from this arises false apprehension.

"Some say that the self endures after death, some say it perishes.
Both are wrong and their error is most grievous.

"For if they say the self is perishable,
The fruit they strive for will perish too,
And at some time there will be no hereafter.
Good and evil would be indifferent.
This salvation from selfishness is without merit.

"When some, on the other hand,
Say the self will not perish,
Then in the midst of all life and death
There is but one identity unborn and undying.
If such is their self,
Then it is perfect and cannot be perfected by deeds.
The lasting, imperishable self could never be changed.
The self would be lord and master,
And there would be no use in perfecting the perfect;
Moral aims and salvation would be unnecessary.

"But now we see the marks of joy and sorrow.
Where is any constancy?
If there is no permanent self that does our deeds,
Then there is no self;
There is no actor behind our actions,
No perceiver behind our perception,
No lord behind our deeds.

"Now attend and listen:
The senses meet the object
and from their contact sensation is born.
Thence results recollection.

Thus, as the sun's power through a burning-glass causes fire to appear,
So through the cognizance born of sense and object,
The mind originates and with it the ego, the thought of self,
Whom some Brahman teachers call the lord.
The shoot springs from the seed;
The seed is not the shoot,
Both are not one and the same,
But successive phases in a continuous growth.
Such is the birth of animated life.

"You that are slaves of the self and toil in its service from morn until
night,
You that live in constant fear of birth, old age, sickness, and death,
Receive the good news that your cruel master exists not.

"Self is an error, an illusion, a dream.
Open your eyes and awaken.
See things as they are
And you will be comforted.

"He who is awake will no longer be afraid of nightmares.
He who has recognized the nature of the rope
That seemed to be a serpent will cease to tremble.

"He who has found there is no self
Will let go all the lusts and desires of egotism.

"The cleaving to things, greed,
And sensuality inherited from former existences,
Are the causes of the misery and vanity in the world.

"Surrender the grasping disposition of selfishness,
And you will attain to that calm state of mind
Which conveys perfect peace, goodness, and wisdom."

And the Buddha breathed forth this solemn utterance:

"Do not deceive, do not despise
Each other, anymore.
Do not be angry, nor should you
Secret resentment bear;
For as a mother risks her life
And watches o'er her child,

So boundless be your love to all,
So tender, kind and mild.

"Yea, cherish good-will right and left,
All round, early and late,
And without hindrance, without stint,
From every free and hate,
While standing, walking, sitting down,
Whate'er you have in mind,
The rule of life that's always best
Is to be loving-kind.

"Gifts are great,
The founding of viharas* is meritorious,
Meditations and religious exercises pacify the heart,
Comprehension of the truth leads to Nirvana,
But greater than all is loving kindness.
As the light of the moon is sixteen times stronger the light of all the
stars,
So loving-kindness is sixteen times more efficacious in liberating the
heart than all other religious accomplishments taken together.

"This state of heart is the best in the world.
Let a man remain steadfast in it while he is awake,
Whether he is standing, walking, sitting, or lying down."

When the Enlightened One had finished his sermon,
The Magadha king said to the Bhagavat:

"In former days, Lord, when I was a prince, I cherished five wishes.
I wished: O, that I might be inaugurated as a king.
This was my first wish, and it has been fulfilled.
Further, I wished: Might the Holy Buddha, the Perfect One,
Appear on earth while I rule and might he come to my kingdom.
This was my second wish and it is fulfilled now.
Further I wished: Might I pay my respects to him.
This was my third wish and it is fulfilled now.
The fourth wish was: Might the Bhagavat preach the doctrine to me,
and this is fulfilled now.
The greatest wish, however, was the fifth wish:

* **Vihara:** 'Buddhist monastery'. It originally meant 'dwelling' or 'refuge', such as those used by wandering monks during the rainy season.

Might I understand the doctrine of the Bhagavat.
And this wish is fulfilled too.

"Glorious Lord! Most glorious is the truth preached by the Tathagata!
Our Lord, the Buddha, sets up what has been overturned;
He reveals what has been hidden;
He points out the way to the wanderer who has gone astray;
He lights a lamp in the darkness so that those who have eyes to see
may see.

I take my refuge in the Buddha.
I take my refuge in the Dharma.
I take my refuge in the Sangha."

The Tathagata, by the exercise of his virtue and by wisdom,
Showed his unlimited spiritual power.
He subdued and harmonized all minds.
He made them see and accept the truth,
And throughout the kingdom the seeds of virtue were sown.

21 • The King's Gift

The king, having taken his refuge in the Buddha,
Invited the Tathagata to his palace, saying:
"Will the Bhagavat consent to take his meal with me tomorrow
Together with the fraternity of bhikkhus?"

The next morning Seniya Bimbisara, the king,
Announced to the Bhagavat that it was time for taking food:
"You are my most welcome guest, O Lord of the world,
Come; the meal is prepared."

And the Bhagavat having donned his robes, took his alms-bowl and,
Together with a great number of bhikkhus, entered the city of
Rajagaha.

Sakka, the king of the Devas, assuming the appearance of a young
brahman, walked in front, and said:

"He who teaches self-control with those who have learned self-control;
The redeemer with those whom he has redeemed;

The Bhagavat with those to who he has given peace,
Is entering Rajagaha!
Hail to the Buddha, our Lord!
Honor to his name and blessings to all who take refuge in him."
And Sakka intoned this stanza:

"So blessed is an age in which Buddhas arise,
So blessed is the Sangha, concordant and wise,
So blessed a devout congregation!

"And if by all the truth were known,
More seeds of kindness would be sown,
And richer crops of good deeds grown."

When the Bhagavat had finished his meal,
And had cleansed his bowl and his hands,
The king sat down near him and thought:

"Where may I find a place for the Bhagavat to live in,
Not too far from the town and not too near, suitable for going and
coming,
Easily accessible to all people who want to see him,
A place that is by day not too crowded and by night not exposed to
noise,
Wholesome and well fitted for a retired life?
There is my pleasure-garden, the bamboo grove Veluvana, fulfilling
all these conditions.
I shall offer it to the brotherhood whose head is the Buddha."

The king dedicated his garden to the brotherhood, saying:
"May the Bhagavat accept my gift."

Then the Bhagavat, having silently shown his consent
And having gladdened and edified the Magadha king by religious
discourse, rose from his seat and went away.

22 • Sariputta and Moggallana

At that time Sariputta and Moggallana,

Two Brahmans and chiefs of the followers of Sanjaya[°],
Led a religious life.
They had promised each other:
"He who first attains Nirvana shall tell the other one."

Sariputta seeing the venerable Assaji[†] begging for alms,
Modestly keeping his eyes to the ground dignified to demeanor,
exclaimed:

"Truly this samana has entered the right path;
I will ask him in whose name he has retired from the world
And what doctrine he professes."
Being addressed by Sariputta, Assaji replied:
"I am a follower of the Buddha, the Bhagavat,
But being a novice I can tell you the substance only of the doctrine."

Said Sariputta:
"Tell me, venerable monk, it is the substance I want."
And Assaji recited the stanza:

"The Buddha did cause unfold
Of all the things that spring from causes.
And further the great sage had told
How finally all passion pauses."

Having heard this stanza, Sariputta obtained the pure and spotless eye
of truth and said:

"Now I see clearly, whatsoever is subject to origination is also subject
to cessation.

If this be the doctrine I have reached the state to enter Nirvana
Which heretofore has remained hidden from me."

Sariputta went to Moggallana and told him, and both said:
"We will go to the Bhagavat, that he, the Bhagavat, may be our
teacher."

When the Buddha saw Sariputta and Moggallana coming from afar,
he said to his disciples, "These two monks are highly auspicious."

When the two friends had taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma

[°] Sanjaya: The Indian saint that have dictated the Bhagavad Gita.

[†] Assaji: An ascetic monk that have been converted to a Buddha disciple.

and the Sangha, the Holy One said to his other disciples:
"Sariputta, like the first-born son of a world-ruling monarch,
Is well able to assist the king as his chief follower
To set the Wheel* of the Law rolling."

And the people were annoyed.
Seeing that many distinguished young men of the kingdom of
Magadha
Led a religious life under the direction of the Bhagavat,
They became angry and murmured:
"Gautama Sakyamuni induces fathers to leave their wives
And causes families to become extinct."

When they saw the bhikkhus, they blame them, saying:
"The great Sakyamuni has come to Rajagaha subduing the minds of
men.
Who will be the next to be led astray by him?"

The bhikkhus told it to the Bhagavat, and the Bhagavat said:
"This murmuring, O bhikkhus, will not last long.
It will last seven days.
If they blame you, O bhikkhus,
Answer them with these words:

"It is by preaching the truth that Tathagatas lead men.
Who will murmur at the wise? Who will blame the virtuous?
Who will condemn self-control, righteousness, and kindness?"

And the Bhagavat proclaimed this verse:

"Commit no wrong but good deeds do
And let your heart be pure.
All Buddhas teach this doctrine true
Which will for aye endure."

23 • Anathapindika

At this time there was Anathapindika,

* **Wheel of the Law:** 'Dharmacakra', symbolizes the Dharma in Hinduism and Buddhism. Its eight spikes symbolizes the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment.

A man of unmeasured wealth, visiting Rajagaha.
Being of a charitable disposition,
He was called "the supporter of orphans and the friend of the poor."

Hearing that the Buddha had come into the world
And was stopping in the bamboo grove near the city,
He set out in the very night to meet the Bhagavat.

And the Bhagavat saw at once the sterling quality of Anathapindika's
heart
And greeted him with words of religious comfort.
And they sat down together,
And Anathapindika listened to the sweetness of the truth preached by
the Bhagavat.

And the Buddha said:

"The restless, busy nature of the world,
This, I declare, is at the root of pain.
Attain that calmness of mind
Which is resting in the peace of immortality.
Self is but a heap of composite qualities,
And its world is empty like a fantasy.

"Who is it that shapes our lives?
Is it Isvara , a personal creator?
If Isvara be the maker,
All living things should have silently to submit to their maker's power.
They would be like vessels formed by the potter's hand;
And if it were so, how would it be possible to practice virtue?
If the world had been made by Isvara
There should be no such thing as sorrow, or calamity, or evil;
For both pure and impure deeds must come from him.
If not, there would be another cause beside him,
And he would not be self-existent.
Thus, you see, the thought of Isvara is overthrown.

"Again, it is said that the Absolute has created us.
But that which is absolute cannot be a cause.
All things around us come from a cause

¹ **Isvara:** Sanskrit word meaning 'lord', 'master' but is a philosophical concept in Hinduism meaning the 'Supreme Controller'.

As the plant comes from the seed;
But how can the Absolute be the cause of all things alike?
If it pervades them, then, certainly, it does not make them.

"Again, it is said that Self is the maker.
But if self is the maker, why did it not make things pleasing?
The causes of sorrow and joy are real and objective.
How can they have been made by self?

"Again, if we adopt the argument that there is no maker,
Our fate is such as it is, and there is no causation,
What use would there be in shaping our lives
And adjusting means to an end?

"Therefore, we argue that all things that exist are not without cause.
However, neither Isvara, nor the absolute, nor the self,
Nor causeless chance, is the maker,
But our deeds produce results both good and evil
According to the law of causation.

"Let us, then, abandon the heresy of worshipping Isvara and of
praying to him; Let us no longer lose ourselves in vain speculations of
profitless subtleties;
Let us surrender self and all selfishness,
And as all things are fixed by causation,
Let us practice good so that good may result from our actions."

And Anathapindika said:

"I see that you are the Buddha, the Bhagavat, the Tathagata,
And I wish to open to you my whole mind.
Having listened to my words advise me what I shall do.

"My life is full of work, and having acquired great wealth, I am
surrounded with cares.
Yet I enjoy my work, and apply myself to it with all diligence.
Many people are in my employ and depend upon the success of my
enterprises.

"Now, I have heard your disciples praise the bliss of the hermit
and denounce the unrest of the world.
'The Holy One,' they say,
'Has given up his kingdom and his inheritance,
And has found the path of righteousness,

Thus setting an example to all the world how to attain Nirvana.'

"My heart yearns to do what is right
And to be a blessing unto my fellows.
Let me then ask you, Must I give up my wealth,
My home, and my business enterprises, and, like yourself,
Go into homelessness in order to attain the bliss of a religious life?"

And the Buddha replied:
"The bliss of a religious life is attainable by everyone
Who walks in the noble eightfold path.
He that cleaves to wealth had better cast it away
Than allow his heart to be poisoned by it;
But he who does not cleave to wealth,
And possessing riches, uses them rightly,
Will be a blessing unto his fellows.

"It is not life and wealth and power that enslaves men,
But the cleaving to life and wealth and power.

"The bhikkhu who retires from the world
In order to lead a life of leisure will have no gain,
For a life of indolence is an abomination,
And lack of energy is to be despised.

"The Dharma of the Tathagata
Does not require a man to go into homelessness or to resign the
world,
Unless he feels called upon to do so;
But the Dharma of the Tathagata
Requires every man to free himself from the illusion of self,
To cleanse his heart,
To give up his thirst for pleasure
And lead a life of righteousness.

"And whatever men do,
Whether they remain in the world as artisans, merchants, and officers
of the king,
Or retire from the world and devote themselves to a life of religious
meditation,
Let them put their whole heart into their task;
Let them be diligent and energetic, and, if they are like the lotus,
Which, although it grows in the water, yet remains untouched by the

water,
If they struggle in life without cherishing envy or hatred,
If they live in the world not a life of self but a life of truth,
Then surely joy, peace, and bliss will dwell in their minds."

24 • The Sermon on Charity

Anathapindika rejoiced at the words of the Bhagavat and said:
"I dwell at Savatthi, the capital of Kosala,
A land rich in produce and enjoying peace.
Pasenadi is the king of the country,
And his name is renowned among our own people and our neighbors.
Now I wish to found there a vihara
Which shall be a place of religious devotion for your brotherhood,
And I pray you kindly accept it."

The Buddha saw into the heart of the supporter of orphans;
And knowing that unselfish charity was the moving cause of his offer,
In acceptance of the gift, the Bhagavat said:

"The charitable man is loved by all;
His friendship is prized highly;
In death his heart is at rest and full of joy;
For he suffers not from repentance;
He receives the opening flower of his reward
And the fruit that ripens from it.

"Hard is it to understand:
By giving away our food, we get more strength,
By giving clothing on others, we gain more beauty;
By donating abodes of purity and truth, we acquire great treasures.

"There is a proper time and a proper mode in charity
Just as the vigorous warrior goes to battle,
So is the man who is able to give.
He is like an able warrior,
A champion strong and wise in action.

"Loving and compassionate he gives with reverence
And banishes all hatred, envy, and anger.

"The charitable man has found the path of salvation.
He is like the man who plants a sapling,
Securing thereby the shade, the flowers, and the fruit in future years.
Even so is the result of charity,
Even so is the joy of him who helps those that are in need of
assistance; even so is the great Nirvana.

"We reach the immortal path only by continuous acts of kindness
And we perfect our souls by compassion and charity."

Anathapindika invited Sariputta to accompany him on his return to
Kosala and help him selecting a pleasant site for the vihara.

25 • Jetavana

Anathapindika, the friend of the poor and the supporter of orphans,
Having returned home, saw the garden of the heir-apparent, Jeta,
With its green groves and limpid rivulets, and thought:
"This is the place which will be most suitable
As a vihara for the brotherhood of the Bhagavat."
And he went to the prince and asked leave to buy the ground.

The prince was not inclined to sell the garden, for he valued it highly.
He at first refused but said at last,
"If you can cover it with gold, then,
And for no other price, shall you have it."

Anathapindika rejoiced and began to spread his gold; but Jeta said:
"Spare yourself the trouble, for I will not sell."
But Anathapindika insisted.
Thus they contended until they resorted to the magistrate.

Meanwhile the people began to talk of the unusual proceeding,
And the prince, hearing more of the details
And knowing that Anathapindika was not only very wealthy
But also straightforward and sincere, inquired into his plans.
On hearing the name of the Buddha,
The prince became anxious to share in the foundation
And he accepted only one-half of the gold, saying:
"Your is the land, but mine are the trees.
I will give the trees as my share of this offering to the Buddha."

Then Anathapindika took the land and Jeta the trees,
And they placed them in trust of Sariputta for the Buddha.

After the foundations were laid,
They began to build the hall which rose high in due proportions
According to the directions which the Buddha had suggested;
And it was beautifully decorated with appropriate carvings.

This vihara was called Jetavana,
And the friend of the orphans invited the Master to come to Savatthi
and receive the donation.
And the Bhagavat left Kapilavastu and came to Savatthi.

While the Bhagavat was entering Jetavana,
Anathapindika scattered flowers and burned incense,
And as a sign of the gift
He poured water from a golden dragon decanter, saying:
"This Jetavana vihara I give for the use of the brotherhood throughout
the world."

The Bhagavat received the gift and replied:
"May all evil influences be overcome;
May the offering promote the kingdom of righteousness
And be a permanent blessing to mankind in general,
To the land of Kosala, and especially also to the giver."

Then the king Pasenadi, hearing that the Lord had come,
Went in his royal equipage to the Jetavana vihara
And saluted the Bhagavat with clasped hands, saying:

"Blessed is my unworthy and obscure kingdom
that it has met with so great a fortune.
For how can calamities and dangers befall it
In the presence of the Lord of the World,
The Dharmaraja, the King of Truth.

"Now that I have seen your sacred face,
Let me partake of the refreshing waters of your teachings.

"Worldly profit is fleeting and perishable,
But religious profit is eternal and inexhaustible.
A worldly man, though a king, is full of trouble,
But even a common man who is holy has peace of mind."

Knowing the tendency of the king's heart,
Weighed down by avarice and love of pleasure,
The Buddha seized the opportunity and said:

"Even those who, by their evil karma,
Have been born in low degree,
When they see a virtuous man, feel reverence for him.
How much more must an independent king,
On account of merits acquired in previous existences,
When meeting a Buddha, conceive reverence for him.

"And now as I briefly expose the law,
Let the Maharaja listen and weigh my words,
And hold fast that which I deliver!

"Our good or evil deeds follow us continually like shadows.

"That which is most needed is a loving heart!

"Regard your people as men do an only son.
Do not oppress them, do not destroy them;
Keep in due check every member of your body,
Forsake unrighteous doctrine and walk in the straight path.
Exalt not yourself by trampling down others,
But comfort and befriend the suffering.

"Neither ponder on kingly dignity,
Nor listen to the smooth words of flatterers.

"There is no profit in distressing oneself by austerities,
But meditate on the Buddha and weigh his righteous law.

"We are encompassed on all sides by the rocks of birth, old age,
disease, and death,
And only by considering and practicing the true law
Can we escape from this sorrow-piled mountain.

"What profit, then, in practicing iniquity?

"All who are wise spurn the pleasures of the body.
They loathe lust and seek to promote their spiritual existence.

"When a tree is burning with fierce flames,

How can the birds congregate therein?
Truth cannot dwell where passion lives.
He who does not know this,
Though he be a learned man
And be praised by others as a sage,
Is clouded with ignorance.

"To him who has this knowledge true wisdom dawns,
And he will beware of craving for pleasure.
To acquire this state of mind, wisdom is the one thing needful.
To neglect wisdom will lead to failure in life.

"The teachings of all religions should centre here,
For without wisdom there is no reason.

"This truth is not for the hermit alone;
It concerns every human being, priest and layman alike.
There is no distinction between the monk who has taken the vows,
And the man of the world living with his family.
There are hermits who fall into perdition,
And there are humble householders who mount to the rank of rishis^o.

"Going yearning after pleasure is a danger common to all;
It carries away the world.
He who is involved in its vortex finds no escape.
But wisdom is the handy boat, reflection is the rudder.
The slogan of religion calls you to overcome the assaults of Mara, the
enemy.

"Since it is impossible to escape the result of our deeds,
let us practice good works.

"Let us guard our thoughts that we do no evil,
Or as we sow so shall we reap.

"There are ways from light into darkness and from darkness into light.
There are ways, also, from the gloom into deeper darkness, and from
the dawn into brighter light.
The wise man will use the light he has to receive more light.
He will constantly advance in the knowledge of truth.

^o **Rishi:** an Hindu "saint" or "sage", in its canonical sense denotes a 'Vedic sage'.

"Exhibit true superiority by virtuous conduct and the exercise of reason;
Meditate deeply on the vanity of earthly things,
And understand the fickleness of life.

"Elevate the mind,
And seek sincere faith with firm purpose;
Transgress not the rules of kingly conduct,
And let your happiness depend,
Not upon external things,
But upon your own mind.
Thus you will lay up a good name for distant ages
And will secure the favor of the Tathagata."

The king listened with reverence and remembered all the words of the Buddha in his heart.

26 • The Three Characteristics and The Uncreate

When the Buddha was staying at the Veluvana,
The bamboo grove at Rajagaha,
He addressed the brethren thus:

"Whether Buddhas arise, O monks, or whether Buddhas do not arise,
It remains a fact and the fixed and necessary constitution of being
That all conformations are transitory.
This fact a Buddha discovers and masters,
And when he has discovered and mastered it,
He announces, teaches, publishes,
Proclaims, discloses, minutely explains
And makes it clear that all conformations are transitory.

"Whether Buddhas arise, O monks, or whether Buddhas do not arise,
It remains a fact and a fixed and necessary constitution of being,
That all conformations are suffering.
This fact a Buddha discovers and masters,
And when he has discovered and mastered it,
He announces, teaches, publishes,
Proclaims, discloses, minutely explains
And makes it clear that all conformations are suffering.

"Whether Buddhas arise, O monks, or whether Buddhas do not arise,
It remains a fact and a fixed and necessary constitution of being,
That all conformations are lacking a self.
This fact a Buddha discovers and masters,
And when he has discovered and mastered it,
He announces, teaches, publishes,
Proclaims, discloses, minutely explains and makes it clear that all
conformations are lacking a self."

And on another occasion the Bhagavat dwelt at Savatthi
in the Jetavana, the garden of Anathapindika.

At that time the Bhagavat edified,
aroused, quickened and gladdened the monks
With a religious discourse on the subject of Nirvana.
And these monks grasping the meaning, thinking it out,
And accepting with their hearts the whole doctrine, listened
attentively.
But there was one brother who had some doubt left in his heart.
He arose and clasping his hands made the request:
"May I be permitted to ask a question?"
When permission was granted he spoke as follows:

"The Buddha teaches that all conformations are transient,
That all conformations are subject to sorrow,
That all conformations are lacking a self.
How then can there be Nirvana, a state of eternal bliss?"

And the Bhagavat, in this connection, on that occasion,
Breathed forth this solemn utterance:

"There is, O monks, a state where there is neither earth,
Nor water, nor heat, nor air;
Neither infinity of space nor infinity of consciousness,
Nor nothingness, nor perception nor non-perception;
Neither this world nor that world, neither sun nor moon.
It is the uncreate.

"That, O monks, I term
Neither coming nor going nor standing;
Neither death nor birth.
It is without stability, without change;
It is the eternal which never originates

And never passes away.
There is the end of sorrow.

"It is hard to realize the essential,
The truth is not easily perceived;
Desire is mastered by him who knows,
And to him who sees aright all things are naught.

"There is, O monks,
An unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed.
Were there not, O monks,
This unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed,
There would be no escape from the world of the born, originated,
created, formed.

"Since, O monks,
There is an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, and unformed,
Therefore is there an escape from the born, originated, created,
formed."

27 • The Buddha's Father

The Buddha's name became famous over all India and Suddhodana,
His father, sent word to him saying:
"I am growing old and wish to see my son before I die.
Others have had the benefit of his doctrine,
But not his father nor his relatives."

And the messenger said:
"O world-honored Tathagata,
Your father looks for your coming
As the lily longs for the rising of the sun."

The Bhagavat consented to the request of his father
And set out on his journey to Kapilavastu.
Soon the news spread in the native country of the Buddha:
"Prince Siddhartha, who wandered forth from home
Into homelessness to obtain enlightenment,
Having attained his purpose, is coming back."

Suddhodana went out with his relatives and ministers to meet the

prince.

When the king saw Siddhartha, his son, from afar,
He was struck with his beauty and dignity,
And he rejoiced in his heart,
But his mouth found no words to utter.

This, indeed, was his son;
These were the features of Siddhartha.
How near was the great samana to his heart,
And yet what a distance lay between them!
That noble muni was no longer Siddhartha, his son;
He was the Buddha, the Bhagavat, the Holy One,
Lord of truth, and teacher of mankind.

Suddhodana the king, considering the religious dignity of his son,
Descended from his chariot and after saluting his son said:
"It is now seven years since I have seen you.
How I have longed for this moment!"

Then the Sakyamuni took a seat opposite his father,
And the king gazed eagerly at his son.
He longed to call him by his name, but he dared not.
"Siddhartha," he exclaimed silently in his heart,
"Siddhartha, come back to your aged father and be his son again!"
But seeing the determination of his son,
He suppressed his sentiments,
And desolation overcame him.

Thus the king sat face to face with his son,
Rejoicing in his sadness and sad in his rejoicing.
Well might he be proud of his son, but his pride broke down at the
idea that his great son would never be his heir.

"I would offer you my kingdom," said the king,
"But if I did, you would account it but as ashes."

And the Buddha said:
"I know that the king's heart is full of love
And that for his son's sake he feels deep grief.
But let the ties of love that bind him to the son
Whom he lost embrace with equal kindness all his fellow-beings,
And he will receive in his place a greater one than Siddhartha;
He will receive the Buddha, the teacher of truth,

The preacher of righteousness,
And the peace of Nirvana will enter into his heart."

Suddhodana trembled with joy when he heard the melodious words
of his son, the Buddha,
And clasping his hands, exclaimed with tears in his eyes:
"Wonderful is this change!
The overwhelming sorrow has passed away.
At first my sorrowing heart was heavy,
But now I reap the fruit of your great renunciation.
It was right that, moved by your mighty sympathy,
You should reject the pleasures of royal power
And achieve your noble purpose in religious devotion.
Now that you have found the path,
You can preach the law of immortality
To all the world that yearns for deliverance."

The king returned to the palace,
While the Buddha remained in the grove before the city.

28 • Yasodhara

On the next morning the Buddha took his bowl
And set out to beg his food.

And the news spread abroad.
"Prince Siddhartha is going from house to house
To receive alms in the city where he used to ride
In a chariot attended by his servants.
His robe is like a red clod,
And he holds in his hand an earthen bowl."

On hearing the strange rumor,
The king went forth in great haste
And when he met his son he exclaimed:
"Why do you thus disgrace me?
Knows you not that I can easily supply
You and your bhikkhus with food?"

And the Buddha replied:
"It is the custom of my race."

But the king said: "How can this be?
You are descendant from kings,
And not one of them ever begged for food."

"O great king," rejoined the Buddha,
"You and your race may claim descent from kings;
My descent is from the Buddhas of old.
They, begging their food, lived on alms."

The king made no reply, and the Bhagavat continued:
"It is customary, O king, when one has found a hidden treasure,
For him to make an offering of the most precious jewel to his father.
Suffer me, therefore, to open this treasure of mine
Which is the Dharma, and accept from me this gem:"

And the Bhagavat recited the following stanza:

"Rise from dreams and loiter not
Open to truth your mind.
Practice righteousness and you
Eternal bliss shall find."

Then the king conducted the prince into the palace,
And the ministers and all the members of the royal family greeted
him with great reverence,
But Yasodhara, the mother of Rahula, did not make her appearance.
The king sent for Yasodhara, but she replied:
"Surely, if I am deserving of any regard,
Siddhartha will come and see me."

The Bhagavat, having greeted all his relatives and friends, asked:
"Where is Yasodhara?"

And on being informed that she had refused to come,
He rose straightaway and went to her apartment.

"I am free," the Bhagavat said to his disciples, Sariputta and
Moggallana,
Whom he had bidden to accompany him to the princess's chamber;
"The princess, however, is not as yet free.
Not having seen me for a long time, she is exceedingly sorrowful.
Unless her grief be allowed its course her heart will cleave.
Should she touch the Tathagata, the Holy One,
You must not prevent her."

Yasodhara sat in her room, dressed in mean garments, and her hair cut.

When Prince Siddhartha entered, she was, from the abundance of her affection, like an overflowing vessel, unable to contain her love.

Forgetting that the man whom she loved was the Buddha,
The Lord of the world, the preacher of truth,
She held him by his feet and wept bitterly.

Remembering, however, that Suddhodana was present, she felt ashamed,
And rising, seated herself reverently at a little distance.

The king apologized for the princess, saying:
"This arises from her deep affection, and is more than a temporary emotion.

During the seven years that she has lost her husband,
When she heard that Siddhartha had shaved his head, she did likewise;

When she heard that he had left of the use of perfumes and ornaments,

She also refused their use.

Like her husband she had eaten at appointed times from an earthen bowl only.

Like him she had renounced high beds with splendid coverings,
And when other princes asked her in marriage, she replied that she was still his.

Therefore, grant her forgiveness."

And the Bhagavat spoke kindly to Yasodhara,

Telling of her great merits inherited from former lives.

She had indeed been again and again of great assistance to him.

Her purity, her gentleness, her devotion had been invaluable to the Bodhisattva

When he aspired to attain enlightenment, the highest aim of mankind.

And so holy had she been that she desired to become the wife of a Buddha.

This, then, is her karma, and it is the result of great merits.

Her grief has been unspeakable, but the consciousness of the glory that surrounds her spiritual inheritance

Increased by her noble attitude during her life, will be a balm

That will miraculously transform all sorrows into heavenly joy.

29 • Rahula

Many people in Kapilavastu believed in the Tathagata and took refuge in his doctrine,

Among them Nanda, Siddhartha's half-brother, the son of Pajapati;
Devadatta, his cousin and brother-in-law;

Upali the barber; and Anuruddha the philosopher.

Some years later Ananda,
Another cousin of the Bhagavat,
Also joined the Sangha.

Ananda was a man after the heart of the Bhagavat;
He was his most beloved disciple, profound in comprehension and gentle in spirit.

And Ananda remained always near the Blessed Master of Truth,
Until death parted them.

On the seventh day after the Buddha's arrival in Kapilavastu,
Yasodhara dressed Rahula, now seven years old, in all the splendor of a prince and said to him:

"This holy man, whose appearance is so glorious that he looks like the great Brahma, is your father.

He possesses four great mines of wealth which I have not yet seen.

Go to him and ask him to put you in possession of them,

For the son ought to inherit the property of his father."

Rahula replied: "I know of no father but the king. Who is my father?"

The princess took the boy in her arms
And from the window she pointed out to him the Buddha,
Who happened to be near the palace, partaking of food.

Rahula then went to the Buddha,
And looking up into his face said
Without fear and with much affection:
"My father!"

And standing near by him, he added:
"O samana, even your shadow is a place of bliss!"

When the Tathagata had finished his repast,
He gave blessings and went away from the palace,

But Rahula followed and asked his father for his inheritance.

No one prevented the boy, nor did the Bhagavat himself.

Then the Bhagavat turned to Sariputta, saying:

"My son asks for his inheritance.

I cannot give him perishable treasures that will bring cares and sorrows,

But I can give him the inheritance of a holy life,

Which is a treasure that will not perish."

Addressing Rahula with earnestness, the Bhagavat said:

"Gold and silver and jewels are not in my possession.

But if you are willing to receive spiritual treasures,

And are strong enough to carry them and to keep them,

I shall give you the four truths which will teach you the eightfold path of righteousness.

Do you desire to be admitted to the brotherhood

Of those who devote their life to the culture of the heart

Seeking for the highest bliss attainable?"

And Rahula replied with firmness:

"I do. I want to join the brotherhood of the Buddha."

When the king heard that Rahula had joined the brotherhood of bhikkhus he was grieved.

He had lost Siddhartha and Nanda, his sons, and Devadatta, his nephew.

But now that his grandson had been taken from him,

He went to the Bhagavat and spoke to him.

And the Bhagavat promised that from that time forward

He would not ordain any minor without the consent of his parents or guardians.

Consolidation of the Buddha's Religion

30 • Jivaka, the Physician

Long before the Bhagavat had attained enlightenment,
Self-mortification had been the custom among those who earnestly
sought for enlightenment.
Deliverance of the soul from all the necessities of life
And finally from the body itself,
They regarded as the aim of religion.
Thus, they avoided everything that might be a luxury
In food, shelter, and clothing, and lived like the beasts in the wood.
Some went naked, while others wore the rags cast away upon
cemeteries or dung-heaps.

When the Bhagavat retired from the world,
He recognized at once the error of the naked ascetics,
And, considering the indecency of their habit,
Clad himself in cast-off rags.

Having attained enlightenment and rejected all unnecessary self-
mortifications,
The Bhagavat and his bhikkhus continued for a long time
To wear the cast-off rags of cemeteries and dung-heaps.

Then it happened that the bhikkhus were visited with diseases of all
kinds,

And the Bhagavat permitted and explicitly ordered the use of medicines,
And among them he even enjoined, whenever needed, the use of unguents.

One of the brethren suffered from a sore on his foot,
And the Bhagavat enjoined the bhikkhus to wear foot-coverings.

Now it happened that a disease befell the body of the Bhagavat himself,
And Ananda went to Jivaka, physician to Bimbisara, the king.

And Jivaka, a faithful believer in the Holy One,
Ministered unto the Bhagavat with medicines and baths
Until the body of the Bhagavat was completely restored.

At that time, Pajjota, king of Ujjeni, was suffering from jaundice,
And Jivaka, the physician to king Bimbisara, was consulted.

When king Pajjota had been restored to health,
He sent to Jivaka a suit of the most excellent cloth.

And Jivaka said to himself:

"This suit is made of the best cloth,
And nobody is worthy to receive it but the Bhagavat,
The perfect and holy Buddha, or the Magadha king, Senija
Bimbisara."

Then Jivaka took that suit and went to the place where the Bhagavat was;

Having approached him, and having respectfully saluted the Bhagavat,

He sat down near him and said:

"Lord, I have a boon to ask of the Bhagavat."

The Buddha replied:

"The Tathagatas, Jivaka, do not grant boons
Before they know what they are."

Jivaka said: "Lord, it is a proper and unobjectionable request."

"Speak, Jivaka," said the Bhagavat.

"Lord of the world,
The Bhagavat wears only robes made of rags

Taken from a dung-heap or a cemetery,
And so also does the brotherhood of bhikkhus.
Now, Lord, this suit has been sent to me by King Pajjota,
Which is the best and most excellent,
And the finest and the most precious,
And the noblest that can be found.
Lord of the world, may the Bhagavat accept from me this suit,
And may he allow the brotherhood of bhikkhus to wear lay robes."

The Bhagavat accepted the suit,
And after having delivered a religious discourse,
He addressed the bhikkhus thus:

"Henceforth you shall be at liberty to wear either cast-off rags or lay robes.
Whether you are pleased with the one or with the other, I will approve of it."

When the people at Rajagaha heard,
"The Bhagavat has allowed the bhikkhus to wear lay robes,"
Those who were willing to hand out gifts became glad.
And in one day many thousands of robes were presented at Rajagaha to the bhikkhus.

31 • The Buddha's Parents Attain Nirvana

When Suddhodana had grown old,
He fell sick and sent for his son
To come and see him once more before he died;
And the Bhagavat came and stayed at the sick-bed,
And Suddhodana, having attained perfect enlightenment,
Died in the arms of the Bhagavat.

And it is said that the Bhagavat,
For the sake of preaching to his mother Maya-devi,
Ascended to heaven and dwelt with the devas.
Having concluded his pious mission,
He returned to the earth and went about again,
Converting those who listened to his teachings.

32 • Women Admitted to the Sangha

Yasodhara had three times requested of the Buddha
That she might be admitted to the Sangha,
But her wish had not been granted.
Now Pajapati, the foster-mother of the Bhagavat,
In the company of Yasodhara, and many other women,
Went to the Tathagata asking him earnestly
To let them take the vows and be ordained as disciples.

And the Bhagavat, foreseeing the danger that lurked in admitting
women to the Sangha,
Protested that while the good religion ought surely to last a thousand
years it would,
When women joined it, likely decay after five hundred years;
But observing the zeal of Pajapati and Yasodhara for leading a
religious life
He could no longer resist and assented to have them admitted as his
disciples.

Then the venerable Ananda addressed the Bhagavat thus:

"Are women competent, Venerable Lord,
If they retire from household life to the homeless state,
Under the doctrine and discipline announced by the Tathagata,
To attain to the fruit of conversion,
To attain to a release from a wearisome repetition of rebirths,
To attain to saintship?"

And the Bhagavat declared:
"Women are competent, Ananda,
If they retire from household life to the homeless state,
Under the doctrine and discipline announced by the Tathagata,
To attain to the fruit of conversion,
To attain to a release from a wearisome repetition of rebirths,
To attain to saintship.

"Consider, Ananda, how great a benefactress Pajapati has been.
She is the sister of the mother of the Bhagavat,
And as foster-mother and nurse,
Reared the Bhagavat after the death of his mother.
So, Ananda, women may retire from household life to the homeless
state,

Under the doctrine and discipline announced by the Tathagata."

Pajapati was the first woman to become a disciple of the Buddha
And to receive the ordination as a bhikkhuni*.

33 • The Bhikkhu's Conduct Toward Women

The bhikkhus came to the Bhagavat and asked him:

"O Tathagata, our Lord and Master,
What conduct toward women do you prescribe
To the samanās who have left the world?"

And the Bhagavat said:

"Guard against looking on a woman.

"If you see a woman, let it be as though you saw her not,
And have no conversation with her.

"If, after all, you must speak with her,
Let it be with a pure heart,
And think to yourself,
'I as a samana will live in this sinful world
As the spotless leaf of the lotus,
Unsoiled by the mud in which it grows.'

"If the woman be old, regard her as your mother,
If young, as your sister,
If very young, as your child.

"The samana who looks on a woman as a woman,
Or touches her as a woman, has broken his vow
And is no longer a disciple of the Tathagata.

"The power of lust is great with men,
And is to be feared even so;
Take then the bow of earnest perseverance,
And the sharp arrow-points of wisdom.

* Bhikkhuni: A fully ordained female Buddhist monastic.

"Cover your heads with the helmet of right thought,
And fight with fixed resolve against the five desires.

"Lust clouds a man's heart,
When it is confused with woman's beauty,
And the mind is dazed.

"Better far with red-hot irons bore out both your eyes,
Than encourage in yourself sensual thoughts,
Or look upon a woman's form with lustful desires.

"Better fall into the fierce tiger's mouth,
Or under the sharp knife of the executioner,
Than dwell with a woman and excite in yourself lustful thoughts.

"A woman of the world is anxious to exhibit her form and shape,
Whether walking, standing, sitting, or sleeping.
Even when represented as a picture,
She desires to captivate with the charms of her beauty,
And thus to rob men of their steadfast heart.

"How then ought you to guard yourselves?

"By regarding her tears and her smiles as enemies,
Her stooping form, her hanging arms, and her disentangled hair
As toils designed to entrap man's heart.

"Therefore, I say, restrain the heart,
Give it no unbridled license."

34 • Visakha

Visakha, a wealthy woman in Savatthi
Who had many children and grandchildren,
Had given to the order the Pubbarama or Eastern Garden, and was
The first in Northern Kosala
To become a matron of the lay sisters.

When the Bhagavat stayed at Savatthi,
Visakha went up to the place where the Bhagavat was,
And tendered him an invitation to take his meal at her house,

Which the Bhagavat accepted.

And a heavy rain fell during the night and the next morning;
And the bhikkhus take off their robes to keep them dry
And let the rain fall upon their bodies.

When on the next day the Bhagavat had finished his meal,
She took her seat at his side and spoke thus:
"Eight are the boons, Lord, which I beg of the Bhagavat."

Said the Bhagavat: "The Tathagatas, O Visakha,
grant no boons until they know what they are."

Visakha replied: "Appropriate, Lord,
And unobjectionable are the boons I ask."

Having received permission to make known her requests, Visakha
said:

"I desire, Lord, through all my life long
To donate robes for the rainy season on the Sangha,
And food for incoming bhikkhus, and food for outgoing bhikkhus,
And food for the sick, and food for those who wait upon the sick,
And medicine for the sick, and a constant supply of rice-milk for the
Sangha,
And bathing robes for the bhikkhunis, the sisters."

Said the Buddha: "But what circumstance is it, O Visakha,
That you have in view in asking these eight boons of the Tathagata?"

And Visakha replied:

"I gave command, Lord, to my maid-servant, saying,
'Go, and announce to the brotherhood that the meal is ready.'
And the maid went, but when she came to the vihara,
She observed that the bhikkhus had take off their robes while it was
raining,
And she thought: 'These are not bhikkhus,
But naked ascetics letting the rain fall on them.'
So she returned to me and reported accordingly,
And I had to send her a second time.
Impure, Lord, is nakedness, and revolting.
It was this circumstance, Lord, that I had in view
In desiring to provide the Sangha my life long

With special garments for use in the rainy season.

"As to my second wish, Lord, an incoming bhikkhu,
Not being able to take the direct roads,
And not knowing the places where food can be procured,
Comes on his way tired out by seeking for alms.
It was this circumstance, Lord, that I had in view
In desiring to provide the Sangha my life long
With food for incoming bhikkhus.

"Thirdly, Lord, an outgoing bhikkhu,
While seeking about for alms, may be left behind,
Or may arrive too late at the place where he desires to go,
And will set out on the road in weariness.

Fourthly, Lord, if a sick bhikkhu does not obtain suitable food,
His sickness may increase upon him, and he may die.

Fifthly, Lord, a bhikkhu who is waiting upon the sick
Will lose his opportunity of going out to seek food for himself.

"Sixthly, Lord, if a sick bhikkhu does not obtain suitable medicines,
His sickness may increase upon him, and he may die.

"Seventhly, Lord, I have heard that the Bhagavat has praised rice-
milk,
Because it gives readiness of mind, dispels hunger and thirst;
It is wholesome for the healthy as nourishment,
And for the sick as a medicine.
Therefore I desire to provide the Sangha my life long
With a constant supply of rice-milk.

"Finally, Lord, the bhikkhunis are in the habit
Of bathing in the river Achiravati with the courtesans,
At the same landing place, and naked.
And the courtesans, Lord, ridicule the bhikkhunis, saying,
'What is the good, ladies, of your maintaining chastity when you are
young?
When you are old, maintain chastity then;
Thus will you obtain both worldly pleasure and religious consolation.'
Impure, Lord, is nakedness for a woman, disgusting, and revolting.

"These are the circumstances, Lord, that I had in view."

The Bhagavat said:
"But what was the advantage
You had in view for yourself, O Visakha,
In asking the eight boons of the Tathagata?"

Visakha replied:

"Bhikkhus who have spent the rainy seasons in various places
will come, Lord, to Savatthi to visit the Bhagavat.
And on coming to the Bhagavat they will ask, saying:
'Such and such a bhikkhu, Lord, has died.
What, now, is his destiny?'
Then will the Bhagavat explain
That he has attained the fruits of conversion;
That he has attained arahatship*
Or has entered Nirvana, as the case may be.

"And I, going up to them, will ask, 'Was that brother, Sirs,
One of those who had formerly been at Savatthi?'
If they reply to me, 'He has formerly been at Savatthi,'
Then shall I arrive at the conclusion,
'For a certainty did that brother enjoy either the robes for the rainy
season,
Or the food for the incoming bhikkhus,
Or the food for the outgoing bhikkhus,
Or the food for the sick,
Or the food for those that wait upon the sick,
Or the medicine for the sick,
Or the constant supply of rice-milk.'

"Then gladness will spring up within me;
Thus gladdened, joy will come to me;
And so rejoicing all my mind will be at peace.
Being thus at peace I shall experience a blissful feeling of content;
And in that bliss my heart will be at rest.
That will be to me an exercise of my moral sense,
An exercise of my moral powers,
An exercise of the seven kinds of wisdom!
This, Lord, was the advantage I had in view for myself
In asking those eight boons of the Bhagavat."

* Arahat: Sanskrit. 'Spiritual practitioner' who had attained 'saintship'.

The Bhagavat said: "It is well, it is well, Visakha.
You have done well in asking these eight boons
Of the Tathagata with such advantages in view.
Charity given those who are worthy of it
Is like food seed sown on a good soil that yields an abundance of
fruits.
But alms given to those who are yet under the tyrannical yoke of the
passions
Are like seed deposited in a bad soil.
The passions of the receiver of the alms choke, as it were,
The growth of merits."

And the Bhagavat gave thanks to Visakha in these verses:

"O noble woman of an upright life,
Disciple of the Bhagavat, you gives
lavishly in purity of heart.

"You spreads joy, relieves pain,
And verily your gift will be a blessing
As well to many others as to you."

35 • The Uposatha and Patimokkha

When Seniya Bimbisara, the king of Magadha, was advanced in years,
He retired from the world and led a religious life.
He observed that there were Brahmanical sects in Rajagaha keeping
sacred certain days,
And the people went to their meeting houses and listened to their
sermons.

Concerning the need of keeping regular days
For retirement from worldly labors and religious instruction,
The king went to the Bhagavat and said:
"The Parivrajaka, who belong to the Tithiya school,
Prosper and gain adherents because they keep the eighth day
And also the fourteenth or fifteenth day of each half-month.
Would it not be advisable for the reverend brethren of the Sangha
Also to assemble on days duly appointed for that purpose?"

And the Bhagavat ordered the bhikkhu to assemble on the eighth day

And also on the fourteenth or fifteenth day of each half-month,
And to devote these days to religious exercises.

A bhikkhu duly appointed should address the congregation and
expose the Dharma.

He should exhort the people to walk in the eightfold path of
righteousness;

He should comfort them in the vicissitudes of life

And gladden them with the bliss of the fruit of good deeds.

Thus the brethren should keep the Uposatha*.

Now the bhikkhus, in obedience to the rule laid down by the Buddha,
Assembled in the vihara on the day appointed,

And the people went to hear the Dharma,

But they were greatly disappointed,

For the bhikkhus remained silent

And delivered no discourse.

When the Bhagavat heard of it,

He ordered the bhikkhus to recite the Patimokkha[†],

Which is a ceremony of disburdening the conscience;

And he commanded them to make confession of their errors

So as to receive the absolution of the order.

A fault, if there be one, should be confessed

By the bhikkhu who remembers it and desires to be cleansed.

For a fault, when confessed, shall be light on him.

And the Bhagavat said:

"The Patimokkha must be recited in this way:

"Let a competent and venerable bhikkhu

Make the following proclamation to the Sangha:

'May the Sangha hear me! Today is Uposatha,

The eighth, or the fourteenth or fifteenth day of the half-month.

If the Sangha is ready, let the Sangha hold the Uposatha service

And recite the Patimokkha. I will recite the Patimokkha.'

* **Uposatha:** The Buddhist Sabbath day, in existence since 500 BC, and still being kept today in countries that professes the Theravada Buddhism.

† **Patimokkha:** The basic Theravada Buddhism code of monastic discipline.

"And the bhikkhus shall reply:
'We hear it well and we concentrate well our minds on it, all of us.'

"Then the officiating bhikkhu shall continue:
'Let him who has committed an offense, confess it;
If there be no offense, let all remain silent;
From your being silent I shall understand
That the reverend brethren are free from offenses.

"As a single person who has been asked a question answers it,
So also, if before an assembly like this
A question is solemnly proclaimed three times, an answer is expected:
If a bhikkhu, after a threefold proclamation,
Does not confess an existing offense which he remembers,
He commits an intentional falsehood.

"Now, reverend brethren, an intentional falsehood
Has been declared an impediment by the Bhagavat.
Therefore, if an offense has been committed by a bhikkhu
Who remembers it and desires to become pure,
The offense should be confessed by the bhikkhu;
And when it has been confessed, it is treated duly."

36 • The Schism

While the Bhagavat dwelt at Kosambi,
A certain bhikkhu was accused of having committed an offense,
And, as he refused to acknowledge it,
The brotherhood pronounced against him the sentence of expulsion.

Now, that bhikkhu was erudite.
He knew the Dharma, had studied the rules of the order,
And was wise, learned, intelligent, modest, conscientious,
And ready to submit himself to discipline.
And he went to his companions and friends among the bhikkhus,
saying:
"This is no offense, friends;
This is no reason for a sentence of expulsion.
I am not guilty. The verdict is unconstitutional and invalid.
Therefore I consider myself still as a member of the order.
May the venerable brethren assist me in maintaining my right."

Those who sided with the expelled brother
Went to the bhikkhus who had pronounced the sentence,
Saying: "This is no offense";
While the bhikkhus who had pronounced the sentence replied:
"This is an offense."

Thus altercations and quarrels arose,
And the Sangha was divided into two parties,
Offending and slandering each other.

And all these happenings were reported to Gautama Buddha.

Then the Bhagavat went to the place where the bhikkhus were
Who had pronounced the sentence of expulsion, and said to them:
"Do not think, O bhikkhus,
That you are to pronounce expulsion against a bhikkhu,
Whatever be the facts of the case, simply by saying:
'It occurs to us that it is so,
And therefore we are pleased to proceed thus against our brother.'
Let those bhikkhus who frivolously pronounce a sentence
Against a brother who knows the Dharma and the rules of the order,
Who is learned, wise, intelligent, modest, conscientious,
And ready to submit himself to discipline, stand in awe of causing
divisions.
They must not pronounce a sentence of expulsion against a brother
Merely because he refuses to see his offense."

Then the Bhagavat rose and went to the brethren
Who sided with the expelled brother and said to them:
"Do not think, O bhikkhus,
That if you have given offense you need not atone for it, thinking:
'We are without offense.'
When a bhikkhu has committed an offense, which he considers no
offense
While the brotherhood consider him guilty, he should think:
'These brethren know the Dharma and the rules of the order;
They are learned, wise, intelligent, modest, conscientious,
And ready to submit themselves to discipline;
It is impossible that they should on my account
act with selfishness or in malice or in delusion or in fear.'
Let him stand in awe of causing divisions,
And rather acknowledge his offense
On the authority of his brethren."

Both parties continued to keep Uposatha
And perform official acts independently of one another;
And when their doings were related to the Bhagavat,
He ruled that the keeping of Uposatha
And the performance of official acts
Were lawful, unobjectionable, and valid for both parties.

For he said:

"The bhikkhus who side with the expelled brother
Form a different communion from those who pronounced the
sentence.

There are venerable brethren in both parties.

As they do not agree, let them keep Uposatha
And perform official acts separately."

And the Bhagavat reprimanded the quarrelsome bhikkhus
saying to them:

"Loud is the voice which worldlings make;
But how can they be blamed
When divisions arise also in the Sangha?
Hatred is not appeased in those who think:
'He has offended me, he has wronged me, he has injured me.'

"For not by hatred is hatred appeased.

Hatred is appeased by not-hatred.

This is an eternal law.

"There are some who do not know the need of self-restraint;

If they are quarrelsome we may excuse their behavior.

But those who know better, should learn to live in concord.

"If a man finds a wise friend who lives righteously and is constant in
his character,

He may live with him, overcoming all dangers, happy and mindful.

"But if he finds not a friend who lives righteously and is constant in
his character,

Let him rather walk alone, like a king who leaves his empire

And the cares of government behind him to lead a life of retirement

Like a lonely elephant in the forest.

"With fools there is no companionship.

Rather than to live with men who are selfish, vain, quarrelsome, and

obstinate let a man walk alone."

And the Bhagavat thought to himself:

"It is no easy task to instruct these stubborn and obsessed fools."

And he rose from his seat and went away.

37 • The Reestablishment of Concord

While the dispute between the parties was not yet settled,
The Bhagavat left Kosambi, and wandering from place to place
He came at last to Savatthi.

And in the absence of the Bhagavat the quarrels grew worse,
So that the lay devotees of Kosambi became annoyed and they said:
"These quarrelsome monks are a great nuisance
And will bring upon us misfortunes.
Worried by their altercations the Bhagavat is gone,
And has selected another abode for his residence.
Let us, therefore, neither salute the bhikkhus nor support them.
They are not worthy of wearing yellow robes,
And must either appease the Bhagavat,
Or return to the world."

And the bhikkhus of Kosambi, when no longer honored
And no longer supported by the lay devotees,
Began to repent and said:
"Let us go to the Bhagavat
And let him settle the question of our disagreement."

And both parties went to Savatthi to the Bhagavat.
And the venerable Sariputta, having heard of their arrival,
Addressed the Bhagavat and said:
"These contentious and quarrelsome bhikkhus of Kosambi,
The authors of dissensions, have come to Savatthi.
How am I to behave, O Buddha, toward those bhikkhus."

"Do not reprove them, Sariputta," said the Bhagavat,
"For harsh words do not serve as a remedy
And are pleasant to no one.
Assign separate dwelling-places to each party
And treat them with impartial justice.

Listen with patience to both parties.
He alone who weighs both sides is called muni.
When both parties have presented their case,
Let the Sangha come to an agreement
And declare the reestablishment of concord."

And Pajapati, the matron, asked the Bhagavat for advice,
And the Bhagavat said:
"Let both parties enjoy the gifts of lay members,
Be they robes or food, as they may need,
And let no one receive any noticeable preference over any other."

And the venerable Upali, having approached the Bhagavat,
Asked concerning the reestablishment of peace in the Sangha:
"Would it be right, O Master," said he,
"That the Sangha, to avoid further disputations,
Should declare the restoration of concord
Without inquiring into the matter of the quarrel?"

And the Bhagavat said:

"If the Sangha declares the reestablishment of concord
Without having inquired into the matter,
The declaration is neither right nor lawful.

"There is two ways of re-establishing concord:
One is in the letter,
And the other is in the spirit and in the letter.

"If the Sangha declares the reestablishment of concord
Without having inquired into the matter,
The peace is concluded in the letter only.
But if the Sangha, having inquired into the matter
And having gone to the bottom of it,
Decides to declare the reestablishment of concord,
The peace is concluded in the spirit and in the letter.

"The concord reestablishment in the spirit
And in the letter is alone right and lawful."

And the Bhagavat addressed the bhikkhus
And told them the story of Prince Dighavu, the long-lived. He said:

"In former times, there lived at Benares a powerful king whose name was Brahmadata of Kasi;
And he went to war against Dighiti, the Long-suffering, a king of Kosala, for he thought,
'The kingdom of Kosali is small and Dighiti will not be able to resist my armies.'

"And Dighiti, seeing that resistance was impossible
Against the great host of the king of Kasi, fled,
Leaving his little kingdom in the hands of Brahmadata;
And having wandered from place to place, he came at last to Benares,
And lived there with his consort in a potter's dwelling outside the town.

"And the queen bore him a son and they called him Dighavu.

"When Dighavu had grown up,
The king thought to himself:
'King Brahmadata has done us great harm,
And he is fearing our revenge;
He will seek to kill us.
Should he find us he will slay all three of us.'
And he sent his son away,
And Dighavu having received a good education from his father,
Applied himself diligently to learn all arts, becoming very skilful and wise.

"At that time the barber of king Dighiti dwelt at Benares,
And he saw the king, his former master,
And, being of an avaricious nature, betrayed him to King Brahmadata.

"When Brahmadata, the king of Kasi, heard that the fugitive king of Kosala
And his queen, unknown and in disguise, were living a quiet life in a potter's dwelling,
He ordered them to be bound and executed;
And the sheriff to whom the order was given seized king Dighiti
And led him to the place of execution.

"While the captive king was being led through the streets of Benares
He saw his son who had returned to visit his parents,
And, careful not to betray the presence of his son,

Yet anxious to communicate to him his last advice, he cried:
'O Dighavu, my son! Be not far-sighted, be not near-sighted,
For not by hatred is hatred appeased;
Hatred is appeased by not-hatred only.'

"The king and queen of Kosala were executed,
But Dighavu their son bought strong wine and made the guards
drunk.
When the night arrived he laid the bodies of his parents upon a
funeral pyre
And burned them with all honors and religious rites.

"When king Brahmadata heard of it, he became afraid, for he
thought,
'Dighavu, the son of king Dighiti, is a wise youth
And he will take revenge for the death of his parents.
If he espies a favorable opportunity, he will assassinate me.'

"Young Dighavu went to the forest and wept to his heart's content.
Then he wiped his tears and returned to Benares.
Hearing that assistants were wanted in the royal elephants' stable,
He offered his services and was engaged by the master of the
elephants.

"And it happened that the king heard a sweet voice ringing through
and night
And singing to the lute a beautiful song that gladdened his heart.
And having inquired among his attendants who the singer might be,
Was told that the master of the elephants had in his service
A young man of great accomplishments, and beloved by all his
comrades.
They said, 'He is used to sing to the lute,
And he must have been the singer that gladdened the heart of the
king.'

"And the king summoned the young man before him and,
Being much pleased with Dighavu, gave him a job in the royal castle.
Observing how wisely the youth acted,
How modest he was and yet meticulous in the performance of his
work,
The king very soon gave him a position of trust.

"Now it came to pass that the king went hunting

And became separated from his entourage,
Young Dighavu alone remaining with him.
And the king worn out from the hunt
Laid his head in the lap of young Dighavu and slept.

"And Dighavu thought:
'People will forgive great wrongs which they have suffered,
But they will never be at ease about the wrongs which they themselves
have done.
They will persecute their victims to the bitter end.
This king Brahmadata has done us great injury;
He robbed us of our kingdom and slew my father and my mother.
He is now in my power.'
Thinking thus he unsheathed his sword.

"Then Dighavu thought of the last words of his father,
'Be not far-sighted, be not near-sighted.
For not by hatred is hatred appeased.
Hatred is appeased by not-hatred alone.'
Thinking thus, he put his sword back into the sheath.

"The king became restless in his sleep
And he awoke, and when the youth asked,
'Why are you frightened, O king?'
He replied:
'My sleep is always restless because I often dream
That young Dighavu is coming upon me with his sword.
While I lay here with my head in your lap
I dreamed the dreadful dream again;
And I awoke full of terror and alarm.'

"Then the youth, laying his left hand upon the defenseless king's head
And with his right hand drawing his sword, said:
'I am Dighavu, the son of king Dighiti,
Whom you have robbed of his kingdom
And slain together with his queen, my mother.
I know that men overcome the hatred entertained for wrongs
Which they have suffered much more easily than for the wrongs
which they have done,
And so I cannot expect that you will take compassion on me;
But now a chance for revenge has come to me.'

"The king seeing that he was at the mercy of young Dighavu raised

his hands and said:

'Grant me my life, my dear Dighavu, grant me my life.
I shall be forever grateful to you.'

"And Dighavu said without bitterness or ill-will:

'How can I grant you your life, O king,
Since my life is endangered by you.
I do not mean to take your life.
It is you, O king, who must grant me my life.'

"And the king said:

'Well, my dear Dighavu,
Then grant me my life,
And I will grant you your.'

"Thus, king Brahmadatta of Kasi and young Dighavu granted each other's life

And took each other's hand and swore an oath not to do any harm to each other.

"And king Brahmadatta of Kasi said to young Dighavu:

'Why did your father say to you in the hour of his death:
"Be not far-sighted, be not near-sighted,
For hatred is not appeased by hatred.
Hatred is appeased by not-hatred alone," -
What did your father mean by that?'

"The youth replied: 'When my father, O king,
In the hour of his death said: "Be not far-sighted,"
He meant, Let not your hatred go far.

And when my father said, "Be not near-sighted,"
He meant, be not hasty to fall out with your friends.

And when he said,

"For not by hatred is hatred appeased;
Hatred is appeased by not-hatred," he meant this:
You have killed my father and mother, O king,
And if I should deprive you of your life,
Then your partisans in turn would take away my life;
My partisans again would deprive your of their lives.
Thus by hatred, hatred would not be appeased.
But now, O king, you have granted me my life,
And I have granted you your;
Thus by not-hatred hatred has been appeased.'

"Then king Brahmadatta of Kasi thought:
'How wise is young Dighavu that he understands
In its full extent the meaning of what his father spoke concisely.'
And the king gave him back his father's kingdom
And gave him his daughter in marriage."

Having finished the story, the Bhagavat said:
"Brethren, you are my lawful sons in the faith,
Born by the words of my mouth.
Children ought not to trample under foot
The counsel given them by their father;
Do you henceforth follow my admonitions."

Then the bhikkhus met in conference;
They discussed their differences in mutual good will,
And the concord of the Sangha was re-established.

38 • The Bhikkhus Reprimanded

And it happened that the Bhagavat walked up and down in the open
air unshod.

When the elders saw that the Bhagavat walked unshod,
They put away their shoes and did likewise.
But the novices did not heed the example of their elders
And kept their feet covered.

Some of the brethren noticed the irreverent behavior of the novices
And told the Bhagavat; and the Bhagavat reprimanded the novices
and said:

"If the brethren, even now, while I am yet living,
Show so little respect and courtesy to one another,
What will they do when I have passed away?"

And the Bhagavat was filled with anxiety
For the welfare of the truth; and he continued:

"Even the laymen, O bhikkhus, who move in the world,
Pursuing some handicraft that they may procure them a living,
Will be respectful, affectionate, and hospitable to their teachers.
Do you, therefore, O bhikkhus,

So let your light shine forth, that you,
Having left the world and devoted your entire life to religion
And to religious discipline,
May observe the rules of decency,
Be respectful, affectionate, and hospitable to your teachers and
superiors,
Or those who rank as your teachers and superiors.
Your attitude, O bhikkhus, does not lead to the conversion of the
unconverted
And to the increase of the number of the faithful.
It serves, O bhikkhus, to repel the unconverted and to depart them.
I exhort you to be more considerate in the future,
More thoughtful and more respectful."

39 • Devadatta

When Devadatta, the son of Suprabuddha and a brother of Yasodhara,
became a disciple,
He cherished the hope of attaining the same distinctions and honors
as Siddhartha Gautama.
Being disappointed in his ambitions, he conceived in his heart a
jealous hatred,
And, attempting to excel the Perfect One in virtue,
He found fault with his regulations and reproved them as too lenient.

Devadatta went to Rajagaha and gained the ear of Ajatasattu, the son
of King Bimbisara.
And Ajatasattu built a new vihara for Devadatta,
And founded a sect whose disciples were pledged to severe rules and
self-mortification.

Soon afterwards the Bhagavat himself came to Rajagaha
And stayed at the Veluvana vihara.

Devadatta called on the Bhagavat,
Requesting him to sanction his rules of greater stringency,
By which a greater holiness might be procured.
"The body," he said, "consists of its thirty-two parts
And has no divine attributes.
It is conceived in sin and born in corruption.
Its attributes are liability to pain and dissolution, for it is

impermanent.

It is the receptacle of karma which is the curse of our former existences;

It is the dwelling-place of sin and diseases

And its organs constantly discharge disgusting secretions.

Its end is death and its goal the charnel house.

Such being the condition of the body

It behooves us to treat it as a carcass full of abomination

And to clothe it in such rags only

As have been gathered in cemeteries or upon dung-hills."

The Bhagavat said:

"Truly, the body is full of impurity and its end is the charnel house,
For it is impermanent and destined to be dissolved into its elements.

But being the receptacle of karma,

It lies in our power to make it a vessel of truth and not of evil.

It is not good to indulge in the pleasures of the body,

But neither is it good to neglect our bodily needs

And to heap filth upon impurities.

The lamp that is not cleansed and not filled with oil will be extinguished,

And a body that is unkept, unwashed, and weakened by penance
Will not be a fit receptacle for the light of truth.

Attend to your body and its needs as you would treat a wound

Which you care for without loving it.

Severe rules will not lead the disciples on the middle path which I
have taught.

Certainly, no one can be prevented from keeping more stringent
rules, if he sees fit to do so, but they should not be imposed upon any
one,

For they are unnecessary."

Thus the Tathagata refused Devadatta's proposal;

And Devadatta left the Buddha

And went into the vihara speaking evil of the Master's path of
enlightenment as too lenient and altogether insufficient.

When the Bhagavat heard of Devadatta's intrigues, he said:

"Among men there is no one who is not blamed.

People blame him who sits silent and him who speaks,

They also blame the man who preaches the middle path."

Devadatta instigated Ajatasattu to plot against his father Bimbisara, the

king,
So that the prince would no longer be subject to him;
Bimbisara was imprisoned by his son in a tower where he died
Leaving the kingdom of Magadha to his son Ajatasattu.

The new king listened to the evil advice of Devadatta,
And he gave orders to take the life of the Tathagata.
However, the murderers sent out to kill the Master could not perform
their wicked deed,
And became converted as soon as they saw him and listened to his
preaching.
The rock hurled down from a precipice upon the Master split in two,
And the two pieces passed by on either side without doing any harm.
Nalagiri, the wild elephant let loose to destroy the Buddha, became
gentle in his presence;
And Ajatasattu, suffering greatly from the pangs of his conscience,
Went to the Bhagavat and sought peace in his distress.

The Bhagavat received Ajatasattu kindly and taught him the way of
enlightenment;
But Devadatta still tried to become the founder of a religious school
of his own.

Devadatta did not succeed in his plans
And having been abandoned by many of his disciples, he fell sick,
And then repented.
He asked those who had remained with him to carry his litter to the
Buddha, saying:
"Take me, children, take me to him;
Though I have done evil to him, I am his brother-in-law.
For the sake of our relationship the Buddha will save me."
And they obeyed, although reluctantly.

And Devadatta in his impatience to see the Bhagavat rose from his
litter while his carriers were washing their hands.
But his feet burned under him;
He sank to the ground;
And, having chanted a hymn on the Buddha, died.

40 • Name and Form

On one occasion the Bhagavat entered the assembly hall
And the brethren hushed their conversation.

When they had greeted him with clasped hands,
They sat down and became calm.
Then the Bhagavat said:
"Your minds are inflamed with intense interest;
What was the topic of your discussion?"

And Sariputta rose and spoke:
"World-honored master, we were discussing the nature of man's own
existence.
We were trying to grasp the mixture of our own being which is called
Name and Form .
Every human being consists of conformations,
And there are three groups which are not corporeal.
They are sensation, perception, and the dispositions,
All three constitute consciousness
And mind, being comprised under the term Name.
And there are four elements, the earthly element,
The watery element, the fiery element, and the gaseous element,
And these four elements constitute man's bodily form,
Being held together so that this machine moves like a puppet.
How does this name and form endure and how can it live?"

Said the Bhagavat:
"Life is instantaneous and living is dying.
Just as a chariot-wheel in rolling
Rolls only at one point of the tire,
And in resting rests only at one point;
In exactly the same way, the life of a living being
Lasts only for the period of one thought.
As soon as that thought has ceased
The being is said to have ceased.

"As it has been said:
"The being of a past moment of thought has lived,
But does not live, nor will it live.

¹ **Name and Form:** 'Nama-rupa' in the Pali Text being correspondent to the duality
Mind and Body, the constituents of an individual being.

The being of a future moment of thought will live,
But has not lived, nor does it live.
The being of the present moment of thought does live,
But has not lived, nor will it live."

"As to Name and Form we must understand how they interact.
Name has no power of its own, nor can it go on of its own impulse,
Either to eat, or to drink, or to utter sounds, or to make a movement.
Form also is without power and cannot go on of its own impulse.
It has no desire to eat, or to drink, or to utter sounds, or to make a
movement.
But Form goes on when supported by Name,
And Name when supported by Form.
When Name has a desire to eat, or to drink,
Or to utter sounds, or to make a movement,
Then Form eats, drinks, utters sounds, makes a movement.

"It is as if two men, the one blind from birth
And the other a cripple, were desirous of going traveling,
And the man blind from birth were to say to the cripple as follows:
'See here! I am able to use my legs,
But I have no eyes with which to see the rough
And the smooth places in the road.'

"And the cripple were to say to the man blind from birth as follows:
'See here! I am able to use my eyes,
But I have no legs with which to go forward and back.'

"And the man blind from birth, pleased and delighted,
Were to mount the cripple on his shoulders.
And the cripple sitting on the shoulders of the man blind from birth
Were to direct him, saying:
'Leave the left and go to the right;
Leave the right and go the left.'

"Here the man blind from birth is without power of his own, and
weak,
And cannot go of his own impulse or might.
The cripple also is without power of his own, and weak,
And cannot go of his own impulse or might.
Yet when they mutually support one another
It is not impossible for them to go.

"In exactly the same way Name is without power of its own,
And cannot spring up of its own might, nor perform this or that
action.

Form also is without power of its own, and cannot spring up of its own
might,

Nor perform this or that action.

Yet when they mutually support one another

It is not impossible for them to spring up and go on.

"There is no material that exists for the production of Name and
Form;

And when Name and Form cease, they do not go anywhere in space.

After Name and Form have ceased,

They do not exist anywhere in the shape of heaped-up material.

Thus when a lute is played upon, there is no previous store of sound;

And when the music ceases it does not go anywhere in space.

When it has ceased, it exists nowhere in a stored-up state.

Having previously been non-existent,

It came into existence on account of the structure

And stem of the lute and the exertions of the performer;

And as it came into existence so it passes away.

In exactly the same way, all the elements of being,

Both corporeal and non-corporeal

Come into existence after having previously been non-existent;

And having come into existence pass away.

"There is not a self residing in Name and Form,

But the co-operation of the conformations

Produce what people call a man.

"Just as the word 'chariot'

Is but a mode of expression for axle, wheels, the chariot-body

And other constituents in their proper combinations,

So a living being is the appearance of the groups

With the four elements as they are joined in a unit.

There is no self in the carriage

And there is no self in man.

"O bhikkhus, this doctrine is sure and an eternal truth,

That there is no self outside of its parts.

This self of ours which constitutes Name and Form

Is a combination of the groups with the four elements,

But there is no ego entity,

No self in itself.

"Paradoxical though it may sound:

There is a path to walk on,

There is walking being done,

But there is no traveler.

There are deeds being done, but there is no doer.

There is a blowing of the air, but there is no wind that does the blowing.

The thought of self is an error

And all existences are hollow as the plantain tree^{*}

And as empty as twirling water bubbles.

"Therefore, O bhikkhus,

As there is no self, there is no transmigration of a self;

But there are deeds and the continued effect of deeds.

There is rebirth of karma; there is reincarnation.

This rebirth, this reincarnation, this reappearance of the conformations

Is continuous and depends on the law of cause and effect.

Just as a seal is impressed upon the wax

Reproducing the configurations of its device,

So the thoughts of men, their characters, their aspirations

Are impressed upon others in continuous transference

And continue their karma,

And good deeds will continue in blessings

while bad deeds will continue in curses.

"There is no entity here that migrates,

No self is transferred from one place to another;

But here is a voice uttered here and the echo of it comes back.

The teacher pronounces a stanza and the disciple

Who attentively listens to his teacher's instruction, repeats the stanza.

Thus the stanza is reborn in the mind of the disciple.

"The body is a compound of perishable organs.

It is subject to decay;

And we should take care of it as of a wound or a sore;

We should attend to its needs

Without being attached to it, or loving it.

* **plantain tree:** A banana species with a hollow stalk.

"The body is like a machine,
And there is no self in it that makes it walk or act,
But the thoughts of it, as the windy elements,
Cause the machine to work.

"The body moves about like a cart.
Therefore 'tis said:

"As ships are by the wind impelled,
As arrows from their bowstrings speed,
So likewise when the body moves
The windy element must lead.

"Machines are geared to work by ropes;
So too this body is, in fact,
Directed by a mental pull
Whene'er it stand or sit or act.

"No independent self is here
That could intrinsic forces prove
To make man act without a cause,
To make him stand or walk or move.

"He only who utterly abandons all thought of the ego
Escapes the snares of the Evil One;
He is out of the reach of Mara.

"Thus says the pleasure-promising tempter:

"So long as to the things
Called 'mine' and 'I' and 'me'
Your anxious heart still clings,
My snares you can not flee."

"The faithful disciple replies:

"Naught's mine and naught of me,
The self I do not mind!
Thus Mara, I tell you
My path you cannot find."

"Dismiss the error of the self
And do not cling to possessions which are transient

But perform deeds that are good,
For deeds are enduring
And in deeds your karma continues.

"Since then, O bhikkhus, there is no self,
There cannot be any after life of a self.
Therefore abandon all thought of self.
But since there are deeds and since deeds continue,
Be careful with your deeds.

"All beings have karma as their portion:
They are heirs of their karma;
They are sprung from their karma;
Their karma is their kinsman;
Their karma is their refuge;
Karma allots beings to meanness or to greatness.

"Assailed by death in life's last throes
On quitting all your joys and woes
What is your own, your recompense?
What stays with you when passing hence?
What like a shadow follows you
And will Beyond your heirloom be?

"T'is deeds, your deeds, both good and bad;
Naught else can after death be had.
Your deeds are your, your recompense;
They are your own when going hence;
They like a shadow follow you
And will beyond your heirloom be.

"Let all then here perform good deeds,
For future weal a treasure store;
There to reap crops from noble seeds,
A bliss increasing evermore."

41 • The Goal

And the Bhagavat thus addressed the bhikkhus:

"It is through not understanding the four noble truths, O bhikkhus,

That we had to wander so long in the weary path of Samsara,
Both you and I.

"Through contact thought is born from sensation,
And is reborn by a reproduction of its form.
Starting from the simplest forms,
The mind rises and falls according to deeds,
But the aspirations of a Bodhisattva
Pursue the straight path of wisdom and righteousness,
Until they reach perfect enlightenment in the Buddha.

"All creatures are what they are
Through the karma of their deeds
Done in former and in present existences.

"The rational nature of man is a spark of the true light;
It is the first step on the upward road.
But new births are required to insure an ascent to the summit of
existence,
The enlightenment of mind and heart,
Where the immeasurable light of moral comprehension is gained
Which is the source of all righteousness.

"Having attained this higher birth,
I have found the truth and have taught you the noble path
That leads to the city of peace.

"I have shown you the way to the lake of Ambrosia^{*},
Which washes away all evil desire.

"I have given you the refreshing drink called the perception of truth,
And he who drinks of it becomes free from excitement, passion, and
wrong-doing.

"The very gods envy the bliss of him
Who has escaped from the floods of passion
And has climbed the shores of Nirvana.
His heart is cleansed from all pollution

^{*} **Ambrosia:** 'The drink of the gods' in the greek mythology. The legend says that mortals who drink it became immortal. The Hindu mythology has similar legends. The word in the Buddhist canonical texts was 'amrita' (a plant consumed in ancient Vedic rituals), used here as a spiritual symbol.

And free from all illusion.

"He is like unto the lotus which grows in the water,
Yet not a drop of water adheres to its petals.

"The man who walks in the noble path lives in the world,
And yet his heart is not polluted by worldly desires.

"He who does not see the four noble truths,
He who does not understand the three characteristics
And has not grounded himself in the uncreate,
Has still a long path to traverse by repeated births
Through the desert of ignorance
With its mirages of illusion
And through the morass of wrong.

"But now that you have gained comprehension,
The cause of further migrations and aberrations is removed.
The goal is reached.
The craving of selfishness is destroyed,
And the truth is attained.

"This is true deliverance;
This is enlightenment;
This is Nirvana
And the bliss of a life immortal."

42 • Miracles Forbidden

Jotikkha, the son of Subhadda, was a householder living in Rajagaha.
Having received a precious bowl of sandalwood decorated with jewels,
He erected a long pole before his house
And put the bowl on its top with this legend:
"Should a samana take this bowl down without using a ladder
Or a stick with a hook, or without climbing the pole, but by magic
power,
He shall receive as reward whatever he desires."

And the people came to the Bhagavat,
Full of wonder and their mouths overflowing with praise, saying:
"Great is the Tathagata. His disciples perform miracles.

Kassapa, the disciple of the Buddha, saw the bowl on Jotikkha's pole,
And, stretching out his hand, he took it down,
Carrying it away in triumph to the vihara."

When the Bhagavat heard what had happened, he went to Kassapa,
And, breaking the bowl to pieces,
Forbade his disciples to perform miracles of any kind.

Soon after this it happened that in one of the rainy seasons
Many bhikkhus were staying in the Vajji territory during a famine.
And one of the bhikkhus proposed to his brethren
That they should praise one another to the householders of the
village, saying:
"This bhikkhu is a saint; he has seen celestial visions;
And that bhikkhu possesses supernatural gifts; he can work miracles."
And the villagers said:
"It is lucky, very lucky for us,
That such saints are spending the rainy season with us."
And they gave willingly and abundantly,
And the bhikkhus prospered and did not suffer from the famine.

When the Bhagavat heard it,
He told Ananda to call the bhikkhus together,
And he asked them:
"Tell me, O bhikkhus,
When does a bhikkhu cease to be a bhikkhu?"

And Sariputta replied:

"An ordained disciple must not commit any unchaste act.
The disciple who commits an unchaste act
Is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"Again, an ordained disciple must not take
Except what has been given him.
The disciple who takes,
Be it so little as a penny's worth,
Is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"And lastly,
An ordained disciple must not knowingly and malignantly
Deprive any harmless creature of life,
Not even an earthworm or an ant.

The disciple who knowingly and malignantly
Deprives any harmless creature of its life
Is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"These are the three great prohibitions."

And the Bhagavat addressed the bhikkhus and said:

"There is another great prohibition which I declare to you:

"An ordained disciple must not boast of any superhuman perfection.
The disciple who with evil intent
And from greed boasts of a superhuman perfection,
Be it celestial visions or miracles,
Is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"I forbid you, O bhikkhus,
To employ any spells or supplications,
For they are useless,
Since the law of karma governs all things.
He who attempts to perform miracles
Has not understood the doctrine of the Tathagata."

43 • The Vanity of Worldliness

There was a poet who had acquired the spotless eye of truth,
And he believed in the Buddha,
Whose doctrine gave him peace of mind
And comfort in the hour of affliction.

And it happened that an epidemic swept over the country in which he
lived,
So that many died, and the people were terrified.
Some of them trembled with fright,
And in anticipation of their fate
Were stricken with all the horrors of death before they died,
While others began to be merry, shouting loudly,
"Let us enjoy ourselves today,
For we know not whether tomorrow we shall live";
Yet was their laughter no genuine gladness,
But a mere pretense and affectation.

Among all these worldly men and women trembling with anxiety,
The Buddhist poet lived in the time of the pestilence,
As usual, calm and undisturbed,
Helping wherever he could and ministering unto the sick,
Soothing their pains by medicine and religious consolation.

And a man came to him and said:

"My heart is nervous and excited, for I see people die.
I am not anxious about others, but I tremble because of myself.
Help me; cure me of my fear."

The poet replied:

"There is help for him who has compassion on others,
But there is no help for you
So long as you clings to your own self alone.
Hard times try the souls of men and teach them righteousness and
charity.
Can you witness these sad sights around you
And still be filled with selfishness?
Can you see your brothers, sisters, and friends suffer,
Yet not forget the petty cravings and lust of your own heart?"

Noticing the desolation in the mind of the pleasure-seeking man,
The Buddhist poet composed this song
And taught it to the brethren in the vihara:

"Unless refuge you take in the Buddha and find in Nirvana rest
Your life is but vanity - empty and desolate vanity.
To see the world is idle, and to enjoy life is empty.
The world, including man, is but like a phantom,
And the hope of heaven is as a mirage.

"The worldling seeks pleasures fattening himself like a caged fowl.
But the Buddhist saint flies up to the sun like the wild crane.
The fowl in the coop has food but will soon be boiled in the pot.
No provisions are given to the wild crane,
But the heavens and the earth are his."

The poet said:

"The times are hard
And teach the people a lesson;
Yet do they not heed it."
And he composed another poem

On the vanity of worldliness:

"It is good to reform, and it is good to exhort people to reform.
The things of the world will all be swept away.
Let others be busy and buried with care.
My mind all undisturbed shall be pure.

"After pleasures they crave and find no satisfaction;
Riches they want and can never have enough.
They are like unto puppets held up by a string.
When the string breaks they come down with a shock.

"In the domain of death there are neither great nor small;
Neither gold nor silver is used, nor precious jewels.
No distinction is made between the high and the low.
And daily the dead are buried beneath the fragrant sod.

"Look at the sun setting behind the western hills.
You lie down to rest, but soon the cock will announce morn.
Reform today and do not wait until it be too late.
Do not say it is early, for the time quickly passes by.

"It is good to reform and it is good to exhort people to reform.
It is good to lead a righteous life and take refuge in the Buddha's
name.
Your talents may reach to the skies, your wealth may be untold
But all is in vain unless you attain the peace of Nirvana."

44 • Secrecy and Publicity

The Buddha said:

"Three things, O disciples,
Are characterized by secrecy:
Love affairs, priestly wisdom,
And all aberrations from the path of truth.

"Women who are in love, O disciples,
Seek secrecy and shun publicity;
Priests who claim to be in possession
Of special revelations, O disciples,
Seek secrecy and shun publicity;

All those who stray from the path of truth, O disciples,
Seek secrecy and shun publicity.

"Three things, O disciples,
Shine before the world and cannot be hidden.
What are the three?

"The moon, O disciples, illumines the world and cannot be hidden;
The sun, O disciples, illumines the world and cannot be hidden;
And the truth proclaimed by the Tathagata
Illumines the world and cannot be hidden.
These three things, O disciples,
Illumines the world and cannot be hidden.
There is no secrecy about them."

45 • The annihilation of Suffering

And the Buddha said: "What my friends, is evil?

"Killing is evil;
Stealing is evil;
Yielding to sexual passion is evil;
Lying is evil;
Slandering is evil;
Abuse is evil;
Gossip is evil;
Envy is evil;
Hatred is evil;
To cling to false doctrine is evil;
All these things, my friends are evil.

"And what, my friends, is the root of evil?

"Desire is the root of evil;
Hatred is the root of evil;
Illusion is the root of evil;
These things are the root of evil.

"What, however, is good?

"Abstaining from killing is good;

Abstaining from theft is good;
Abstaining from sensuality is good;
Abstaining from falsehood is good;
Abstaining from slander is good;
Suppression of unkindness is good;
Abandoning gossip is good;
Letting go all envy is good;
Dismissing hatred is good;
Obedience to the truth is good;
All these things are good.

"And what, my friends,
Is the root of the good?

"Freedom from desire is the root of the good;
Freedom from hatred and freedom from illusion;
These things, my friends, are the root of the good.

"What, however, O brethren, is suffering?
What is the origin of suffering?
What is the annihilation of suffering?

"Birth is suffering;
Old age is suffering;
Disease is suffering;
Death is suffering;
Sorrow and misery are suffering;
Affliction and despair are suffering;
To be united with loathsome things is suffering;
The loss of that which we love
And the failure in attaining that which is longed for are suffering;
All these things, O brethren, are suffering.

"And what, O brethren,
Is the origin of suffering?

"It is lust, passion,
And the thirst for existence
That yearns for pleasure everywhere,
Leading to a continual rebirth!
It is sensuality, desire, selfishness;
All these things, O brethren,
Are the origin of suffering.

"And what is the annihilation of suffering?

"The radical and total annihilation of this thirst
And the abandonment, the liberation, the deliverance from passion,
That, O brethren, is the annihilation of suffering.

"And what, O brethren, is the path that leads to the annihilation of suffering?

"It is the holy eightfold path that leads to the annihilation of suffering, which consists of,

“Right views,
Right decision,
Right speech,
Right action,
Right living,
Right struggling,
Right thoughts,
And right meditation.

"In so far, O friends,
As a noble youth thus recognizes suffering
And the origin of suffering,
As he recognizes the annihilation of suffering,
And walks on the path
That leads to the annihilation of suffering,
Radically forsaking passion,
Subduing wrath,
Annihilating the vain conceit of the "I-am,"
Leaving ignorance,
And attaining to enlightenment,
He will make an end of all suffering
Even in this life."

46 • Avoiding the Ten Evils

The Buddha said:

"All acts of living creatures become bad by ten things,
And by avoiding the ten things they become good.
There are three evils of the body,

Four evils of the tongue,
And three evils of the mind.

"The evils of the body are: murder, theft, and adultery;
Of the tongue: lying, slander, abuse, and idle talk;
Of the mind: greed, hatred, and error.

"I exhort you to avoid the ten evils:

"(1) Kill not, but have regard for life.

"(2) Steal not, neither do you rob; but help everybody to be master of the fruits of his labor.

"(3) Abstain from luxury, and lead a life of chastity.

"(4) Lie not, but be truthful. Speak the truth with discretion, fearlessly and in a loving heart.

"(5) Invent not evil reports, neither do you repeat them.
Carp not, but look for the good sides of your fellow beings,
So that you may with sincerity defend them against their enemies.

"(6) Swear not, but speak decently and with dignity.

"(7) Waste not the time with gossip, but speak to the purpose or keep silence.

"(8) Covet not, nor envy, but rejoice at the fortunes of other people.

"(9) Cleanse your heart of malice and cherish no hatred, not even against your enemies; but embrace all living beings with kindness.

"(10) Free your mind of ignorance
And be anxious to learn the truth,
Especially in the one thing that is needful,
Lest you fall a prey either to skepticism or to errors.
Skepticism will make you indifferent
And errors will lead you astray,
So that you shall not find the noble path
That leads to eternal life."

47 • The Preacher's Mission

And the Bhagavat said to his disciples:

"When I have passed away and can no longer address you
And edify your minds with religious discourse,
Select from among you men of good family and education
To preach the truth in my stead.
And let those men be invested with the robes of the Tathagata,
Let them enter into the abode of the Tathagata,
And occupy the pulpit of the Tathagata.

"The robe of the Tathagata is sublime forbearance and patience.
The abode of the Tathagata is charity and love of all beings.
The pulpit of the Tathagata is the comprehension of the good law
In its abstract meaning as well as in its particular application.

"The preacher must propose the truth with unshrinking mind.
He must have the power of persuasion rooted in virtue
And in strict fidelity to his vows.

"The preacher must keep in his proper sphere and be steady in his course.
He must not flatter his vanity by seeking the company of the great,
Nor must he keep company with persons who are frivolous and immoral.
When in temptation, he should constantly think of the Buddha and he will conquer.

"All who come to hear the doctrine,
The preacher must receive with benevolence,
And his sermon must be unprejudiced.

"The preacher must not be prone to carp at others,
Or to blame other preachers; nor speak scandal, nor propagate bitter words.
He must not mention by name other disciples
To vituperate them and reproach their attitude.

"Clad in a clean robe, dyed with good color with appropriate undergarments,
He must ascend the pulpit with a mind free from blame and at peace with the whole world.

"He must not take delight in querulous disputations
or engage in controversies so as to show the superiority of his talents,
but be calm and composed.

"No hostile feelings shall reside in his heart,
And he must never abandon the disposition of charity toward all
beings.
His sole aim must be that all beings become Buddhas.

"Let the preacher apply himself with zeal to his work,
And the Tathagata will show to him
The body of the holy law in its transcendent glory.
He shall be honored as one whom the Tathagata has blessed.
The Tathagata blesses the preacher
And also those who reverently listen to him
And joyfully accept the doctrine.

"All those who receive the truth will find perfect enlightenment.
And, verily, such is the power of the doctrine
That even by the reading of a single stanza,
Or by reciting, copying, and keeping in mind
A single sentence of the good law,
Persons may be converted to the truth
And enter the path of righteousness
Which leads to deliverance from evil.

"Creatures that are swayed by impure passions,
When they listen to the voice, will be purified.
The ignorant who are infatuated with the follies of the world will,
When pondering on the profundity of the doctrine, acquire wisdom.
Those who act under the impulse of hatred will,
When taking refuge in the Buddha, be filled with good-will and love.

"A preacher must be full of energy and cheerful hope,
Never tiring and never despairing of final success.

"A preacher must be like a man in quest of water
Who digs a well in an arid tract of land.
So long as he sees that the sand is dry and white,
He knows that the water is still far off.
But let him not be troubled or give up the task as hopeless.
The work of removing the dry sand must be done
So that he can dig down deeper into the ground.

And often the deeper he has to dig,
The cooler and purer and more refreshing will the water be.

"When after some time of digging
He sees that the sand becomes moist,
He accepts it as a token that the water is near.

"So long as the people do not listen to the words of truth,
The preacher knows that he has to dig deeper into their hearts;
But when they begin to heed his words
He apprehends that they will soon attain enlightenment.

"Into your hands, O ye men of good family and education
Who take the vow of preaching the words of the Tathagata,
The Bhagavat transfers, entrusts, and commends the good law of
truth.

"Receive the good law of truth, keep it, read and re-read it,
Penetrate it, promulgate it, and preach it to all beings
In all the quarters of the universe.

"The Tathagata is not avaricious, nor narrow-minded,
And he is willing to impart the perfect Buddha-knowledge
Unto all who are ready and willing to receive it.
Be you like unto him.
Imitate him and follow his example
In plentifully giving, showing, bestow
And giving away the truth.

"Gather round you hearers who love to listen
To the benign and comforting words of the law;
Rouse the unbelievers to accept the truth
And fill them with delight and joy.
Quicken them, teach them,
And lift them higher and higher
Until they see the truth face to face
In all its splendor and infinite glory."

When the Bhagavat had thus spoken, the disciples said:

"O you who rejoices in kindness having its source in compassion,
You great cloud of good qualities and of benevolent mind,
You quenches the fire that worries living beings,

You pour out nectar, the rain of the law!

"We shall do, O Lord,
What the Tathagata commands.
We shall fulfill his command
The Lord shall find us obedient to his words."

And this vow of the disciples resounded through the universe,
And like an echo it came back from all the Bodhisattvas who are to be
and will come to preach the good law of Truth to future generations.

And the Bhagavat said:

"The Tathagata is like unto a powerful king
Who rules his kingdom with righteousness,
But being attacked by envious enemies
Goes out to wage war against his foes.
When the king sees his soldiers fight
He is delighted with their gallantry
And will bestow upon them donations of all kinds.
You are the soldiers of the Tathagata,
While Mara, the Evil One, is the enemy who must be conquered.
And the Tathagata will give to his soldiers the city of Nirvana,
The great capital of the good law.
And when the enemy is overcome, the Dharma-rajā,
The great king of truth, will bestow upon all his disciples
The most precious crown which jewel brings perfect enlightenment,
Supreme wisdom, and undisturbed peace."

The Teacher

48 • The Dhammapada

This is the Dhammapada^{*}, the path of religion
Pursued by those who are followers of the Buddha:

Creatures from mind their character derive;
Mind-marshaled are they, mind made.
Mind is the source either of bliss or of corruption.

By oneself evil is done; by oneself one suffers;
By oneself evil is left undone; by oneself one is purified.
Purity and impurity belong to oneself,
No one can purify another.

You yourself must make an effort.
The Tathagatas are only preachers.
The thoughtful who enter the way
Are freed from the bondage of Mara.

He who does not rouse himself when it is time to rise;
Who, though young and strong, is full of sloth;
Whose will and thoughts are weak;
That lazy and idle man

^{*} **Dhammapada:** A Buddhist scripture containing 423 verses spoken by the Buddha on various occasions, most of which about ethics, and a 4th century commentary attributed to Buddhaghosa with 305 stories which give context to the verses.

Will never find the way to enlightenment.

If a man hold himself dear, let him watch himself carefully;
The truth guards him who guards himself.

If a man makes himself as he teaches others to be,
Then, being himself subdued, he may subdue others;
One's own self is indeed difficult to subdue.

If some men conquer in battle
A thousand times a thousand men,
And if another conquer himself,
He is the greatest of conquerors.

It is the habit of fools,
Be they laymen or members of the clergy, to think,
"This is done by me. May others be subject to me.
In this or that transaction a prominent part should be played by me."
Fools do not care for the duty to be performed or the aim to be
reached,
But think of their self alone.
Everything is but a pedestal of their vanity.

Bad deeds, and deeds hurtful to ourselves, are easy to do;
What is beneficial and good, that is very difficult.

If anything is to be done, let a man do it,
Let him attack it vigorously!

Before long, alas! this body will lie on the earth,
Despised, without understanding, like a useless log;
Yet our thoughts will endure.
They will be thought again, and will produce action.
Good thoughts will produce good actions,
And bad thoughts will produce bad actions.

Earnestness is the path of immortality,
Thoughtlessness the path of death.
Those who are in earnest do not die;
Those who are thoughtless are as if dead already.

Those who imagine they find truth in untruth, and see untruth in
truth,

Will never arrive at truth, but follow vain desires.
They who know truth in truth, and untruth in untruth,
Arrive at truth, and follow true desires.

As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house,
Passion will break through an unreflecting mind.
As rain does not break through a well-thatched house,
Passion will not break through a well-reflecting mind.

Well-makers lead the water wherever they like;
Fletchers bend the arrow;
Carpenters bend a log of wood;
Wise people fashion themselves;
Wise people falter not amidst blame and praise.
Having listened to the law, they become serene,
Like a deep, smooth, and still lake.

If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought,
Pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of an ox that draws the
carriage.

An evil deed is better left undone,
For a man will repent of it afterwards;
A good deed is better done,
For having done it one will not repent.

If a man commits a wrong let him not do it again;
Let him not delight in wrongdoing;
Pain is the outcome of evil.
If a man does what is good, let him do it again;
Let him delight in it;
Happiness is the outcome of good.

Let no man think lightly of evil,
Saying in his heart,
"It will not come nigh unto me."
As by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled,
So the fool becomes full of evil,
Though he gather it little by little.

Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart,
"It will not come nigh unto me."
As by the falling of water-drops a water-pot if filled,

So the wise man becomes full of good,
Though he gather it little by little.

He who lives for pleasure only, his senses uncontrolled,
Immoderate in his food, idle, and weak,
Him Mara, the tempter, will certainly overthrow,
As the wind throws down a weak tree.
He who lives without looking for pleasures, his senses well-controlled,
Moderate in his food, faithful and strong,
Him Mara will certainly not overthrow,
Any more than the wind throws down a rocky mountain.

The fool who knows his foolishness, is wise at least so far.
But a fool who thinks himself wise, he is a fool indeed.

To the evil-doer wrong appears sweet as honey;
He looks upon it as pleasant so long as it bears no fruit;
But when its fruit ripens, then he looks upon it as wrong.
And so the good man looks upon the goodness of the Dharma
As a burden and an evil so long as it bears no fruit;
But when its fruit ripens, then he sees its goodness.

A hater may do great harm to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy;
But a wrongly-directed mind will do greater mischief unto itself.
A mother, a father, or any other relative will do much good;
But a well-directed mind will do greater service unto itself.

He whose wickedness is very great brings himself down
To that state where his enemy wishes him to be.
He himself is his greatest enemy.
Thus a creeper destroys the life of a tree on which it finds support.

Do not direct your thought to what gives pleasure,
That you may not cry out when burning, "This is pain".
The wicked man burns by his own deeds, as if burnt by fire.

Pleasures destroy the foolish;
The foolish man by his thirst for pleasures
Destroys himself as if he were his own enemy.
The fields are damaged by hurricanes and weeds;
Mankind is damaged by passion,
By hatred, by vanity, and by lust.

Let no man ever take into consideration
Whether a thing is pleasant or unpleasant.
The love of pleasure brings for grief
And the dread of pain causes fear;
He who is free from the love of pleasure
And the dread of pain knows neither grief nor fear.

He who gives himself to vanity, and does not give himself to
meditation,
Forgetting the real aim of life and grasping at pleasure,
Will in time envy him who has exerted himself in meditation.

The fault of others is easily noticed,
But that of oneself is difficult to perceive.
A man winnows his neighbor's faults like chaff,
But his own fault he hides,
As a cheat hides the false die from the gambler.

If a man looks after the faults of others,
And is always inclined to take offense,
His own passions will grow,
And he is far from the destruction of passions.

Not about the perversities of others,
Not about their sins of commission or omission,
But about his own misdeeds and negligences alone
Should a sage be worried.

Good people shine from afar, like the snowy mountains;
Bad people are concealed, like arrows shot by night.

If a man by causing pain to others,
Wishes to obtain pleasure for himself,
He, entangled in the bonds of selfishness,
Will never be free from hatred.

Let a man overcome anger by love,
Let him overcome evil by good;
Let him overcome the greedy by generosity,
The liar by truth!

For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time;
Hatred ceases by not-hatred, this is an old rule.

Speak the truth,
Do not yield to anger;
Give, if you are asked;
By these three steps you will become divine.

Let a wise man blow off impurities of his self,
As a smith blows off the impurities of silver,
One by one, little by little, and from time to time.

Lead others, not by violence,
But by righteousness and equity.

He who possesses virtue and intelligence,
Who is just, speaks the truth,
And does what is his own business,
Him the world will hold dear.

As the bee collects nectar
And departs without injuring the flower
Or its color or scent,
So let a sage dwell in the community.

If a traveler does not meet with one
Who is his better, or his equal,
Let him firmly keep to his solitary journey;
There is no companionship with fools.

Long is the night to him who is awake;
Long is a mile to him who is tired;
Long is life to the foolish who do not know the truth religion.

Better than living a hundred years, not seeing the highest truth,
Is one day in the life of a man who sees the highest truth.

Some form their Dharma arbitrarily
And fabricate it artificially;
They advance complex speculations
And imagine that good results are attainable
Only by the acceptance of their theories;
Yet the truth is but one;
There are not different truths in the world.
Having reflected on the various theories,
We have gone into the yoke with him who has shaken off all sin.

But shall we be able to proceed together with him?

The best of ways is the eightfold path.

This is the path.

There is no other

That leads to the purifying of intelligence.

Go on this path!

Everything else is the deceit of Mara, the tempter.

If you go on this path,

You will make an end of pain!

Says the Tathagata.

The path was preached by me,

When I had understood the removal of the thorn in the flesh.

Not only by discipline and vows, not only by much learning,
Do I learn the happiness of release which no worldling can know.

Bhikkhu, be not confident as long as you have not attained the
Extinction of thirst.

The extinction of evil desire is the highest religion.

The gift of religion exceeds all gifts;

The sweetness of religion exceeds all sweetness;

The delight in religion exceeds all delights;

The extinction of thirst overcomes all pain.

Few are there among men who cross the river and reach the goal.

The great multitudes are running up and down the shore;

But there is no suffering for him who has finished his journey.

As the lily will grow full of sweet perfume and delight upon a heap of
rubbish,

Thus the disciple of the truly enlightened Buddha shines forth by his
wisdom

Among those who are like rubbish, among the people that walk in
darkness.

Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us!

Among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred!

Let us live happily then, free from all ailments among the ailing!

Among men who are ailing let us dwell free from ailments!

Let us live happily then, free from greed among the greedy!

Among men who are greedy let us dwell free from greed!

The sun is bright by day, the moon shines by night,
The warrior is bright in his armor, thinkers are bright in their
meditation;
But among all the brightest with splendor day and night
Is the Buddha, the Awakened, the Holy Blessed.

49 • The Two Brahmans

At one time when the Bhagavat was journeying through Kosala
He came to the Brahman village which is called Manasakata.
There he stayed in a mango grove.

And two young Brahmans came to him who were of different schools.
One was named Vasettha and the other Bharadvaja.
And Vasettha said to the Bhagavat:

"We have a dispute as to the true path.
I say the straight path which leads into a union with Brahma
Is that which has been announced by the Brahman Pokkharasati,
While my friend says the straight path which leads unto a union with
Brahma Is that which has been announced by the Brahman
Tarukkha.

"Now, regarding your high reputation, O samana,
And knowing that you are called the Enlightened One,
The teacher of men and gods, the Blessed Buddha,
We have come to ask you,
Are all these paths of enlightenment?
There are many roads all around our village, and all lead to
Manasakata.
Is it just so with the paths of the sages?
Are all paths to salvation,

And do they all lead to a union with Brahma^{*}?"

And the Bhagavat proposed these questions to the two Brahmans:
"Do you think that all paths are right?"

* **Brahma:** The Supreme Cosmic Spirit in Hindu Vedanta philosophy.

Both answered and said:
"Yes, Gautama, we think so."

"But tell me," continued the Buddha,
"Has any one of the Brahmans, versed in the Vedas,
Seen Brahma face to face?"

"No, sir!" was the reply.

"But, then," said the Bhagavat,
"Has any teacher of the Brahmans, versed in the Vedas,
Seen Brahma face to face?"

The two Brahmans said: "No, sir."

"But, then," said the Bhagavat,
"Has any one of the authors of the Vedas
Seen Brahma face to face?"

Again the two Brahmans answered in the negative and exclaimed:
"How can any one see Brahma or understand him,
For the mortal cannot understand the immortal".
And the Bhagavat proposed an illustration, saying:

"It is as if a man should make a staircase
In the place where four roads cross,
To mount up into a mansion.
And people should ask him,
'Where, good friend, is this mansion,
To mount up into which you are making this staircase?
Knows you whether it is in the east,
Or in the south, or in the west, or in the north?
Whether it is high, or low, or of medium size?'
And when so asked he should answer, 'I know not'.
And people should say to him,
'But, then, good friend, you are making a staircase
To mount up into something - taking it for a mansion -
Which all the while you knows not,
Neither have you seen it'.
And when so asked he should answer,
'That is exactly what I do;
Yea I know that I cannot know it'.
What would you think of him?"

Would you not say that the talk of that man was foolish talk?"

"Truly, Gautama", said the two Brahmans,
"It would be foolish talk!"

The Bhagavat continued:

"Then the Brahmans should say,
'We show you the way unto a union
Of what we know not and what we have not seen'.
This being the substance of Brahman lore,
Does it not follow that their task is vain?"

"It does follow," replied Bharadvaja.

Said the Bhagavat:

"Thus it is impossible that Brahmans versed in the three Vedas
Should be able to show the way to a state of union
With that which they neither know nor have seen.
Just as when a string of blind men are clinging one to the other.
Neither can the foremost see, nor can those in the middle see, nor
can the hindmost see.
Even so, it seems to me, the talk of the Brahmans versed in the three
Vedas is but blind talk;
It is ridiculous, consists of mere words, and is a vain and empty thing."

"Now suppose," added the Bhagavat,
"That a man should come here to the bank of the river,
And, having some business on the other side, should want to cross.
Do you suppose that if he were to invoke the other bank of the river
To come over to him on this side, the bank would come on account
of his praying?"

"Certainly not, Gautama."

"Yet this is the way of the Brahmans.
They omit the practice of those qualities
Which really make a man a Brahman, and say,
'Indra*, we call upon you; Soma, we call upon you;
Varuna, we call upon you; Brahma, we call upon you.'
Verily, it is not possible that these Brahmans,

* Indra, Soma and Varuna are Hindu Deities.

On account of their invocation, prayers, and praises,
Should after death be united with Brahma."

"Now tell me", continued the Buddha,
"What do the Brahmans say of Brahma?
Is his mind full of lust?"

And when the Brahmans denied this, the Buddha asked:
"Is Brahma's mind full of malice, sloth, or pride?"

"No sir!" was the reply.
"He is the opposite of all this."

And the Buddha went on:
"But are the Brahmans free from these vices?"

"No sir!" said Vasettha.

The Holy One said:
"The Brahmans cling to the five things leading to worldliness
And yield to the temptations of the senses;
They are entangled in the five hindrances,
Lust, malice, sloth, pride, and doubt.
How can they be united to that which is most unlike their nature?
Therefore the threefold wisdom of the Brahmans is a waterless desert,
A pathless jungle, and a hopeless desolation."

When the Buddha had thus spoken, one of the Brahmans said:
"We are told, Gautama, that the Sakyamuni knows the path to a
union with Brahma."

And the Bhagavat said:
"What do you think, O Brahmans, of a man born and brought up in
the city of Manasakata?
Would he be in doubt about the most direct way from this spot to
Manasakata?"

"Certainly not, Gautama."

"Thus", replied the Buddha,
"The Tathagata knows the straight path
That leads to a union with Brahma.
He knows it as one who has entered the world of Brahma and has

been born in it. There can be no doubt in the Tathagata."

And the two young Brahmans said:
"If you know the way show it to us."

And the Buddha said:

"The Tathagata sees the universe face to face and understands its nature.

He proclaims the truth both in its letter and in its spirit,

And his doctrine is glorious in its origin,

Glorious in its progress, glorious in its consummation.

The Tathagata reveals the higher life in its purity and perfection.

He can show you the way to that which is contrary to the five great hindrances.

"The Tathagata lets his mind pervade the four quarters of the world with thoughts of love.

And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere

Will continue to be filled with love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure.

"Just as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard -

And that without difficulty - in all the four quarters of the earth;

Even so is the coming of the Tathagata:

There is not one living creature

That the Tathagata passes by or leaves aside,

But regards them all with mind set free, and deep-felt love.

"And this is the sign that a man follows the right path:

Uprightness is his delight,

And he sees danger in the least of those things which he should avoid.

He trains himself in the commands of morality,

He encloses himself with holiness in word and deed;

He sustains his life by means that are quite pure;

Good is his conduct, guarded is the door of his senses;

Mindful and self-possessed, he is altogether happy.

"He who walks in the eightfold noble path

With unswerving determination is sure to reach Nirvana.

The Tathagata anxiously watches over his children

And with loving care helps them to see the light.

"When a hen has eight or ten or twelve eggs,
Over which she has properly brooded,
The wish arises in her heart,
'O would that my little chickens would break open the egg-shell with
their claws,
Or with their beaks, and come forth into the light in safety!'
Yet all the while those little chickens are sure to break the egg-shell
And will come forth into the light in safety.
Even so, a brother who with firm determination walks in the noble
path
Is sure to come forth into the light,
Sure to reach up to the higher wisdom,
Sure to attain to the highest bliss of enlightenment."

50 • Guard The Six Quarters

While the Bhagavat was staying at the bamboo grove near Rajagaha,
He once met on his way Sigala, a householder,
Who, clasping his hands, turned to the four quarters of the world,
To the zenith above, and to the nadir below.
And the Bhagavat, knowing that this was done
According to the traditional religious superstition to avert evil,
Asked Sigala: "Why performs you these strange ceremonies?"

And Sigala in reply said: "Do you think it strange that I protect my
home against the influences of demons?
I know you would gladly tell me, O Gautama Sakyamuni,
Whom people call the Tathagata and the blessed Buddha,
That incantations are of no avail and possess no saving power.
But listen to me and know, that in performing this rite
I honor, reverence, and keep sacred the words of my father."

Then the Tathagata said:

"You do well, O Sigala, to honor, reverence, and keep sacred the
words of your father;
And it is your duty to protect your home,
Your wife, your children, and your children's children
Against the hurtful influences of evil spirits.
I find no fault with the performance of your father's rite.
But I find that you do not understand the ceremony.

Let the Tathagata, who now speaks to you as a spiritual father
And loves you no less than did your parents,
Explain to you the meaning of the six directions.

"To guard your home by mysterious ceremonies is not sufficient;
You must guard it with good deeds.
Turn to your parents in the East,
To your teachers in the South,
To your wife and children in the West,
To your friends in the North,
And regulate the zenith of your religious relations above you,
And the nadir of your servants below you.

"Such is the religion your father wants you to have,
And the performance of the ceremony shall remind you of your
duties."

And Sigala looked up to the Bhagavat
With reverence as to his father and said:
"Truly, Gautama, you are the Buddha, the Bhagavat, the holy teacher.
I never knew what I was doing, but now I know.
You have revealed to me the truth that was hidden
As one who brings a lamp into the darkness.
I take my refuge in the Enlightened Teacher,
In the truth that enlightens,
And in the community of brethren
Who have been taught the truth."

51 • Simha's Question Concerning Annihilation

At that time many distinguished citizens were sitting together
assembled in the town-hall
And spoke in many ways in praise of the Buddha, of the Dharma, and
of the Sangha.
Simha, the general-in-chief, a disciple of the Niggantha* sect, was
sitting among them.
And Simha thought: "Truly, the Bhagavat must be the Buddha, the
Holy One.

* **Niggantha:** Pali word meaning 'freed from all ties'. These devotees are wandering naked mendicants that cover themselves with ashes.

I will go and visit him."

Then Simha, the general, went to the place
Where the Niggantha chief, Nataputta, was;
And having approached him, he said:
"I wish, Lord, to visit the samana Gautama."

Nataputta said:
"Why should you, Simha,
Who believe in the result of actions according to their moral merit,
Go to visit the samana Gautama, who denies the result of actions;
He teaches the doctrine of non-action;
And in this doctrine he trains his disciples."

Then the desire to go and visit the Bhagavat,
Which had arisen in Simha, the general, abated.

Hearing again the praise of the Buddha, of the Dharma, and of the
Sangha,
Simha asked the Niggantha chief a second time;
And again Nataputta persuaded him not to go.

When a third time the general heard some men of distinction
Praise the merits of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha,
The general thought:
"Truly the samana Gautama must be the Holy Buddha.
What are the Nigganthas to me,
Whether they give their consent or not?
I shall go without asking their permission
To visit him, the Bhagavat, the Holy Buddha."

And Simha, the general, said to the Bhagavat:
"I have heard, Lord,
That the samana Gautama denies the result of actions;
He teaches the doctrine of non-action,
Saying that the action of sentient beings do not receive their reward,
For he teaches annihilation and the worthlessness of all things;
And in this doctrine he trains his disciples.
Teaches you the doing away of the soul
And the burning away of man's being?
Please tell me, Master, do those who speak thus say the truth,
Or do they bear false witness against the Bhagavat,
Passing off a spurious Dharma as your Dharma?"

The Bhagavat said:

"There is a way, Simha,
In which one who says so, is speaking truly of me,
On the other hand, Simha,
There is a way in which one who says the opposite
Is speaking truly of me, too.
Listen, and I will tell you:

"I teach, Simha,
The not-doing of such actions as are unrighteous,
Either by deed, or by word, or by thought;
I teach the not-bringing about of all those conditions of heart which
are evil and not good.
However, I teach, Simha,
The doing of such actions as are righteous,
By deed, by word, and by thought;
I teach the bringing about
Of all those conditions of heart
Which are good and not evil.

"I teach, Simha,
That all the conditions of heart which are evil and not good,
Unrighteous actions by deed, by word, and by thought, must be burnt
away.
He who has freed himself, Simha,
From all those conditions of heart
Which are evil and not good,
He who has destroyed them as a palm-tree which is rooted out,
So that they cannot grow up again,
Such a man has accomplished the eradication of self.

"I proclaim, Simha,
The annihilation of egotism, of lust, of ill-will, of delusion.
However, I do not proclaim the annihilation
Of patience, of love, of charity, and of truth.

"I deem, Simha, unrighteous actions ignoble,
Whether they are performed by deed, or by word, or by thought;
But I deem virtue and righteousness praiseworthy."

And Simha said:

"One doubt still lurks in my mind

Concerning the doctrine of the Bhagavat.
Will the Bhagavat consent to clear the cloud away
So that I may understand the Dharma as the Bhagavat teaches it?"

The Tathagata having given his consent, Simha continued:
"I am a soldier, O Bhagavat,
And I am appointed by the king
To enforce his laws and to wage his wars.
Does the Tathagata who teaches kindness without end
And compassion for all sufferers,
Permit the punishment of the criminal?
And further, does the Tathagata declare
That it is wrong to go to war for the protection
Of our homes, our wives, our children, and our property?
Does the Tathagata teach the doctrine of a complete self-surrender,
So that I should suffer the evil-doer to do what he pleases
And yield submissively to him who threatens to take by violence what
is my own?
Does the Tathagata maintain that all strife, including such warfare
As is waged for a righteous cause, should be forbidden?"

The Buddha replied:
"He who deserves punishment must be punished,
And he who is worthy of favor must be favored.
Yet at the same time he teaches to do no injury
To any living being but to be full of love and kindness.
These injunctions are not contradictory,
For whosoever must be punished for the crimes which he has
committed,
Suffers his injury not through the ill-will of the judge
But on account of his evil-doing.
His own acts have brought upon him the injury
That the executer of the law inflicts.
When a magistrate punishes, let him not harbor hatred in his breast,
Yet a murderer, when put to death,
Should consider that this is the fruit of his own act.
As soon as he will understand that the punishment will purify his soul,
He will no longer lament his fate but rejoice at it."

And the Bhagavat continued:
"The Tathagata teaches that all warfare in which man tries to slay his
brother is lamentable,
But he does not teach that those who go to war in a righteous cause

After having exhausted all means to preserve the peace are blame-worthy.

He who must be blamed is the cause of war.

"The Tathagata teaches a complete surrender of self,

But he does not teach a surrender of anything

To those powers that are evil, be they men or gods or the elements of nature.

Struggle must be, for all life is a struggle of some kind.

But he that struggles should look to it

Lest he struggles in the interest of self against truth and righteousness.

"He who struggles in the interest of self,

So that he himself may be great or powerful or rich or famous,

Will have no reward, but he who struggles for righteousness and truth,

Will have great reward, for even his defeat will be a victory.

"Self is not a fit vessel to receive any great success;

Self is small and brittle

And its contents will soon be split for the benefit,

And perhaps also for the curse, of others.

"Truth, however, is large enough

To receive the yearnings and aspirations of all selves

And when the selves break like soap-bubbles,

Their contents will be preserved

And in the truth they will lead a life everlasting.

"He who goes to battle, O Simha,

Even though it be in a righteous cause,

Must be prepared to be slain by his enemies,

For that is the destiny of warriors;

And should his fate overtake him

He has no reason for complaint.

"But he who is victorious

Should remember the instability of earthly things.

His success may be great,

But be it ever so great the wheel of fortune may turn again

And bring him down into the dust.

"However, if he moderates himself

And, extinguishing all hatred in his heart

Lifts his down-trodden adversary up and says to him,
'Come now and make peace and let us be brothers,'
He will gain a victory that is not a transient success,
For its fruits will remain forever.

"Great is a successful general, O Simha,
But he who had conquered self is the greater victor.

"The doctrine of the conquest of self, O Simha,
Is not taught to destroy the souls of men, but to preserve them.
He who has conquered self is more fit to live,
To be successful, and to gain victories
Than he who is the slave of self.

"He whose mind is free from the illusion of self,
Will stand and not fall in the battle of life.

"He whose intentions are righteousness and justice,
Will meet with no failure,
But be successful in his enterprises
And his success will endure.

"He who harbors in his heart love of truth
Will live and not die,
For he has drunk the water of immortality.

"Struggle then, O general, courageously;
And fight your battles vigorously,
But be a soldier of truth
And the Tathagata will bless you."

When the Bhagavat had spoken thus,
Simha, the general, said:

"Glorious Master, glorious Master!
You have revealed the truth.

Great is the doctrine of the Bhagavat.

You, indeed, are the Buddha, the Tathagata, the Holy One.

You are the teacher of mankind.

You show us the road of salvation,

For this indeed is true deliverance.

He who follows you will not miss the light to enlighten his path.

He will find blessedness and peace.

I take my refuge, Master, in the Bhagavat,

And in his doctrine, and in his brotherhood.
May the Bhagavat receive me from this day forth
while my life lasts as a disciple who has taken refuge in him."

And the Bhagavat said:
"Consider first, Simha, what you do.
It is becoming that persons of rank like yourself
Should do nothing without due consideration."

Simha's faith in the Bhagavat increased. He replied:
"Had other teachers, Master, succeeded in making me their disciple,
They would carry around their banners through the whole city of
Vesali, shouting:
'Simha, the general has become our disciple!
For the second time, Lord,
I take my refuge in the Bhagavat,
And in the Dharma, and in the Sangha;
May the Bhagavat receive me from this day forth while my life lasts
As a disciple who has taken his refuge in him."

Said the Bhagavat:
"For a long time, Simha,
Offerings have been given to the Nigganths in your house.
You should therefore deem it right also in the future
To give them food when they come to you on their alms-pilgrimage."

And Simha's heart was filled with joy.
He said:
"I have been told, Master: 'The samana Gautama says: To me alone
and to nobody else should gifts be given.
My pupils alone and the pupils of no one else should receive
offerings.'
But the Bhagavat exhorts me to give also to the Nigganths.
Well, Master, we shall see what is seasonable.
For the third time, Master, I take refuge in the Bhagavat,
And in his Dharma, and in his fraternity."

52 • All Existence is Spiritual

And there was an officer among the entourage of Simha
Who had heard of the discourses of the Bhagavat,

And there was some doubt left in his heart.

This man came to the Bhagavat and said:

"It is said, O Lord,
That the samana Gautama denies the existence of the soul.
Do they who say so speak the truth,
Or do they bear false witness against the Bhagavat?"

And the Bhagavat said:

"There is a way in which those who say so are speaking truly of me;
On the other hand, there is a way in which those who say so do not
speak truly of me.

"The Tathagata teaches that there is no self.
He who says that the soul is his self
And that the self is the thinker of our thoughts and the actor of our
deeds,
Teaches a wrong doctrine which leads to confusion and darkness.

"On the other hand, the Tathagata teaches that there is a mind.
He who understands by soul mind,
And says that mind exists,
Teaches the truth which leads to clearness and enlightenment."

The officer said:

"Does, then, the Tathagata maintain that two things exist?
That which we perceive with our senses and that which is mental?"

Said the Bhagavat:

"Verily, I say unto you, your mind is spiritual,
But neither is the sense-perceived void of spirituality.
The bodhi¹ is eternal and it dominates all existence
As the good law guiding all beings in their search for truth.
It changes brute nature into mind, and there is no being
that cannot be transformed into a vessel of truth."

¹ **Bodhi:** Pali and Sanskrit word meaning 'awakened consciousness'; or 'Buddhic Consciousness' in Vedanta. Also called the 'causal body' in Teosophy or the 'Budhic body', one of the four human bodies.

53 • Identity and Non-Identity

Kutadanta, the head of the Brahmans in the village of Danamati
Having approached the Bhagavat respectfully, greeted him and said:
"I am told, O samana, that you are the Buddha,
The Holy One, the All-knowing, the Lord of the World.
But if you were the Buddha,
Would you not come like a king
In all your glory and power?"

Said the Bhagavat:
"Your eyes are clutched
If the eye of your mind were cleared
You could see the glory and the power of truth."

Said Kutadanta:
"Show me the truth and I shall see it.
But your doctrine is without consistency.
If it were consistent, it would stand;
But as it is not, it will pass away."

The Bhagavat replied: "The truth will never pass away."

Kutadanta said:
"I am told that you teaches the law,
Yet you tears down religion.
Your disciples despise rites and abandon immolation,
But reverence for the gods can be shown only by sacrifices.
The very nature of religion consists in worship and sacrifice."

Said the Buddha:
"Greater than the immolation of bullocks is the sacrifice of self.
He who offers to the gods his evil desires
Will see the uselessness of slaughtering animals at the altar.
Blood has no cleansing power,
But the eradication of lust will make the heart pure.
Better than worshipping gods
Is obedience to the laws of righteousness."

Kutadanta, being of religious disposition
And anxious about his fate after death,
Had sacrificed countless victims.
Now he saw the folly of expiation by blood.

Not yet satisfied, however, with the teachings of the Tathagata,
Kutadanta continued:

"You believe, O Master, that beings are reborn;
That they migrate in the evolution of life;
And that subject to the law of karma we must reap what we sow.
Yet you teaches the non-existence of the soul!
Your disciples praise utter self-extinction
As the highest bliss of Nirvana.
If I am merely a combination of the sankharas*,
My existence will cease when I die.
If I am merely a compound of sensations and ideas and desires,
Where can I go after the dissolution of the body?"

Said the Bhagavat:

"O Brahman, you are religious and earnest.
You are seriously concerned about your soul.
Yet is your work in vain because you are lacking
In the one thing that is needful.

"There is rebirth of character,
But no transmigration of a self.
Your thought-forms reappear,
But there is no ego-entity transferred.
The stanza uttered by a teacher
Is reborn in the scholar who repeats the words.

"Only through ignorance and delusion do men indulge in the dream
That their souls are separate and self-existent entities.

"Your heart, O Brahman, is cleaving still to self;
You are anxious about heaven
But you seek the pleasures of self in heaven,
And thus you cannot see the bliss of truth
And the immortality of truth.

"Verily I say unto you:
The Bhagavat has not come to teach death,
But to teach life.

* Sankharas: 'that which has been put together' or 'that which puts together'. All conditioned things, that which fabricates things, especially in the mind.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sankhara>

And you discern not the nature of living and dying.

"This body will be dissolved
And no amount of sacrifice will save it.
Therefore, seek you the life that is of the mind.
Where self is, truth cannot be;
Yet when truth comes, self will disappear.
Therefore, let your mind rest in the truth;
Propagate the truth, put your whole will in it, and let it spread.
In the truth you shall live for ever.

"Self is death and truth is life.
The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying,
While moving in the truth
Is partaking of Nirvana
Which is life everlasting."

Kutadanta said: "Where, O venerable Master, is Nirvana?"

"Nirvana is wherever the precepts are obeyed,"
Replied the Bhagavat.

"Do I understand you aright," rejoined the Brahman,
"that Nirvana is not a place,
And being nowhere it is without reality?"

"You do not understand me correctly," said the Bhagavat,
"Now listen and answer these questions:
Where does the wind dwell?"

"Nowhere," was the reply.

Buddha retorted: "Then, sir,
There is no such thing as wind".

Kutadanta made no reply;
And the Bhagavat asked again:
"Answer me, O Brahman,
Where does wisdom dwell?
Is wisdom a locality?"

"Wisdom has no allotted dwelling-place," replied Kutadanta.

Said the Bhagavat:

"Mean you that there is no wisdom,
No enlightenment, no righteousness, and no salvation,
Because Nirvana is not a locality?
As a great and mighty wind
Which pass over the world
In the heat of the day,
So the Tathagata comes to blow
Over the minds of mankind
With the breath of his love,
So cool, so sweet, so calm, so delicate;
And those tormented by fever alleviate their suffering
And rejoice at the refreshing breeze."

Said Kutadanta:

"I feel, O Lord,
That you proclaim a great doctrine,
But I cannot grasp it.
Excuse me that I ask again:
Tell me, O Lord, if there be no atman,
How can there be immortality?
The activity of the mind pass,
And our thoughts are gone
When we have done thinking."

Buddha replied:

"Our thinking is gone,
But our thoughts continue.
Reasoning ceases,
But knowledge remains."

Said Kutadanta: "How is that?

Is not reasoning and knowledge the same?"

The Bhagavat explained the distinction by an illustration:

"It is as when a man wants,
During the night, to send a letter,
And, after having his clerk called,
Has a lamp lit, and gets the letter written.
Then, when that has been done, he extinguishes the lamp.
But though the writing has been finished
And the light has been put out the letter is still there.
Thus does reasoning cease and knowledge remain;

And in the same way mental activity ceases,
But experience, wisdom, and all the fruits of our acts endure."

Kutadanta continued:

"Tell me, O Lord, please tell me,
Where, if the sankharas are dissolved, is the identity of my self.
If my thoughts are propagated, and if my soul migrates,
My thoughts cease to be my thoughts
And my soul ceases to be my soul.
Give me an illustration, but please, O Lord,
Tell me, where is the identity of my self?"

Said the Bhagavat:

"Suppose a man were to light a lamp;
Would it burn the night through?"

"Yes, it might do so," was the reply.

"Now, is it the same flame that burns in the first watch of the night as
in the second?"

Kutadanta hesitated.

He thought "Yes, it is the same flame,"
But fearing the complications of a hidden meaning,
And trying to be exact, he said:
"No, it is not."

"Then", continued the Bhagavat,
"There are flames, one in the first watch
And the other in the second watch."

"No, sir," said Kutadanta.
"In one sense it is not the same flame,
But in another sense it is the same flame.
It burns the same kind of oil,
It emits the same kind of light,
And it serves the same purpose."

"Very well," said the Buddha,
"And would you call those flames
The same that have burned yesterday
And are burning now in the same lamp,
Filled with the same kind of oil,

Illuminating the same room?"

"They may have been extinguished during the day," suggested Kutadanta.

Said the Bhagavat:

"Suppose the flame of the first watch
Had been extinguished during the second watch,
Would you call it the same if it burns again in the third watch?"

Replied Kutadanta:

"In one sense it is a different flame,
In another it is not."

The Tathagata asked again:

"Has the time that elapsed during the extinction of the flame
anything to do with its identity or non-identity?"

"No, sir", said the Brahman, "it has not.
There is a difference and an identity,
Whether many years elapsed or only one second,
And also whether the lamp
Has been extinguished in the meantime or not."

"Well, then, we agree that the flame of today
Is in a certain sense the same as the flame of yesterday,
And in another sense it is different at every moment.
Moreover, the flames of the same kind,
Illuminating with equal power the same kind of rooms
Are in a certain sense the same."

"Yes, sir," replied Kutadanta.

The Bhagavat continued:

"Now, suppose there is a man
Who feels like yourself,
Thinks like yourself,
And acts like yourself,
Is he not the same man as you?"

"No, sir," interrupted Kutadanta.

Said the Buddha:

"Do you deny that the same logic holds good for yourself
That holds good for the things of the world

Kutadanta remind himself
And rejoined slowly: "No, I do not.
The same logic holds good universally;
But there is a peculiarity about my self
Which renders it altogether different
From everything else and also from other selves.
There may be another man who feels exactly like me,
Thinks like me, and acts like me;
Suppose even he had the same name
And the same kind of possessions
He would not be myself."

"True, Kutadanta," answered Buddha,
"He would not be yourself.
Now, tell me, is the person who goes to school one,
And that same person when he has finished his schooling another?
Is it one who commits a crime, another
Who is punished by having his hands and feet cut off?"

"They are the same," was the reply.

"Then sameness is constituted by continuity only?" asked the
Tathagata.

"Not only by continuity," said Kutadanta,
"But also and mainly by identity of character."

"Very well," concluded the Buddha,
"Then you agree that persons can be the same, in the same sense
As two flames of the same kind are called the same;
And you must recognize that in this sense
Another man of the same character
And product of the same karma
Is the same as you."

"Well, I do." said the Brahman.

The Buddha continued:
"And in this same sense alone are you the same today as yesterday.
Your nature is not constituted by the matter of which your body

consists

But by your sankharas, the forms of the body, of sensations, of thoughts.

Your person is the combination of the sankharas.

Wherever they are, you are.

To whatever place they go, you go.

Thus you will recognize in a certain sense

An identity of your self, and in another sense a difference.

But he who does not recognize the identity should deny all identity,

And should say that the questioner is no longer the same person

As he who a minute after receives the answer.

Now consider the continuation of your personality,

Which is preserved in your karma.

Do you call it death and annihilation,

Or life and continued life?"

"I call it life and continued life," rejoined Kutadanta,

"for it is the continuation of my existence,

But I do not care for that kind of continuation.

All I care for is the continuation of self

In the other sense which makes of every man,

Whether identical with me or not,

An altogether different person."

"Very well," said Buddha.

"This is what you desire

And this is the cleaving to self.

This is your error.

All compound things are transitory:

They grow and they decay.

All compound things are subject to pain:

They will be separated from what they love

And be joined to what they abhor.

All compound things lack a self, an atman, an ego."

"How is that?" asked Kutadanta.

"Where is your self?" asked the Buddha.

And when Kutadanta made no reply, he continued:

"Your self to which you cleave is a constant change.

Years ago you was a small babe;

Then, you was a boy;

Then a youth, and now, you are a man.

Is there any identity of the babe and the man?
There is an identity in a certain sense only.
Indeed there is more identity between the flames
Of the first watch and the third watch,
Even though the lamp might have been extinguished during the
second watch.
Now which is your true self,
That of yesterday, that of today, or that of tomorrow,
For the preservation of which you demand?"

Kutadanta was bewildered.
"Lord of the world," he said,
"I see my error, but I am still confused."

The Tathagata continued:
"It is by a process of evolution that sankharas come to be.
There is no sankhara which has sprung into being without a gradual
becoming.
Your sankharas are the product of your deeds in former existences.
The combination of your sankharas is your self.
Wherever they are impressed there your self migrates.
In your sankharas you will continue to live
And you will reap in future existences
The harvest sown now and in the past."

"Verily, O Lord," rejoined Kutadanta,
"this is not a fair retribution.
I cannot recognize the justice
that others after me will reap
What I am sowing now."

The Bhagavat waited a moment and then replied:
"Is all teaching in vain?
Do you not understand that those others are you yourself?
You yourself will reap what you sow, not others."

"Think of a man who is ill-bred and indigent,
Suffering from the wretchedness of his condition.
As a boy he was slothful and indolent, and when he grew up
He had not learned a craft to earn a living.
Would you say his misery
Is not the product of his own action,
Because the adult is no longer the same person as was the boy?"

"Verily, I say unto you:
Not in the heavens,
Not in the midst of the sea,
Not if you hide yourself away in the clefts of the mountains,
Would you find a place where you can escape the fruit of your evil
actions.

"At the same time you are sure to receive the blessings of your good
actions.

"The man who has long been traveling and who returns home in
safety,
The welcome of family, friends, and acquaintances awaits.
So, the fruits of his good works bid him welcome
Who has walked in the path of righteousness,
When he passes over from the present life into the hereafter."

Kutadanta said:

"I have faith in the glory and excellence of your doctrine.
My eye cannot as yet endure the light;
But I now understand that there is no self,
And the truth dawns upon me.
Sacrifices cannot save, and invocations are idle talk.
But how shall I find the path to life everlasting?
I know all the Vedas^{*} by heart and have not found the truth."

Said the Buddha:

"Learning is a good thing; but it avails not.
True wisdom can be acquired by practice only.
Practice the truth that your brother is the same as you.
Walk in the noble path of righteousness
And you will understand that while there is death in self,
There is immortality in truth."

Said Kutadanta:

"Let me take my refuge in the Bhagavat,
In the Dharma, and in the brotherhood.
Accept me as your disciple
And let me partake of the bliss of immortality."

^{*} Vedas: Hindu religious scripture.

54 • The Buddha Omnipresent

And the Bhagavat thus addressed the brethren:

"Those only who do not believe, call me Gautama,
But you call me the Buddha, the Bhagavat, the Teacher.
And this is right, for I have in this life entered Nirvana,
While the life of Gautama has been extinguished.

"Self has disappeared
And the truth has taken its abode in me.
This body of mine is Gautama's body
And it will be dissolved in due time,
And after its dissolution no one,
Neither God nor man,
Will see Gautama again.
But the truth remains.
The Buddha will not die;
The Buddha will continue to live
In the holy body of the law.

"The extinction of the Bhagavat will be by that passing away
In which nothing remains that could tend to the formation of another
self.
Nor will it be possible to point out the Bhagavat as being here or
there.
But it will be like a flame in a great body of blazing fire.
That flame has ceased;
It has vanished
And it cannot be said that it is here or there.
In the body of the Dharma, however,
The Bhagavat can be pointed out;
For the Dharma has been preached by the Bhagavat.

"You are my children, I am your father;
Through me you have been released from your sufferings.

"I myself having reached the other shore,
Help others to cross the stream;
I myself having attained salvation,
Am a savior of others;
Being comforted, I comfort others
And lead them to the place of refuge.

"I shall fill with joy all the beings whose limbs languish;
I shall give happiness to those who are dying from distress;
I shall extend to them relief and deliverance.

"I was born into the world
As the king of truth
For the salvation of the world.

"The subject on which I meditate is truth.
The practice to which I devote myself is truth.
The topic of my conversation is truth.
My thoughts are always in the truth.
For lo! my self has become the truth.

"Whoever comprehends the truth will see the Bhagavat,
For the truth has been preached by the Bhagavat."

55 • One Essence, One Law, One Aim

And the Tathagata addressed the venerable Kassapa,
To dispel the uncertainty and doubt of his mind,
and he said:

"All things are made of one essence,
Yet things are different according to the forms
Which they assume under different impressions.
As they form themselves so they act,
And as they act so they are.

"It is, Kassapa, as if a potter
Made different vessels out of the same clay.
Some of these pots are to contain sugar,
Others rice, others curds and milk;
Others still are vessels of impurity.
There is no diversity in the clay used;
The diversity of the pots is only due
To the molding hands of the potter
Who shapes them for the various uses
That circumstances may require.

"And as all things originate from one essence,

So they are developing according to one law
And they are destined to one aim which is Nirvana.

"Nirvana comes to you, Kassapa,
When you understand thoroughly,
And when you live according to your understanding,
That all things are of one essence
And that there is but one law.
Hence, there is but one Nirvana
As there is but one truth,
Not two or three.

"And the Tathagata is the same unto all beings,
Differing in his attitude only
In so far as all beings are different.

"The Tathagata revives the whole world
Like a cloud shedding its waters without distinction.
He has the same sentiments
For the high as for the low,
For the wise as for the ignorant,
For the noble-minded as for the immoral.

"The great cloud full of rain
Comes up in this wide universe
Covering all countries and oceans
To pour down its rain everywhere,
Over all grasses, shrubs, trees
Of various species, families of plants
Of different names growing on the earth,
On the hills, on the mountains, or in the valleys.

"Then, Kassapa,
The grasses, shrubs, herbs and wild trees
Suck the water emitted from that great cloud
Which is all of one essence
And has been abundantly poured down;
And they will, according to their nature,
Acquire a proportionate development,
Shooting up and producing blossoms
And their fruits in season.

"Rooted in one and the same soil,

All those families of plants and germs
Are quickened by water of the same essence.

"The Tathagata, however, O Kassapa,
Knows the law whose essence is deliverance,
And whose end is the peace of Nirvana.
He is the same to all,
And yet knowing the requirements of every single being,
He does not reveal himself to all alike.
He does not impart to them at once the fullness of omniscience,
But pays attention to the disposition of various beings."

56 • The Lesson Given to Rahula

Before Rahula, the son of Siddhartha Gautama and Yasodhara,
Attained to the enlightenment of true wisdom,
His conduct was not always marked by a love of truth,
And the Bhagavat sent him to a distant vihara
To govern his mind and to guard his tongue.

After some time the Bhagavat head for the place,
And Rahula was filled with joy.

And the Bhagavat ordered the boy
To bring him a basin of water
And to wash his feet,
And Rahula obeyed.

When Rahula had washed the Tathagata's feet,
The Bhagavat asked:
"Is the water now fit for drinking?"

"No, my Lord," replied the boy, "the water is soiled."

Then the Bhagavat said:
"Now consider your own case.
Although you are my son,
And the grandchild of a king,
Although you are a samana
Who has voluntarily given up everything,
You are unable to guard your tongue from untruth,

And thus soil you your mind."

And when the water had been poured away,
The Bhagavat asked again:
"Is this vessel now fit
For holding water to drink?"

"No, my Lord," replied Rahula,
"The vessel, too, has become unclean."

And the Bhagavat said:
"Now consider your own case.
Although you wear the yellow robe,
Are you fit for any high purpose
When you have become unclean like this vessel?"

Then the Bhagavat,
Lifting up the empty basin
And whirling it round, asked:
"Are you not afraid
Lest it should fall and break?"

"No, my Lord," replied Rahula,
"The vessel is but cheap,
And its loss will not amount too much."

"Now consider your own case," said the Bhagavat.
"You are whirled about in endless vortexes of reincarnation,
And as your body is made of the same substance
As other material things that will crumble to dust,
There is no loss if it be broken.
He who is given to speaking untruths
Is an object of disdain to the wise."

Rahula was filled with shame,
And the Bhagavat addressed him once more:
"Listen, and I will tell you a parable:

"There was a king who had a very powerful elephant,
Able to cope with five hundred ordinary elephants.
When going to war, the elephant was armed
With sharp swords on his tusks,
With scythes on his shoulders,

Spears on his feet, and an iron ball at his tail.
The elephant-master rejoiced to see the noble creature so well
equipped,
And, knowing that a slight wound by an arrow in the trunk would be
fatal,
He had taught the elephant to keep his trunk well coiled up.
But during the battle the elephant stretched forth his trunk to seize a
sword.
His master was frightened and consulted with the king,
And they decided that the elephant was no longer fit
to be used in battle.

"O Rahula! if men would only guard their tongues all would be well!
Be like the fighting who guards his trunk
Against the arrow that strikes in the center.

"By love of truth the sincere escape iniquity.
Like the elephant well subdued and quiet,
Who permits the king to mount on his trunk,
Thus the man that reveres righteousness
Will endure faithfully throughout his life."

Rahula hearing these words was filled with deep sorrow;
He never again gave any occasion for complaint,
And forthwith he sanctified his life by earnest exertions.

57 • The Sermon on Abuse

And the Bhagavat observed the ways of society
And noticed how much misery came from malignity and foolish
offenses
Done only to gratify vanity and self-seeking pride.

And the Buddha said:
"If a man foolishly does me wrong,
I will return to him the protection of my generous love;
The more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me;
The fragrance of goodness always comes to me,
And the harmful air of evil goes to him."

A foolish man learning that the Buddha observed the principle of

great love

Which commends the return of good for evil, came and abused him.
The Buddha was silent, pitying his folly.

When the man had finished his abuse,
The Buddha asked him, saying:

"Son, if a man declined to accept a present made to him,
To whom would it belong?"

And he answered:

"In that case it would belong
To the man who offered it."

"My son," said the Buddha,

"You have railed at me,

But I decline to accept your abuse,

And request you to keep it yourself.

Will it not be a source of misery to you?

As the echo belongs to the sound,

And the shadow to the substance,

So misery will overtake the evil-doer without fail."

The abuser made no reply, and Buddha continued:

"A wicked man who reproaches a virtuous one

Is like one who looks up and spits at heaven;

The spittle soils not the heaven,

But comes back and soils his own person.

"The slanderer is like one

Who flings dust at another when the wind is contrary;

The dust does not but return on him who threw it.

The virtuous man cannot be hurt

And the misery that the other would inflict

Comes back on himself."

The abuser went away ashamed, but he came again

And took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

58 • The Buddha Replies to the Deva

On a certain day when the Bhagavat dwelt

At Jetavana, the garden of Anathapindika,
A celestial deva came to him in the shape of a Brahman
Whose face was bright and whose garments were white like snow.
The deva asked questions which the Bhagavat answered.

The deva said:

"What is the sharpest sword?
What is the deadliest poison?
What is the fiercest fire?
What is the darkest night?"

The Bhagavat replied:

"A word spoken in wrath is the sharpest sword;
Greed is the deadliest poison;
Passion is the fiercest fire;
Ignorance is the darkest night."

The deva said:

"Who gains the greatest benefit?
Who loses most?
Which armor is invulnerable?
What is the best weapon?"

The Bhagavat replied:

"He is the greatest gainer who gives to others,
And he loses most who greedily receives without gratitude.
Patience is an invulnerable armor;
Wisdom is the best weapon."

The deva said:

"Who is the most dangerous thief?
What is the most precious treasure?
Who is most successful in taking away by violence not only on earth,
but also in heaven?
What is the securest treasure-trove?"

The Bhagavat replied:

"Evil thought is the most dangerous thief;
Virtue is the most precious treasure.
The mind takes possession of everything not only on earth, but also in
heaven,
And immortality is its securest treasure-trove."

The deva said:
"What is attractive?
What is disgusting?
What is the most horrible pain?
What is the greatest enjoyment?"

The Bhagavat replied:
"Good is attractive;
Evil is disgusting.
A bad conscience is the most tormenting pain;
Deliverance is the height of bliss."

The deva asked:
"What causes ruin in the world?
What breaks off friendships?
What is the most violent fever?
Who is the best physician?"

The Bhagavat replied:
"Ignorance causes the ruin of the world.
Envy and selfishness break off friendships.
Hatred is the most violent fever,
And the Buddha is the best physician."

The deva then asked and said:
"Now I only have one doubt to be solved;
Please, clear it away:
What is it fire can neither burn,
Nor moisture corrode,
Nor wind crush down,
But is able to reform the whole world?"

The Bhagavat replied: "Blessing!
Neither fire, nor moisture, nor wind can destroy
The blessing of a good deed,
And blessings reform the whole world."

The deva, having heard the words of the Bhagavat, was full of
exceeding joy.
Clasping his hands, he bowed down before him in reverence,
And disappeared suddenly from the presence of the Buddha.

59 • Words of Instruction

The Bhikkhus came to the Bhagavat,
And having saluted him with clasped hands they said:

"O Master, you all-seeing one, we all wish to learn;
Our ears are ready to hear, you are our teacher, you are incomparable.
Cut off our doubt, inform us of the blessed Dharma, O you of great
understanding;
Speak in the midst of us, O you who are all-seeing, as is the thousand-
eyed Lord of the gods.

"We will ask the muni of great understanding, who has crossed the
stream,
Gone to the other shore, is blessed and of a firm mind:
How does a bhikkhu wander rightly in the world,
After having gone out from his house
And driven away desire?"

The Buddha said:

"Let the bhikkhus subdue his passion
For human and celestial pleasures,
Then, having conquered existence,
He will command the Dharma.
Such a one will wander rightly in the world.

"He whose lusts have been destroyed,
Who is free from pride,
Who has overcome all the ways of passion,
Is subdued, perfectly happy, and of a firm mind.
Such a one will wander rightly in the world.

"Faithful is he who is possessed of knowledge,
Seeing the way that leads to Nirvana;
He who is not partisan;
He who is pure and virtuous,
And has removed the veil from his eyes.
Such a one will wander rightly in the world."

Said the Bhikkhus:

"Certainly, O Bhagavat, it is so:
Whichever bhikkhu lives in this way,

Subdued and having overcome all bonds,
Such a one will wander rightly in the world."

The Bhagavat said:

"Whatever is to be done by him
Who aspires to attain the calmness of Nirvana
Let him be able and upright, conscientious and gentle, and not
proud.

"Let a man's pleasure be the Dharma,
Let him delight in the Dharma,
Let him stand fast in the Dharma,
Let him know how to inquire into the Dharma,
Let him not raise any dispute that pollutes the Dharma,
And let him spend his time in pondering
On the well-spoken truths of the Dharma.

"A treasure that is laid up in a deep pit
Profits nothing and may easily be lost.
The real treasure that is laid up through charity
And piety, temperance, self-control, or deeds of merit,
Is hid secure and cannot pass away.
It is never gained by despoiling or wronging others,
And no thief can steal it.
A man, when he dies,
Must leave the fleeting wealth of the world,
But this treasure of virtuous acts he takes with him.
Let the wise do good deeds;
They are a treasure that can never be lost."

And the bhikkhus praised the wisdom of the Tathagata:

"You have passed beyond pain;
You are holy, O Enlightened One,
We consider you one who has destroyed his passions.
You are glorious, thoughtful, and of great understanding.
O you who puts an end to pain,
You have carried us across our doubt.

"Because you saw our longing
And carried us across our doubt, adoration be to you, O muni,
Who has attained the highest good

In the ways of wisdom.

"The doubt we had before,
You have cleared away,
O you clearly-seeing one;
Surely you are a great thinker,
Perfectly enlightened,
There is no obstacle for you.

"And all your troubles are scattered and cut off;
You are calm, subdued, firm, truthful.

"Adoration be to you, O noble sage,
Adoration be to you, O you best of beings;

There is none equal to you.

"You are the Buddha, you are the Master,
You are the muni that conquers Mara;
After having cut off desire
You have crossed over
And carries this generation
To the other shore."

60 • Amitabha

One of the disciples came to the Bhagavat
With a trembling heart and his mind full of doubt.
And he asked the Bhagavat:
"O Buddha, our Lord and Master,
Why do we give up the pleasures of the world,
If you forbid us to work miracles
And to attain the supernatural?
Is not Amitabha, the infinite light of revelation,
The source of innumerable miracles?"

And the Bhagavat, seeing the anxiety
Of a truth-seeking mind, said:
"O savaka°, you are a novice among the novices,

* Savaka: Sanskrit word meaning 'a hearer' or, more generally, 'disciple'.

And you are swimming on the surface of samsara.
How long will it take you to grasp the truth?
You have not understood the words of the Tathagata.
The law of karma is irrefutable,
And supplications have no effect,
For they are empty words."

Said the disciple:
"So you say there are no miracles and wonderful things?"

And the Bhagavat replied:

"Is it not a wonderful thing,
Mysterious and miraculous to the worldling,
That a man who commits wrong can become a saint,
That he who attains to true enlightenment
Will find the path of truth
And abandon the evil ways of selfishness?"

"The bhikkhu who renounces the transient pleasure of the world
For the eternal bliss of holiness,
Performs the only miracle
That can truly be called a miracle.

"A holy man changes the curses of karma into blessings.
The desire to perform miracles arises either from greed or from vanity.

"That mendicant does right
Who does not think:
'People should salute me';
Who, though despised by the world,
Yet cherishes no ill-will towards it.

"That mendicant does right
To whom omens, meteors, dreams,
And signs are things abolished;
He is free from all their evils.

"Amitabha, the unbounded light,
Is the source of wisdom, of virtue, of Buddhahood.
The deeds of sorcerers and miracle-mongers are frauds,
But what is more wondrous, more mysterious,
More miraculous than Amitabha?"

"But, Master," continued the savaka,
"Is the promise of the happy region vain talk and a myth?"

"What is this promise?" asked the Buddha; and the disciple replied:

"There is in the west a paradise called the Pure Land^{*},
Exquisitely adorned with gold and silver and precious gems.
There are pure waters with golden sands,
Surrounded by pleasant walks and covered with large lotus flowers.
Joyous music is heard, and flowers rain down three times a day.
There are singing birds whose harmonious notes proclaim the praises
of religion,
And in the minds of those who listen to their sweet sounds,
Remembrance arises of the Buddha, the law, and the brotherhood.
No evil birth is possible there, and even the name of hell is unknown.
He who fervently and with a pious mind repeats the words 'Amitabha
Buddha'
Will be transported to the happy region of this pure land,
And when death draws nigh, the Buddha, with a company of saintly
followers,
Will stand before him, and there will be perfect calmness."

"In truth," said the Buddha,
"There is such a happy paradise.
But the country is spiritual and it is accessible
Only to those that are spiritual.
You say it lies in the west.
This means, look for it where
He who enlightens the world resides.
The sun sinks down and leaves us in utter darkness,
The shades of night steal over us,
And Mara, the evil one, buries our bodies in the grave.
Sunset is nevertheless no extinction,
There is boundless light and inexhaustible life."

"I understand," said the savaka,

^{*} **Pure Land:** Pure Land Buddhism today is a large subset of the Mahayana School of Buddhism found in China and, specially, in Japan. Pure Land Buddhism teaches that instead of practical and meditative work toward enlightenment through devotion to just Amitabha, one will be reborn in the Pure Land in which enlightenment is guaranteed. The 'Pure Land' idea was anterior to Gautama's life and is a legend about a 'heaven' found in many Indo-European traditions.

"That the story of the Western Paradise
Is not literally true."

"Your description of paradise," the Buddha continues, "is beautiful;
Yet it is insufficient and does little justice to the glory of the pure land.
The worldly can speak of it in a worldly way only;
They use worldly similes and worldly words.
But the pure land in which the pure live
Is more beautiful than you can say or imagine.

"However, the repetition of the name Amitabha Buddha^{*}
Is meritorious only if you speak it
With such a devout attitude of mind
As will cleanse your heart
And attune your will to do works of righteousness.
He can only reach the happy land whose soul
Is filled with the infinite light of truth.
He only can live and breathe in the spiritual atmosphere
Of the Western Paradise who has attained enlightenment.

"Verily I say unto you,
The Tathagata lives in the pure land of eternal bliss
Even now while he is still in the body;
And the Tathagata preaches the law of religion
Unto you and unto the whole world,
So that you and your brethren may attain
The same peace and the same happiness."

Said the disciple: "Teach me, O Lord,
The meditations to which I must devote myself
In order to let my mind enter
Into the paradise of the pure land."

Buddha said: "There are five meditations.

"The first meditation is the meditation of love
In which you must so adjust your heart
That you long for the happiness and welfare
Of all beings including the happiness of your enemies.

^{*} **Nembutsu:** A ritual of Pure Land Buddhism that focuses on the ritual recitation of the name of the Amitabha Buddha.

"The second meditation is the meditation of compassion,
In which you think of all beings in distress,
Vividly representing in your imagination
Their sorrows and anxieties so as to arouse
A deep compassion for them in your soul.

"The third meditation is the meditation of joy
In which you think of the prosperity of others
And rejoice with their rejoicings.

"The fourth meditation is the meditation on purity, in which you
Consider the evil consequences
Of corruption, the effects of wrongs and evils.
How trivial is often the pleasure of the moment
And how fatal are its consequences!

"The fifth meditation is the meditation on serenity,
In which you rise above love and hate, tyranny and slavery, wealth
and want, and regard your own fate with impartial calmness and
perfect tranquility.

"A true follower of the Tathagata
Finds not his trust upon austerities or rituals
But giving up the idea of self
Relies with his whole heart upon Amitabha,
Which is the unbounded light of truth."

The Bhagavat after having explained his doctrine of Amitabha,
The immeasurable light which makes him who receives it a Buddha,
Looked into the heart of his disciple and saw still some doubts and
anxieties. And the Bhagavat said:

"Ask me, your son, the questions which weigh upon your soul."

And the disciple said:

"Can a humble monk, by sanctifying himself,
Acquire the talents and supernatural wisdom called Abhijna
And the supernatural powers called Iddhi?
Show me the Iddhi-pada, the path to the highest wisdom?
Open to me the Jhanas which are the means of acquiring samadhi°,"

* **Samadhi:** Sanskrit term for the state of consciousness induced by complete meditation. Its etymology comes from 'sam' (together or integrated), 'a' (towards), and 'dha' (to get, to hold). To acquire integration or wholeness, or truth.

The fixity of mind which enraptures the soul."

And the Bhagavat said: "Which are the Abhijna?"

The disciple replied: "There are six Abhijna :

- (1) The celestial eye;
- (2) The celestial ear;
- (3) The body at will or the power of transformation¹;
- (4) The knowledge of the destiny of former dwellings, so as to know former states of existence;
- (5) The faculty of reading the thoughts of others; and
- (6) The knowledge of comprehending the finality of the stream of life."

And the Bhagavat replied:

"These are wondrous things;

But verily, every man can attain them.

Consider the abilities of your own mind;

You were born about two hundred leagues from here

And can you not in your thought,

In an instant travel to your native place

And remember the details of your father's home?

See you not with your mind's eye the roots of the tree

Which is shaken by the wind without being overthrown?

Does not the collector of herbs see in his mental vision,

Whenever he pleases, any plant with its roots,

Its stems, its fruits, leaves,

And even the uses to which it can be applied?

Cannot the man who understands languages

Recall to his mind any word whenever he pleases,

Knowing its exact meaning and import?

How much more does the Tathagata understand the nature of things;

He looks into the hearts of men and reads their thoughts.

He knows the evolution of beings and foresees their ends."

Said the disciple:

"Then the Tathagata teaches

That man can attain through the Jhanas

The bliss of Abhijna."

¹Idhi-Vidha: 'high or celestial powers' such as walking on water and through walls.

And the Bhagavat asked in reply:

"Which are the Jhanas through which man reaches Abhijna?"

The disciple replied: "There are four Jhanas^{*}.

The first Jhana is seclusion in which one must free his mind from sensuality;

The second Jhana is a tranquility of mind full of joy and gladness;

The third Jhana is a taking delight in things spiritual;

The fourth Jhana is a state of perfect purity and peace

In which the mind is above all gladness and grief."

"Good, my son," enjoined the Bhagavat:

"Be sober and abandon wrong practices

Which serve only to cripple the mind."

Said the disciple: "Forbear with me, O Bhagavat,

For I have faith without understanding

And I am seeking the truth.

O Bhagavat, O Tathagata, my Lord and Master,

Teach me the Iddhipada[†]."

The Bhagavat said:

"There are four means by which Iddhi is acquired:

(1) Prevent bad qualities from arising.

(2) Put away bad qualities which have arisen.

(3) Produce goodness that does not yet exist.

(4) Increase goodness which already exists.

Search with sincerity, and persevere in the search.

In the end you will find the truth."

61 • The Teacher Unknown

And the Bhagavat said to Ananda:

"There are various kinds of assemblies, O Ananda;

Assemblies of nobles, of Brahmans,

Of householders, of bhikkhus and of other beings.

* **Jhana**: A type or aspect of meditation. It is a key concept in Hinduism and Buddhism. 'Zen' is an equivalent term in Japanese.

† **Iddhipada**: 'Path to Iddhi'.

When I used to enter an assembly,
I always became, before I seated myself,
In color like unto the color of my audience
And in voice like unto their voice.
I spoke unto them in their language
And then with religious discourse,
I instructed, quickened, and gladdened them.

My doctrine is like the ocean,
Having the same eight wonderful qualities.

"Both the ocean and my doctrine become gradually deeper.
Both preserve their identity under all changes.
Both cast out dead bodies upon the dry land.
As the great rivers, when falling into the main,
Lose their names and are thenceforth reckoned as the great ocean,
So all the castes, having renounced their lineage and entered the
Sangha,
Become brethren and are reckoned the sons of Sakyamuni.
The ocean is the goal of all streams and of the rain from the clouds,
Yet it is never overflowing and never emptied:
So the Dharma is embraced by millions of people,
Yet it neither increases nor decreases.
As the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt,
So my doctrine has only one flavor, the flavor of emancipation.
Both the ocean and the Dharma are full of gems and pearls and
jewels,
And both afford a dwelling-place for mighty beings.

"These are the eight wonderful qualities
In which my doctrine resembles the ocean.

"My doctrine is pure and it makes no discrimination
Between noble and ignoble, rich and poor.

"My doctrine is like unto water
Which cleanses all without distinction.

"My doctrine is like unto fire
Which consumes all things that exist
Between heaven and earth, great and small.

"My doctrine is like unto the heavens,

For there is room in it ample room for the reception of all,
For men and women, boys and girls, the powerful and the lowly.

"But when I spoke, they knew me not and would say,
'Who may be this who thus speaks, a man or a god?'
Then having instructed, quickened,
And gladdened them with religious discourse,
I would vanish away.
But they knew me not,
Even when I vanished away."

Parables and Stories

62 • Parables

And the Bhagavat thought:

"I have taught the truth which is excellent in the beginning,
Excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end;

It is glorious in its spirit and glorious in its letter.

But simple as it is, the people cannot understand it.

I must speak to them in their own language.

I must adapt my thoughts to their thoughts.

They are like unto children, and love to hear tales.

Therefore, I will tell them stories to explain the glory of the Dharma.

If they cannot grasp the truth in the abstract arguments by which I
have reached it,

They may nevertheless come to understand it, if it is illustrated in
parables."

63 • The Widow's two Mites and the Parable of the three Merchants

There was once a lone widow who was very poor,

And having gone to the mountain

She beheld hermits holding a religious assembly.

Then the woman was filled with joy, and uttering praises, said,

"It is well, holy priests!
But while others give precious things
Such as the ocean caves produce,
I have nothing to offer."
Having spoken thus
And having searched herself in vain for something to give,
She recollected that some time before
She had found in a dung heap two coppers,
So taking these she offered them forthwith
As a gift to the priesthood in charity.

The superior of the priests,
A saint who could read the hearts of men,
Disregarding the rich gifts of others
And seeing the deep faith dwelling in the heart of this poor widow,
And wishing the priesthood to esteem rightly her religious merit,
Burst forth with full voice in a canto.
He raised his right hand and said,
"Reverend priests attend!" and then he proceeded:

"The coppers of this poor widow
To all purpose are more worth
Than all the treasures of the oceans
And the wealth of the broad earth.

"As an act of pure devotion
She has done a pious deed;
She has attained salvation,
Being free from selfish greed."

The woman was mightily strengthened
In her mind by this thought, and said,
"It is even as the Teacher says:
What I have done is as much
As if a rich man were to give up all his wealth."

And the Teacher said:
"Doing good deeds is like hoarding up treasures,"
And he expounded this truth in a parable:

"Three merchants set out on their travels, each with his capital;
One of them gained much, the second returned with his capital,
And the third one came home after having lost his capital.

What is true in common life applies also to religion.

"The capital is the state a man has reached, the gain is heaven;
The loss of his capital means that a man will be born in a lower state,
As a denizen of hell or as an animal.
These are the courses that are upon to the sinner.

"He who brings back his capital, is like unto one who is born again as a man.

Those who through the exercise of various virtues become pious householders

Will be born again as men, for all beings will reap the fruit of their actions.

But he who increases his capital is like unto one who practices eminent virtues.

The virtuous, excellent man attains in heaven to the glorious state of the gods."

64 • The Man Born Blind

There was a man born blind, and he said:

"I do not believe in the world of light and appearance.

There are no colors, bright or somber.

There is no sun, no moon, no stars.

No one has witnessed these things."

His friends protest with him, but he clung to his opinion:

"What you say that you see," he objected, "are illusions.

If colors existed I should be able to touch them.

They have no substance and are not real.

Everything real has weight,

But I feel no weight where you see colors."

In those days there was a physician

Who was called to see the blind man.

He mixed four simples,

And when he applied them to the cataract of the blind man

The gray film melted, and his eyes acquired the faculty of sight.

The Tathagata is the physician,

The cataract is the illusion of the thought "I am,"

And the four simples are the four noble truths.

65 • The Lost Son

There was a householder's son who went away into a distant country,
And while the father accumulated immeasurable riches, the son
became miserably poor.

And the son while searching for food and clothing
Happened to come to the country in which his father lived.
And the father saw him in his wretchedness,
For he was ragged and brutalized by poverty,
And ordered some of his servants to call him.

When the son saw the place to which he was conducted, he thought,
"I must have evoked the suspicion of a powerful man,
And he will throw me into prison."
Full of apprehension he made his escape
Before he had seen his father.

Then the father sent messengers out after his son,
Who was caught and brought back in spite of his cries and
lamentations.
Thereupon the father ordered his servants to deal tenderly with his
son,
And he appointed a laborer of his son's rank and education
To employ the lad as a helpmate on the estate.
And the son was pleased with his new situation.

From the window of his palace the father watched the boy,
And when he saw that he was honest and industrious,
He promoted him higher and higher.

After some time, he summoned his son
And called together all his servants,
And made the secret known to them.
Then the poor man was exceedingly glad
He was full of joy at meeting his father.

Little by little must the minds of men
Be trained for higher truths.

66 • The Giddy Fish

There was a bhikkhu who had great difficulty
In keeping his senses and passions under control;
So, resolving to leave the Order,
He came to the Bhagavat
To ask him for a release from the vows.
And the Bhagavat said to the bhikkhu:

"Take heed, my son,
Lest you fall a prey to the passions of your misguided heart.
For I see that in former existences,
You have suffered much from the evil consequences of lust,
And unless you learn to conquer your sensual desire,
You will in this life be ruined through your folly.

"Listen to a story of another existence of your, as a fish.

"The fish could be seen swimming lustily in the river,
Playing with his mate.
She, moving in front, suddenly perceived the meshes of a net,
And slipping around escaped the danger;
But he, blinded by love, shot eagerly after her
And fell straight into the mouth of the net.
The fisherman pulled the net up, and the fish, who complained
bitterly of his sad fate, saying,
'This indeed is the bitter fruit of my folly,'
Would surely have died if the Bodhisattva had not chanced to come
by,
And, understanding the language of the fish, took compassion on him.
He bought the poor creature and said to him:
'My good fish, had I not caught sight of you this day,
You would have lost your life.
I shall save you,
Henceforth avoid the evil of lust.'
With these words he threw the fish into the water.

"Make the best of the time of grace
That is offered to you in your present existence,
And fear the dart of passion which,
If you guard not your senses,
Will lead you to destruction."

67 • The Cruel Crane Outwitted

A tailor who used to make robes for the brotherhood was used to cheat his customers,
And thus prided himself on being smarter than other men.
But once, on entering upon an important business transaction with a stranger,
He found his master in fraudulent practices, and suffered a heavy loss.

And the Bhagavat said:

"This is not an isolated incident in the greedy tailor's gate;
In other incarnations he suffered similar losses,
And by trying to fool others ultimately ruined himself.

"This same greedy character lived many generations ago as a crane near a pond,
And when the dry season set in he said to the fishes with a bland voice:
'Are you not anxious for your future welfare?
There is at present very little water and still less food in this pond.
What will you do should the whole pond become dry, in this drought."

"Yes, indeed' said the fishes, 'what should we do?'

"Replied the crane:

'I know a fine, large lake, which never becomes dry.
Would you not like me to carry you there in my beak?'
When the fishes began to distrust the honesty of the crane,
He proposed to have one of them sent over to the lake to see it;
And a big carp at last decided to take the risk for the sake of the others,
And the crane carried him to a beautiful lake and brought him back in safety.
Then all doubt vanished, and the fishes gained confidence in the crane,
And now the crane took them one by one out of the pond
And devoured them on a big varana-tree.

"There was also a lobster in the pond,
And when it listed the crane to eat him too, he said:
'I have taken all the fishes away and put them in a fine, large lake.
Come along. I shall take you, too!'

"But how will you hold me to carry me along?' asked the lobster.

"I shall take hold of you with my beak,' said the crane.

"You will let me fall if you carry me like that.
I will not go with you!' replied the lobster.

"You need not fear,' rejoined the crane;
'I shall hold you quite tight all the way.'

"Then the lobster said to himself:
'If this crane once gets hold of a fish, he will certainly never let him
go in a lake!
Now if he should really put me into the lake it would be splendid;
But if he does not, then I will cut his throat and kill him!'
So he said to the crane: 'Look here, friend,
You will not be able to hold me tight enough;
But we lobsters have a famous grip.
If you will let me catch hold of you round the neck with my claws,
I shall be glad to go with you.'

"The crane did not see that the lobster was trying to outwit him, and
agreed.
So the lobster caught hold of his neck with his claws as securely
As with a pair of blacksmith's pincers, and called out:
'Ready, ready, go!'

"The crane took him and showed him the lake,
And then turned off toward the varana-tree.
'My dear uncle!' cried the lobster, 'The lake lies that way,
But you are taking me this other way.'

"Answered the crane: "Think you so? Am I your dear uncle?
You mean me to understand, I suppose, that I am your slave,
Who has to lift you up and carry you about with him, where you
please!
Now cast your eye upon that heap of fish-bones at the root of that
distant varana-tree.
Just as I have eaten those fish, every one of them, just so I will devour
you also!"

"Ah! those fishes get eaten through their own stupidity,' answered the
lobster,

'But I am not going to let you kill me.
On the contrary, it is you that I am going to destroy.
For you, in your folly, have not seen that I have outwitted you.
If we die, we both die together;
For I will but off your head and cast it to the ground!'
So saying, he gave the crane's neck a pinch with his claws as with a
vise.

"Then gasping, and with tears trickling from his eyes,
And trembling with the fear of death,
The crane implored the lobster, saying:
'O, my Lord! indeed I did not intend to eat you.
Grant me my life!'

"Very well! fly down and put me into the lake," replied the lobster.

"And the crane turned round and stepped down into the lake,
To place the lobster on the mud at its edge.
Then the lobster cut the crane's neck through as clean
As one would cut a lotus-stalk with a hunting-knife,
And then entered the water!"

When the Teacher had finished this discourse, he added:
"Not now only was this man outwitted in this way,
But in other existences, too, by his own intrigues."

68 • Four Kinds of Merit

There was a rich man who used to invite
All the Brahmans of the neighborhood to his house,
And, giving them rich gifts, offered great sacrifices to the gods.

And the Bhagavat said:
"If a man each month repeat a thousand sacrifices
And give offerings without ceasing,
He is not equal to him who but one moment
Fixes his mind upon righteousness."

The world-honored Buddha continued:
"There are four kinds of offering:
First, when the gifts are large and the merit small;

Secondly, when the gifts are small and the merit small;
Thirdly, when the gifts are small and the merit large;
And fourthly, when the gifts are large and the merit is also large.

"The first is the cause of the deluded man
Who takes away life for the purpose of sacrificing to the gods,
Accompanied by carousing and feasting.
Here the gifts are great, but the merit is small indeed.

"The gifts are small and the merit is also small,
When from greed and an evil heart a man keeps to himself
A part of that which he intends to offer.

"The merit is great, however, while the gift is small,
When a man makes his offering from love
And with a desire to grow in wisdom and in kindness.

"Lastly, the gift is large and the merit is large, when a wealthy man,
In an unselfish spirit and with the wisdom of a Buddha,
Gives donations and founds institutions for the best of mankind
To enlighten the minds of his fellow-men and to administer unto
their needs."

69 • The Light of the World

There was a certain Brahman in Kosambi,
A wrangler and well versed in the Vedas.
As he found no one whom he regarded his equal in debate
He used to carry a lighted torch in his hand,
And when asked for the reason of his strange conduct, he replied:
"This world is so dark that I carry this torch
To light it up, as far as I can."

A samana sitting in the market-place heard these words and said:
"My friend, if your eyes are blind
To the sight of the omnipresent light of the day,
Do not call the world dark.
Your torch adds nothing to the glory of the sun
And your intention to illumine the minds of others
Is as futile as it is arrogant."

Whereupon the Brahman asked:

"Where is the sun of which you speak?"

And the samana replied:

"The wisdom of the Tathagata is the sun of the mind.

His radiance is glorious by day and night,

And he whose faith is strong will not lack light

On the path to Nirvana where he will inherit bliss everlasting."

70 • Luxurious Living

While the Buddha was preaching his doctrine

For the conversion of the world in the neighborhood of Savatthi,

A man of great wealth who suffered from many ailments

Came to him with clasped hands and said:

"World-honored Buddha,

Pardon me for my want of respect in not saluting you as I ought,

But I suffer greatly from obesity, excessive drowsiness, and other

complaints, so that I cannot move without pain."

The Tathagata, seeing the luxuries with which the man was surrounded asked him:

"Has you a desire to know the cause of your ailments?"

And when the wealthy man expressed his willingness to learn, the

Bhagavat said:

"There are five things which produce the condition of which you complain:

Opulent dinners, love of sleep, yearning after pleasure, thoughtlessness, and lack of occupation.

Exercise self-control at your meals, and take upon yourself

Some duties that will exercise your abilities

And make you useful to your fellow-men.

In following this advice you will prolong your life."

The rich man remembered the words of the Buddha

And after some time having recovered his lightness

And body and youthful buoyancy

Returned to the World-honored One and,

Coming afoot without horses and attendants, said to him:

"Master, you have cured my bodily ailments;

I come now to seek enlightenment of my mind."

And the Bhagavat said:

"The worldling nourishes his body,
But the wise man nourishes his mind.
He who indulges in the satisfaction of his appetites works his own
destruction;
But he who walks in the path will have both the salvation from evil
and a prolongation of life."

71 • The Communication of Bliss

Annabhara, the slave of Sumana,
Having just cut the grass on the meadow,
Saw a samana with his bowl begging for food.
Throwing down his bundle of grass he ran into the house
And returned with the rice that had been provided for his own food.

The samana ate the rice
And gladdened him with words of religious comfort.

The daughter of Sumana having observed the scene from a window
Called out: "Good! Annabhara, good! Very good!"

Sumana hearing these words inquired what she meant,
And on being informed about Annabhara's devotion
And the words of comfort he had received from the samana,
Went to his slave and offered him money
To divide the bliss of his offering.

"My lord," said Annabhara,
"Let me first ask the venerable man."
And approaching the samana, he said:
"My master has asked me to share with him the bliss of the offering
I made you of my allowance of rice.
Is it right that I should divide it with him?"

The samana replied in a parable. He said:
"In a village of one hundred houses a single light was burning.
Then a neighbor came with his lamp and lit it;
And in this same way the light was communicated from house to
house

And the brightness in the village was increased.
Thus the light of religion may be diffused
Without stinting him who communicates it.
Let the bliss of your offering also be diffused.
Divide it."

Annabhara returned to his master's house and said to him:
"I present you, my lord,
With a share of the bliss of my offering.
Consent to accept it."

Sumana accepted it and offered his slave a sum of money,
But Annabhara replied:
"Not so, my lord,
If I accept your money it would appear
As if I sold you my share.
Bliss cannot be sold;
I beg you accept it as a gift."

The master replied:
"Brother Annabhara, from this day forth you shall be free.
Live with me as my friend and accept this present as a token of my
respect."

72 • The Listless Fool

There was a rich Brahman, well advanced in years,
Who, unmindful of the impermanence of earthly things
And anticipating a long life, had built himself a large house.

The Buddha wondered why a man so near to death
Had built a mansion with so many apartments,
And he sent Ananda to the rich Brahman
To preach to him the four noble truths
And the eightfold path of enlightening.

The Brahman showed Ananda his house
And explained to him the purpose of its numerous chambers,
But to the instruction of the Buddha's teachings he gave no heed.

Ananda said:

"It is the habit of fools to say,
'I have children and wealth.'
He who says so is not even master of himself;
How can he claim possession of children, riches, and servants?
Many are the anxieties of the worldly,
But they know nothing of the changes of the future."

Scarcely had Ananda left,
When the old man was stricken with apoplexy and fell dead.
The Buddha said, for the instruction of those who are ready to learn:
"A fool, though he lives in the company of the wise,
Understands nothing of the true doctrine,
As a spoon tastes not the flavor of the soup.
He thinks of himself only,
And unmindful of the advice of good counselors
Is unable to deliver himself."

73 • Rescue in the Desert

There was a disciple of the Bhagavat,
Full of energy and zeal for the truth,
Who, living under a vow to complete a meditation in solitude,
Flagged in a moment of weakness. He said to himself:
"The Teacher said there are several kinds of men;
I must belong to the lowest class
And fear that in this birth there will
Be neither path nor fruit for me.
What is the use of a forest life
If I cannot by my constant endeavor
Attain the insight of meditation
To which I have devoted myself?"
And he left the solitude
And returned to the Jetavana.

When the brethren saw him they said to him:
"You have done wrong, O brother, after taking a vow,
To give up the attempt of carrying it out;"
And they took him to the Master.

When the Bhagavat saw them he said:
"I see, O mendicants,

That you have brought this brother here against his will.
What has he done?"

"Lord, this brother, having taken the vows of so sanctifying a faith,
Has abandoned the endeavor to accomplish the aim of a member of
the order, and has come back to us."

Then the Teacher said to him:

"Is it true that you have given up trying?"

"It is true, O Bhagavat!" was the reply.

The Master said:

"This present life of yours is a time of grace.

If you fail now to reach the happy state

You will have to suffer remorse in future existences.

How is it, brother, that you have proved so irresolute?

Why, in former states of existence you were full of determination.

By your energy alone the men and bullocks of five hundred wagons

Obtained water in the sandy desert, and were saved.

How is it that you now give up?"

By these few words that brother was reestablished in his resolution.

But the others asked the Bhagavat, saying:

"Lord! Tell us how this was."

"Listen, then, O mendicants!" said the Bhagavat;

And having thus excited their attention,

He made manifest a thing concealed by change of birth.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadata was reigning in Kasi,

The Bodhisattva was born in a merchant's family;

And when he grew up, he went about trading with five hundred carts:

One day he arrived at a sandy desert many leagues across.

The sand in the desert was so fine

That when taken in the closed fist

It could not be kept in the hand.

After the sun had risen

It became as hot as a mass of burning embers,

So that no man could walk on it.

Those, therefore, who had to travel over it

Took wood, and water, and oil, and rice in their carts,

And traveled during the night.
And at daybreak they formed an encampment
And spread an awning over it,
And, taking their meals early,
They passed the day lying in the shade.
At sunset they supped,
And when the ground had become cool
They yoked their oxen and went on.
The traveling was like a voyage over the sea;
A desert-pilot had to be chosen,
And he brought the caravan safe to the other side
By his knowledge of the stars.

Thus the merchant of our story traversed the desert.
And when he had passed over fifty-nine leagues he thought,
"Now, in one more night we shall get out of the sand,"
And after supper he directed the wagons to be yoked, and so set out.
The pilot had cushions arranged on the foremost cart
And lay down, looking at the stars and directing the men where to
drive.
But worn out by want of rest during the long march, he fell asleep,
And did not perceive that the oxen had turned around
And taken the same road by which they had come.

The oxen went on the whole night through.
Towards dawn the pilot woke up,
And, observing the stars, called out:
"Stop the wagons, stop the wagons!"
The day broke just as they stopped
And were drawing up the carts in a line.
Then the men cried out:
'Why this is the very encampment we left yesterday!
We have but little wood left and our water is all gone!
We are lost!'
And unyoking the oxen and spreading the canopy over their heads,
They lay down in depression, each one under his wagon.
But the Bodhisattva said to himself,
"If I lose heart, all these will perish,"
And walked about while the morning was yet cool.
On seeing a tuft of kusa-grass, he thought:
"This could have grown only by soaking up some water
Which must be beneath it."

And he made them bring a spade and dig in that spot.
And they dug sixty cubits deep.
And when they had got thus far,
The spade of the diggers struck on the rock;
And as soon as it struck, they all gave up in despair.
But the Bodhisattva thought,
"There must be water under that rock,"
And descending into the well he got upon the stone,
And stooping down applied his ear to it and tested the sound of it.
He heard the sound of water gurgling beneath,
And when he got out he called his page.
"My lad, if you give up now, we shall all be lost.
Do not lose heart. Take this iron hammer,
And go down into the pit, and give the rock a good blow."

The lad obeyed, and though they all stood by in despair,
He went down full of determination and struck at the stone.
The rock split in two and fell below,
So that it no longer blocked the stream,
And water rose to fill its depth
From the bottom to the brim of the well was equal to the height of a
palm-tree.
And they all drunk of the water, and bathed in it.
Then they cooked rice and ate it, and fed their oxen with it.
And when the sun set, they put a flag in the well, and went to the
place appointed.
There they sold their merchandise at a good profit and returned to
their home,
And when they died they passed away according to their deeds.
And the Bodhisattva gave gifts and did other virtuous acts,
And he also passed away according to his deeds.

After the Teacher had told the story
He formed the connection by saying in conclusion,
"The caravan leader was the Bodhisattva, the future Buddha;
The page who at that time despaired not, but broke the stone,
And gave water to the multitude, was the brother without
perseverance;
And the other men were attendants on the Buddha."

74 • The Sower

Bharadvaja, a wealthy Brahman farmer,
Was celebrating his harvest-thanksgiving
When the Bhagavat came with his alms-bowl,
Begging for food.

Some of the people paid him reverence,
But the Brahman was angry and said:
"O samana, it would be more fitting
For you to go to work than to beg.
I plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, I eat.
If you did likewise,
You, too, would have something to eat."

The Tathagata answered him and said:
"O Brahman, I too, plow and sow,
And having plowed and sown, I eat."

"Do you profess to be a farmer?" replied the Brahman.
"Where, then, are your bullocks? Where is the seed and the plough?"

The Bhagavat said:
"Faith is the seed I sow;
Good works are the rain that fertilizes it;
Wisdom and modesty are the plough;
My mind is the guiding-rein;
I lay hold of the handle of the law;
Earnestness is the goad I use,
And exertion is my draught-ox.
This plowing is plowed to destroy the weeds of illusion.
The harvest it yields is the immortal fruit of Nirvana,
And thus all sorrow ends."

Then the Brahman poured rice-milk into a golden bowl
And offered it to the Bhagavat, saying:
"Let the Teacher of mankind partake of the rice-milk,
For the venerable Gautama plows a plowing
That bears the fruit of immortality."

75 • The Outcast

When Bhagavat dwelt at Savatthi in the Jetavana,
He went out with his alms-bowl to beg for food
And approached the house of a Brahman priest
While the fire of an offering was blazing upon the altar.
And the priest said:
"Stay there, O shaveling;
Stay there, O wretched samana;
You are an outcast."

The Bhagavat replied: "Who is an outcast?"

"An outcast is the man who is angry and bears hatred;
The man who is wicked and insincere,
He who embraces error and is full of deceit.

"Whoever is a provoker and is avaricious,
Has evil desires, is envious, wicked, shameless,
And without fear to commit wrong, let him be known as an outcast.

"Not by birth does one become an outcast,
Not by birth does one become a Brahman;
By deeds one becomes an outcast,
By deeds one becomes a Brahman."

76 • The Woman at the Well

Ananda, the favorite disciple of the Buddha,
Having been sent by the Lord on a mission,
Passed by a well near a village,
And seeing Pakati, a girl of the Matanga^{*} caste,
He asked her for water to drink.

Pakati said:
"O Brahman, I am too humble and mean
To give you water to drink,
Do not ask any service of me
Lest your holiness be contaminated,

^{*} **Matanga:** A lower caste in the India caste system. Literally of 'low birth'.

For I am of low caste."

And Ananda replied:

"I ask not for caste but for water;"

And the Matanga's girl's heart leaped joyfully

And she gave Ananda to drink.

Ananda thanked her and went away;

But she followed him at a distance.

Having heard that Ananda was a disciple of Gautama Sakyamuni,

The girl resort to the Bhagavat:

"O Lord help me, and let me live in the place

Where your disciple Ananda dwells,

So that I may see him and minister unto him,

For I love Ananda."

And the Bhagavat understood

The emotions of her heart and he said:

"Pakati, your heart is full of love,

But you understand not your own sentiments.

It is not Ananda that you love, but his kindness.

Accept, then, the kindness you have seen him practice unto you,

And in the humility of your station practice it unto others.

"Verily there is great merit in the generosity of a king

When he ignores the wrongs which he suffers

And cherishes kindness and good-will to all mankind.

He will cease to hate his oppressors,

And even when powerless to resist their usurpation

Will with compassion pity their arrogant behavior.

"Blessed are you, Pakati, or though you are a Matanga

You will be a model for noblemen and noblewomen.

You are of low caste, but Brahmans may learn a lesson from you.

Swerve not from the path of justice and righteousness

And you will outshine the royal glory of queens on the throne."

77 • The Peacemaker

It is reported that two kingdoms were on the verge of war

For the possession of a certain embankment
Which was disputed by them .

And the Buddha seeing the kings and their armies ready to fight,
Requested them to tell him the cause of their quarrels.
Having heard the complaints on both sides, he said:

"I understand that the embankment has value for some of your
people;
Has it any intrinsic value aside from its service to your men?"

"It has no intrinsic value whatever," was the reply.
The Tathagata continued:
"Now when you go to battle is it not sure
That many of your men will be slain
And that you yourselves, O kings,
Are liable to lose your lives?"

And they said: "Verily, it is sure that many will be slain
And our own lives be jeopardized."

"The blood of men, however," said Buddha,
"Has it less intrinsic value than a mound of earth?"

"No," the kings said,
"The lives of men, and above all the lives of kings, are priceless."

Then the Tathagata concluded:
"Are you going to stake that which is priceless
Against that which has no intrinsic value whatever?"

The wrath of the two monarchs abated,
And they came to a peaceable agreement.

78 • The Hungry Dog

There was a great king who oppressed his people

^{*} The Koliyan and the Sakyan Kingdoms were disputing the water of the Rohini river, essential to their growing irrigation needs, that was very low in the summer despite the construction by the two kingdoms of a common dam.

And was hated by his subjects;
Yet when the Tathagata came into his kingdom,
The king desired much to see him.
So he went to the place where the Bhagavat stayed and asked:
"O Sakyamuni, can you teach a lesson to the king
That will divert his mind and benefit him at the same time?"

And the Bhagavat said:
"I shall tell you the parable of the hungry dog:

"There was a wicked tyrant;
And the god Indra, assuming the shape of a hunter,
Came down upon earth with his charioteer Matali,
The latter appearing as a dog of enormous size.
Hunter and dog entered the palace, and the dog howled so woefully
That the royal buildings shook by the sound to their very foundations.
The tyrant had the awe-inspiring hunter brought before his throne
And inquired after the cause of the terrible bark.
The hunter said, 'The dog is hungry,'
Whereupon the frightened king ordered food for him.
All the food prepared at the royal banquet
Disappeared rapidly in the dog's jaws,
And still he howled with portentous significance.
More food was sent for, and all the royal storehouses were emptied,
but in vain.
Then the tyrant grew desperate and asked:
'Will nothing satisfy the cravings of that woeful beast?'
'Nothing,' replied the hunter,
'Nothing except perhaps the flesh of all his enemies.'
'And who are his enemies?' anxiously asked the tyrant.
The hunter replied:
'The dog will howl as long as there are people hungry in the kingdom,
And his enemies are those who practice injustice and oppress the
poor.'
The oppressor of the people, remembering his evil deeds,
Was seized with remorse, and for the first time in his life
He began to listen to the teachings of righteousness."

Having ended his story, the Bhagavat addressed the king,
who had turned pale, and said to him:

"The Tathagata can quicken the spiritual ears of the powerful,
And when you, great king, hear the dog bark,

Think of the teachings of the Buddha,
And may you still learn to pacify the monster."

79 • The Despot

King Brahmadata happened to see a beautiful woman, the wife of a
Brahman merchant,
And, imagining a passion for her ordered a precious jewel
Secretly to be dropped into the merchant's carriage.
The jewel was missed, searched for, and found.
The merchant was arrested on the charge of stealing,
And the king pretended to listen with great attention to the defense,
And with seeming regret ordered the merchant to be executed,
While his wife was consigned to the royal harem.

Brahmadatta attended the execution in person,
For such sights used to give him pleasure,
But when the doomed man looked with deep compassion at his
infamous judge,
A flash of the Buddha's wisdom lit up the king's passion-clouded
mind;
And while the executioner raised the sword for the final stroke,
Brahmadatta felt the effect in his own mind,
And he imagined he saw himself on the block.
"Hold, executioner!" shouted Brahmadata,
"It is the king whom you slay!"
But it was too late!
The executioner had done the bloody deed.

The king fell back in a faint,
And when he awoke a change had come over him.
He had ceased to be the cruel despot
And henceforth led a life of holiness and rectitude.
The people said that the character of the Brahman
Had been impressed into his mind.

O you who commit murders and robberies!
The veil of self-delusion covers your eyes.
If you could see things as they are, not as they appear,
You would no longer inflict injuries and pain on your own selves.
You see not that you will have to compensate for your evil deeds,

For what you sow that you will reap.

80 • Vasavadatta

There was a courtesan in Mathura named Vasavadatta.
She happened to see Upagutta, one of Buddha's disciples,
A tall and beautiful youth, and fell desperately in love with him.
Vasavadatta sent an invitation to the young man, but he replied:
"The time has not yet arrived when Upagutta will visit Vasavadatta."

The courtesan was astonished at the reply,
And she sent again for him, saying:
"Vasavadatta desires love, not gold, from Upagutta."
But Upagutta made the same enigmatic reply and did not come.

A few months later Vasavadatta had a love-intrigue with the chief of
the artisans,
And at that time a wealthy merchant came to Mathura, who fell in
love with Vasavadatta.
Seeing his wealth, and fearing the jealousy of her other lover,
She planned the death of the chief of the artisans,
And concealed his body under a dunghill.

When the chief of the artisans had disappeared,
His relatives and friends searched for him and found his body.
Vasavadatta, however, was tried by a judge,
And condemned to have her ears and nose,
Her hands and feet cut off,
And flung into a graveyard.

Vasavadatta had been a passionate girl,
But kind to her servants,
And one of her maids followed her,
And out of love for her former mistress
Ministered unto her in her agonies,
And chased away the crows.

Now the time had arrived when Upagutta decided to visit Vasavadatta.

When he came, the poor woman ordered her maid to collect
And hide under a cloth her severed limbs;

And he greeted her kindly, but she said with petulance:
"Once this body was fragrant like the lotus and I offered you my love.
In those days I was covered with pearls and fine muslin.
Now I am mangled by the executioner and covered with filth and
blood."

"Sister," said the young man,
"It is not for my pleasure that I approach you.
It is to restore to you a nobler beauty
Than the charms which you have lost."

"I have seen with mine eyes the Tathagata walking upon earth
And teaching men his wonderful doctrine.
But you would not have listened to the words of righteousness
While surrounded with temptations,
While under the spell of passion and yearning for worldly pleasures.
You would not have listened to the teachings of the Tathagata,
For your heart was perverse, and you did see your trust on the sham of
your transient charms."

"The charms of a lovely form are treacherous,
And quickly lead into temptations,
Which have proved too strong for you.
But there is a beauty which will not fade,
And if you will but listen
To the doctrine of our Lord, the Buddha,
You will find that peace which you would have not found
in the restless world of sinful pleasures."

Vasavadatta became calm and a spiritual happiness
soothed the tortures of her bodily pain;
For where there is much suffering there is also great bliss.

Having taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha,
She died in pious submission to the punishment of her crime.

81 • The Marriage Feast in Jambunada

There was a man in Jambunada who was to be married the next day,
And he thought, "Would that the Buddha might be present at the
wedding."

And the Bhagavat passed by his house and met him,
And when he read the silent wish in the heart of the bridegroom,
He consented to enter.

When the Holy One appeared with the entourage of his many
bhikkhus,
The host whose means were limited received them as best he could,
saying: "Eat, my Lord, and all your congregation, according to your
desire."

While the holy men ate,
The meats and drinks remained undiminished,
And the host, thought to himself:
"How wonderful is this!
I should have had plenty for all my relatives and friends.
Would that I had invited them all."

When this thought was in the host's mind,
All his relatives and friends entered the house;
And although the hall in the house was small
There was room in it for all of them.
They sat down at the table and ate,
And there was more than enough for all of them.

The Bhagavat was pleased to see so many guests full of good cheer
And he quickened them and gladdened them with words of truth,
Proclaiming the bliss of righteousness:

"The greatest happiness which a mortal man can imagine
Is the bond of marriage that ties together two loving hearts.
But there is a greater happiness still: it is the embrace of truth.
Death will separate husband and wife,
But death will never affect him who has espoused the truth.

"Therefore be married unto the truth
And live with the truth in holy wedlock.
The husband who loves his wife
And desires for a union that shall be everlasting
Must be faithful to her so as to be like truth itself,
And she will rely upon him and revere him and minister unto him.
And the wife who loves her husband
And desires a union that shall be everlasting
Must be faithful to him so as to be like truth itself;

And he will place his trust in her, he will provide for her.
Verily, I say unto you,
Their children will become like unto their parents
And will bear witness to their happiness.

"Let no man be single, let every one be wedded
In holy love to the truth.
And when Mara, the destroyer,
Comes to separate the visible forms of your being,
You will continue to live in the truth,
And you will partake of the life everlasting,
For the truth is immortal."

There was no one among the guests
But was strengthened in his spiritual life,
And recognized the sweetness of a life of righteousness;
And they took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

82 • A Party in Search of a Thief

Having sent out his disciples,
The Bhagavat himself wandered from place to place
Until he reached Uruvela.

On his way he sat down in a grove to rest,
And it happened that in that same grove
There was a party of thirty friends
Who were enjoying themselves with their wives;
And while they were sporting,
Some of their goods were stolen.

Then the whole party went in search of the thief and,
Meeting the Bhagavat sitting under a tree, saluted him and said:
"Please, Lord, did you see the thief pass by with our goods?"

And the Bhagavat said:
"Which is better for you,
That you go in search for the thief or for yourselves?"
And the youths cried:
"In search for ourselves!"

"Well, then," said the Bhagavat,
"Sit down and I will preach the truth to you."

And the whole party sat down
And they listened eagerly to the words of the Bhagavat.
Having grasped the truth, they praised the doctrine
And took refuge in the Buddha.

83 • In The Realm of Yamaraja

There was a Brahman, a religious man
And fond in his affections but without deep wisdom.
He had a son of great promise, who, when seven years old,
Was struck with a fatal disease and died.
The unfortunate father was unable to control himself;
He threw himself upon the corpse and lay there as one dead.

The relatives came and buried the dead child
And when the father came to himself,
He was so immoderate in his grief
That he behaved like an insane person.
He no longer gave way to tears but wandered about
Asking for the residence of Yamaraja*, the king of death,
Humbly to beg of him that his child
Might be allowed to return to life.

Having arrived at a great Brahman temple
The sad father went through certain religious rites and fell asleep.
While wandering on in his dream he came to a deep mountain pass
Where he met a number of samanas who had acquired supreme
wisdom.

"Kind sirs," he said,
"Can you tell me where Yamaraja lives?" And they asked him,
"Good friend, why would you know?"
Whereupon he told them his sad story and explained his intentions.
Pitying his self-delusion, the samanas said:
"No mortal man can reach the place where Yama reigns,
But some four hundred miles westward

* **Yamaraja:** Also Yama, a Vedic deity, 'the judge of the dead'.

Lies a great city in which many good spirits live;
Every eighth day of the month Yama visits the place,
And there you may see him
Who is the King of Death
And ask him for a boon."

The Brahman rejoicing at the news went to the city
And found it as the samanas had told him.
He was admitted to the dread presence of Yama, the King of Death,
Who, on hearing his request, said:
"Your son now lives in the eastern garden
Where he is amusing himself;
Go there and ask him to follow you."

Said the happy father:
"How does it happen that my son,
Without having performed one good work,
Is now living in paradise?"
Yamaraja replied:
"He has obtained celestial happiness not for performing good works,
But because he died in faith and in love
To the Lord and Master, the most glorious Buddha.
The Buddha says:
'The heart of love and faith spreads as it were
a beneficent shade from the world of men to the world of gods.'
This glorious utterance is like the stamp of a king's seal upon a royal
edict."

The happy father hastened to the place
And saw his beloved child playing with other children,
All transfigured by the peace of the blissful existence of a heavenly
life.
He ran up to his boy and cried with tears running down his cheeks:
"My son, my son, do you not remember me,
Your father who watched over you with loving care
And tended you in your sickness?
Return home with me to the land of the living."
But the boy, while struggling to go back to his playmates,
Upbraided him for using such strange expressions as father and son.
"In my present state," he said, "I know no such words,
for I am free from delusion."

On this, the Brahman departed, and when he woke from his dream

He reminded himself of the Blessed Master of mankind,
The great Buddha, and resolved to go to him,
Lay bare his grief, and seek consolation.

Having arrived at the Jetavana, the Brahman told his story
And how his boy had refused to recognize him
And to go home with him.

And the World-honored One said:

"Truly you are deluded.

When man dies the body is dissolved into its elements,
but the spirit is not buried.

It leads a higher mode of life in which all the relative terms
Of father, son, wife, mother, are at an end,
Just as a guest who leaves his lodging has done with it,
As though it were a thing of the past.

Men concern themselves most about that which passes away;
But the end of life quickly comes as a burning torrent
Sweeping away the transient in a moment.

They are like a blind man set to look after a burning lamp.

A wise man, understanding the transience of worldly relations,
Destroys the cause of grief, and escapes from the seething whirlpool of
sorrow.

Religious wisdom lifts a man above the pleasures and pains of the
world and gives him peace everlasting."

The Brahman asked the permission of the Bhagavat
To enter the community of his bhikkhus,
So as to acquire that heavenly wisdom
Which alone can give comfort to an afflicted heart.

84 • The Mustard Seed

There was a rich man who found his gold suddenly transformed into
ashes;

And he took to his bed and refused all food.

A friend, hearing of his sickness,

Visited the rich man and learned the cause of his grief.

And the friend said:

"You did not make good use of your wealth.

When you did hoard it up it was not better than ashes.

Now heed my advice. Spread mats in the bazaar;
Pile up these ashes, and pretend to trade with them."

The rich man did as his friend had told him,
And when his neighbors asked him,
"Why sell you ashes?" he said:
"I offer my goods for sale."

After some time a young girl, named Kisa Gotami,
An orphan and very poor, passed by,
And seeing the rich man in the bazaar, said:
"My lord, why you pile up gold and silver for sale."

And the rich man said:
"Will you please hand me that gold and silver?"
And Kisa Gotami took up a handful of ashes,
And lo! they changed back into gold.

Considering that Kisa Gotami had the mental eye of spiritual
knowledge
And saw the real worth of things,
The rich man gave her in marriage to his son, and he said:
"With many, gold is no better than ashes,
But with Kisa Gotami ashes become pure gold."

And Kisa Gotami had an only son, and he died.
In her grief she carried the dead child to all her neighbors,
Asking them for medicine, and the people said:
"She has lost her senses. The boy is dead."

At length Kisa Gotami met a man who replied to her request:
"I cannot give you medicine for your child,
But I know a physician who can."

And the girl said: "Please tell me, sir; who is it?"
And the man replied: "Go to Sakyamuni, the Buddha".

Kisa Gotami resort to the Buddha and cried:
"Lord and Master, give me medicine that will cure my boy."

The Buddha answered:
"I want a handful of mustard seed."
And when the girl in her joy promised to procure it, the Buddha

added:

"The mustard seed must be taken from a house
Where no one has lost a child, husband, parent, or friend."

Poor Kisa Gotami now went from house to house,
And the people pitied her and said:

"Here is mustard seed; take it!"

But when she asked,

"Did a son or daughter, a father or mother, die in your family?"

They answered her:

"Alas! the living are few, but the dead are many.

Do not remind us of our deepest grief."

And there was no house where some beloved one had not died in it.

Kisa Gotami became weary and hopeless, and sat down at the
wayside,

Watching the lights of the city, as they flickered up and were
extinguished again.

At last the darkness of the night reigned everywhere.

And she considered the fate of men,

That their lives flicker up and are extinguished.

And she thought to herself:

"How selfish am I in my grief!

Death is common to all;

Yet in this valley of desolation there is a path

That leads him to immortality who has surrendered all selfishness."

Putting away the selfishness of her affection for her child,

Kisa Gotami had the dead boy buried in the forest.

Returning to the Buddha, she took refuge in him

And found comfort in the Dharma,

Which is a balm that will soothe

All the pains of our troubled hearts.

The Buddha said:

"The life of mortals in this world

Is troubled and brief and combined with pain.

For there is not any means by which those

That have been born can avoid dying;

After reaching old age there is death; of such a nature are living
beings.

"As ripe fruits are early in danger of falling,
So mortals when born are always in danger of death.

"As all earthen vessels made by the potter end in being broken,
So is the life of mortals.

"Both young and adult,
Both those who are fools
And those who are wise,
All fall into the power of death;
All are subject to death.

"Of those who, overcome by death, depart from life,
A father cannot save his son, nor kinsmen their relations.

"Mark! while relatives are looking on and lamenting deeply,
One by one mortals are carried off,
Like an ox that is led to the slaughter.

"So the world is afflicted with death and decay,
Therefore the wise do not grieve,
Knowing the terms of the world.

"In whatever manner people think a thing will come to pass,
It is often different when it happens,
And great is the disappointment;
See, such are the terms of the world.

"Not from weeping nor from grieving will any one obtain peace of
mind;
On the contrary, his pain will be the greater and his body will suffer.
He will make himself sick and pale,
Yet the dead are not saved by his lamentation.

"People pass away,
And their fate after death
Will be according to their deeds.

"If a man live a hundred years, or even more,
He will at last be separated from the company of his relatives,
And leave the life of this world.

"He who seeks peace

Should draw out the arrow of lamentation, and complaint, and grief.

"He who has drawn out the arrow
And has become serene obtain peace of mind;
He who has overcome all sorrow
Will become free from sorrow, and be blessed."

85 • Following the Master Over the Stream

South of Savatthi there is a great river^{*},
On the banks of which lay a hamlet of five hundred houses.
Thinking of the salvation of the people,
The World-honored One resolved to go to the village and preach the
doctrine.

Having come to the riverside he sat down beneath a tree,
And the villagers seeing the glory of his appearance approached him
with reverence;
But when he began to preach, they believed him not.

When the world-honored Buddha had left Savatthi
Sariputta felt a desire to see the Lord and to hear him preach.
Coming to the river where the water was deep and the current strong,
He said to himself:
"This stream shall not prevent me.
I shall go and see the Bhagavat,"
And he stepped upon the water
Which was as firm under his feet as a slab of granite.

When he arrived at a place in the middle of the stream where the
waves were high,
Sariputta's heart gave way, and he began to sink.
But rousing his faith and renewing his mental effort,
He proceeded as before and reached the other bank.

The people of the village were astonished to see Sariputta,
And they asked how he could cross the stream
Where there was neither a bridge nor a ferry.

And Sariputta replied:

^{*} Savatthi was located on the banks of the river Aciravati now called Rapti (Nepal).

"I lived in ignorance until I heard the voice of the Buddha.
As I was anxious to hear the doctrine of salvation,
I crossed the river and I walked over its troubled waters because I had
faith.
Faith, nothing else, enabled me to do so,
And now I am here in the bliss of the Master's presence."

The World-honored One added:
"Sariputta, you have spoken well.
Faith like your alone can save the world from the yawning gulf of
reincarnation and enable men to walk dry shod to the other shore."

And the Bhagavat urged to the villagers the necessity
Of ever advancing in the conquest of sorrow
And of casting off all shackles
So as to cross the river of worldliness
And attain deliverance from death.

Hearing the words of the Tathagata,
The villagers were filled with joy
And believing in the doctrines of the Bhagavat
Embraced the five rules and took refuge in his name.

86 • The Sick Bhikkhu

An old bhikkhu of a ill-nature
Was afflicted with a loathsome disease
The sight and smell of which was so nauseating
That no one would come near him or help him in his distress.
And it happened that the World-honored One
Came to the vihara in which the unfortunate man lay;
Hearing of the case he ordered warm water to be prepared
And went to the sick-room to administer unto the sores of the patient
with his own hand, saying to his disciples:

"The Tathagata has come into the world to assist the poor,
To help the unprotected, to nourish those in bodily affliction,

To give sight to the blind and enlighten the minds of the deluded,
To stand up for the rights of orphans as well as the aged,
And in so doing to set an example to others.

This is the consummation of his work,
And thus he attains the great goal of life
As the rivers that lose themselves in the ocean."

The World-honored One administered unto the sick bhikkhu daily
So long as he stayed in that place.
And the governor of the city came to the Buddha to do him
reverence,
And having heard of the service which the Lord did in the vihara
Asked the Bhagavat about the previous existence of the sick monk,
And the Buddha said:

"In days gone by there was a wicked king
Who used to extort from his subjects all he could get;
And he ordered one of his officers to lay the lash on a man of
eminence.
The officer little thinking of the pain he inflicted upon others,
obeyed;
But when the victim of the king's wrath begged for mercy,
He felt compassion and laid the whip lightly upon him.
Now the king was reborn as Devadatta,
Who was abandoned by all his followers,
Because they were no longer willing to stand his severity
And he died miserable and full of penitence.
The officer is the sick bhikkhu,
Who having often given offense to his brethren in the vihara
Was left without assistance in his distress.
The eminent man, however, who was unjustly beaten
And begged for mercy was the Bodhisattva;
He has been reborn as the Tathagata.
It is now the fate of the Tathagata to help the wretched officer
As he had mercy on him."

And the World-honored One repeated these lines:
"He who inflicts pain on the gentle,
Or falsely accuses the innocent,
Will inherit one of the ten great calamities.
But he who has learned to suffer with patience will be purified
And will be the chosen instrument for the alleviation of suffering."

The diseased bhikkhu on hearing these words turned to the Buddha,
Confessed his ill-natured temper and repented,
And with a heart cleansed from error did reverence unto the Master.

87 • The Patient Elephant

While the Bhagavat was residing in the Jetavana,
There was a householder living in Savatthi
Known to all his neighbors as patient and kind,
But his relatives were wicked and conceived a plot to rob him.
One day they came to the householder
And often worrying him with all kinds of threats
Took away a goodly portion of his property.
He did not go to court, nor did he complain,
But tolerated with great forbearance the wrongs he suffered.

The neighbors wondered and began to talk about it,
And rumors of the affair reached the ears of the brethren in Jetavana.
While the brethren discussed the occurrence in the assembly hall,
The Bhagavat entered and asked
"What was the topic of your conversation?"
And they told him.

Said the Bhagavat:
"The time will come when the wicked relatives will find their
punishment.
O brethren, this is not the first time that this occurrence took place;
It has happened before,"
And he told them a world-old tale.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadata was king of Benares,
The Bodhisattva was born in the Himalaya region as an elephant.
He grew up strong and big, and ranged the hills and mountains,
The peaks and caves of the tortuous woods in the valleys.
Once as he went he saw a pleasant tree, and took his food, standing
under it.

Then some impertinent monkeys came down out of the tree,
And jumping on the elephant's back, insulted and tormented him
greatly;
They took hold of his tusks, pulled his tail and diverted themselves,
Thereby causing him much annoyance.
The Bodhisattva, being full of patience, kindness and mercy,
Took no notice at all of their misconduct
Which the monkeys repeated again and again.

One day the spirit that lived in the tree,

Standing upon the tree-trunk, addressed the elephant saying,
"My lord elephant, why do you put up with the impertinence of these
bad monkeys?"

And he asked the question in a couplet as follows:

"Why do you patiently endure each freak
These mischievous and selfish monkeys wreak?"

The Bodhisattva, on hearing this, replied,
"If, Tree-sprite, I cannot endure these monkeys' ill treatment
without abusing their birth, lineage, and persons,
How can I walk in the eightfold noble path?
But these monkeys will do the same to others thinking them to be like
me.

If they do it to any rogue elephant, he will punish them indeed,
And I shall be delivered both from their annoyance
And the guilt of having done harm to others."

Saying this he repeated another stanza:

"If they will treat another one like me,
He will destroy them; and I shall be free."

A few days later, the Bodhisattva went elsewhere,
And another elephant, a savage beast, came and stood in his place.
The wicked monkeys thinking him to be like the old one,
Climbed upon his back and did as before.
The rogue elephant seized the monkeys with his trunk,
Threw them upon the ground, gored them with his trunk
And trampled them to mincemeat under his feet.

When the Master had ended his teaching,
He declared the truths, and identified the births, saying:
"At that time the mischievous monkeys
Were the wicked relatives of the good man,
The rogue elephant was the one who will punish them,
But the virtuous noble elephant
Was the Tathagata himself in a former incarnation."

After this discourse one of the brethren rose
And asked leave to propose a question
And when permission was granted he said:
"I have heard the doctrine that wrong should be met with wrong

And the evil doer should be checked by being made to suffer,
For if this were not done
Evil would increase and good would disappear.
What shall we do?"

Said the Bhagavat: "Nay, I will tell you:
You who have left the world
And have adopted this glorious faith of putting aside selfishness,
You shall not do evil nor return hate for hate.
Nor do you think that you can destroy wrong
By retaliating evil for evil and thus increasing wrong.
Leave the wicked to their fate
And their evil deeds will sooner or later
In one way or another bring on their own punishment."

And the Tathagata repeated these stanzas:

"Who harms him that does no harm
And strikes him that strikes not,
Shall gravest punishment incur
The which his wickedness begot,

"Some of the greatest ills in life
Either a loathsome dread disease,
Or dread old age, or loss of mind,
Or wretched pain without surcease,

"Or conflagration, loss of wealth;
Or his nearest kin he shall
See some one die that's dear to him,
And then he'll be reborn in hell."

The Last Days

88 • The Conditions of Welfare

When the Bhagavat was residing on the mount called Vulture's Peak,
near Rajagaha,
Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha, who reigned in the place of
Bimbisara,
Planned an attack on the Vajjis, and he said to Vassakara, his prime
minister:
"I will root out the Vajjis, mighty though they be.
I will destroy the Vajjis; I will bring them to utter ruin!
Come now, O Brahman, and go to the Bhagavat:
Inquire in my name for his health, and tell him my purpose.
Bear carefully in mind what the Bhagavat may say,
And repeat it to me, for the Buddhas speak nothing untrue.

When Vassakara, the prime minister, had greeted the Bhagavat and
delivered his message,
The venerable Ananda stood behind the Bhagavat and fanned him,
And the Bhagavat said to him:
"Has you heard, Ananda, that the Vajjis hold full and frequent public
assemblies?"

"Lord, so I have heard," replied he.

"So long, Ananda," said the Bhagavat,

"As the Vajjis hold these full and frequent public assemblies,
They may be expected not to decline, but to prosper.
So long as they meet together in concord,
So long as they honor their elders,
So long as they respect womanhood,
So long as they remain religious, performing all proper rites,
So long as they extend the rightful protection, defense and support to
the holy ones,
The Vajjis may be expected not to decline, but to prosper."

Then the Bhagavat addressed Vassakara and said:
"When I stayed, O Brahman, at Vesali,
I taught the Vajjis these conditions of welfare,
That so long as they should remain well instructed,
So long as they will continue in the right path,
So long as they live up to the precepts of righteousness,
We could expect them not to decline, but to prosper."

As soon as the king's messenger had gone,
The Bhagavat had the brethren, that were in the neighborhood of
Rajagaha, assembled in the service-hall, and addressed them, saying:

"I will teach you, O bhikkhus,
The conditions of the welfare of a community.
Listen well, and I will speak.

"So long, O bhikkhus, as the brethren hold full and frequent
assemblies,
Meeting in concord, rising in concord,
And attending in concord to the affairs of the Sangha;
So long as they, O bhikkhus, do not abrogate
That which experience has proved to be good,
And introduce nothing except such things as have been carefully
tested;
So long as their elders practice justice;
So long as the brethren esteem, revere,
And support their elders, and hearken unto their words;
So long as the brethren are not under the influence of craving,
But delight in the blessings of religion,
So that good and holy men shall come to them
And dwell among them in quiet;
So long as the brethren shall exercise themselves
In the sevenfold higher wisdom of mental activity,

Search after truth, energy, joy, modest, self-control,
Earnest contemplation, and equanimity of mind,
So long the Sangha may be expected not to decline, but to prosper.

"Therefore, O bhikkhus,
Be full of faith,
Modest in heart,
Afraid of sin,
Anxious to learn,
Strong in energy,
Active in mind,
And full of wisdom."

89 • Sariputta's Faith

The Bhagavat proceeded with a great company of the brethren to Nalanda; and there he stayed in a mango grove.

Now the venerable Sariputta came to the place where the Bhagavat was,
And having saluted him, took his seat respectfully at his side, and said:
"Lord! such faith I have in the Bhagavat,
That it seems to me there never has been, nor will be,
Nor is there now any other, who is greater or wiser than the Bhagavat,
That is to say, as regards the higher wisdom."

Replied the Bhagavat:
"Grand and bold are the words of your mouth, Sariputta:
Verily, you have burst forth into a song of ecstasy!
Surely then you have known all the Bhagavats
Who in the long ages of the past
Have been holy Buddhas?"

"Not so, O Lord!" said Sariputta.

And the Lord continued:
"Then you have perceived all the Bhagavats
Who in the long ages of the future shall be holy Buddhas?"

"Not so, Lord!"

"But at least then, O Sariputta, you know me
As the holy Buddha now alive, and have penetrated my mind."

"Not even that, O Lord!"

"You see then, Sariputta,
That you know not the hearts of the holy Buddhas of the past
Nor the hearts of those of the future,
Why, therefore, are your words so grand and bold?
Why burst you forth into such a song of ecstasy?"

"O Lord! I have not the knowledge of the hearts
Of all the Buddhas that have been and are to come, and now are.
I only know the lineage of the faith.
Just as a king, Lord, might have a border city,
Strong in its foundations, strong in its ramparts and with one gate
only;
And the king might have a watchman there, clever, expert, and wise,
To stop all strangers and admit only friends.
And on going over the approaches all about the city,
He might not be able so to observe all the joints and crevices in the
ramparts of that city
As to know where such a small creature as a cat could get out.
That might well be.
Yet all living beings of larger size
That entered or left the city,
Would have to pass through that gate.
Thus only is it, Lord, that I know the lineage of the faith.
I know that the holy Buddhas of the past,
Putting away all lust, ill-will, sloth, pride, and doubt,
Knowing all those mental faults which make men weak,
Training their minds in the four kinds of mental activity,
Thoroughly exercising themselves in the sevenfold higher wisdom,
Received the full fruition of Enlightenment.
And I know that the holy Buddhas of the times to come will do the
same.
And I know that the Bhagavat, the holy Buddha of today, has done so
now."

"Great is your faith, O Sariputta," replied the Bhagavat,
"But take heed that it be well grounded."

90 • Pataliputta

When the Bhagavat had stayed as long as convenient at Nalanda,
He went to Pataliputta, the frontier town of Magadha;
And when the disciples at Pataliputta heard of his arrival,
They invited him to their village rest house.
And the Bhagavat robed himself, took his bowl
And went with the brethren to the rest house.
There he washed his feet, entered the hall,
And seated himself against the center pillar,
With his face towards the east.
The brethren, also, having washed their feet, entered the hall,
And took their seats round the Bhagavat,
Against the western wall, facing the east.
And the lay devotees of Pataliputta, having also washed their feet,
Entered the hall, and took their seats opposite the Bhagavat
Against the eastern wall, facing towards the west.

Then the Bhagavat addressed the lay-disciples of Pataliputta, and he said:

"Fivefold, O householders,
Is the loss of the wrong-doer through his lack of rectitude.
In the first place, the wrong-doer, devoid of rectitude,
Falls into great poverty through sloth;
In the next place, his evil repute gets noised abroad;
Thirdly, whatever society he enters shyly and confusedly;
Fourthly, he is full of anxiety when he dies;
And lastly, on the dissolution of the body after death,
His mind remains in an unhappy state.
Wherever his karma continues, there will be suffering and woe.
This, O householders, is the fivefold loss of the evil-doer!

"Fivefold, O householders,
Is the gain of the well-doer through his practice of rectitude.
In the first place the well-doer, strong in rectitude,
Acquires property through his industry;
In the next place, good reports of him are spread abroad;
Thirdly, whatever society he enters,
Whether of nobles, Brahmans, heads of houses, or members of the
order,
He enters with confidence and self-possession;
Fourthly, he dies without anxiety;

And lastly, on the dissolution after death,
His mind remains in a happy state.
Wherever his karma continues, there will be heavenly bliss and peace.
This, O householders, is the fivefold gain of the well-doer."

When the Bhagavat had taught the disciples,
And incited them, and roused them, and gladdened them
Far into the night with religious edification, he dismissed them,
saying,
"The night is far spent, O householders.
It is time for you to do what you deem most fit."

"Be it so, Lord!" answered the disciples of Pataliputta,
And rising from their seats, they bowed to the Bhagavat,
And keeping him on their right hand as they passed him,
they departed thence.

While the Bhagavat stayed at Pataliputta,
The king of Magadha sent a messenger to the governor of Pataliputta
To raise fortifications for the security of the town.

And the Bhagavat seeing the laborers at work
Predicted the future greatness of the place, saying:
"The men who build the fortress act
As if they had consulted higher powers.
For this city of Pataliputta¹ will be a dwelling-place of busy men
And a center for the exchange of all kinds of goods.
But three dangers hang over Pataliputta,
That of fire, that of water, that of dissension."

When the governor heard of the prophecy of Pataliputta's future,
He greatly rejoiced and named the city-gate
through which the Buddha had gone towards the river Ganges,
"The Gautama Gate."

Meanwhile the people living on the banks of the Ganges
Arrived in great numbers to pay reverence to the Lord of the world;
And many persons asked him to do them the honor to cross over in

¹ Pataliputta: Called Patna today, the capital of the Indian State of Bihar. is one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world and a center of international trade since 17th century. It has two million inhabitants now. Apart from being the an administrative centre, the city is also a major educational and medical centre.

their boats.

But the Bhagavat considering the number of the boats and their beauty

Did not want to show any partiality,

And by accepting the invitation of one to offend all the others.

He therefore crossed the river without any boat,

Signifying thereby that the rafts of asceticism

And the gaudy gondolas of religious ceremonies

Were not staunch enough to weather the storms of Samsara,

While the Tathagata can walk dry-shod over the ocean of worldliness.

And as the city-gate was called after the name of the Tathagata

So the people called this passage of the river "Gautama Ford."

91 • The Mirror of Truth

The Bhagavat proceeded to the village Nadika

With a great company of brethren

And there he stayed at the Brick Hall.

And the venerable Ananda went to the Bhagavat

And mentioning to him the names of the brethren and sisters that had died,

Anxiously inquired about their fate after death,

Whether they had been reborn in animals or in hell,

Or as ghosts, or in any place of woe.

And the Bhagavat replied to Ananda and said:

"Those who have died after the complete destruction of the three bonds of lust, or greed and of the egotistical cleaving to existence, Need not fear the state after death.

They will not be reborn in a state of suffering;

Their minds will not continue as a karma of evil deeds or sin,

But are assured of final salvation.

"When they die, nothing will remain of them

But their good thoughts, their righteous acts,

And the bliss that proceeds from truth and righteousness.

As rivers must at last reach the distant main,

So their minds will be reborn in higher states of existence

And continue to be pressing on to their ultimate goal

Which is the ocean of truth, the eternal peace of Nirvana.

"Men are anxious about death and their fate after death;
But consider, it is not at all strange, Ananda,
That a human being should die.
However, that you should inquire about them,
And having heard the truth still be anxious about the dead,
This is wearisome to the Bhagavat.
I will, therefore, teach you the mirror of truth
And let the faithful disciple repeat it:

"Hell is destroyed for me,
And rebirth as an animal,
Or a ghost, or in any place of woe.
I am converted;
I am no longer liable to be reborn in a state of suffering,
And I am assured of final salvation.'

"What, then, Ananda, is this mirror of truth?
It is the consciousness that the elect disciple
Is in this world possessed of faith in the Buddha,
Believing the Bhagavat to be the Holy One,
The Fully-enlightened One, wise, upright, happy, world-knowing,
supreme,
The Bridler of men's wayward hearts, the Teacher of gods and men,
The blessed Buddha.

"It is further the consciousness that the disciple
Is possessed of faith in the truth,
Believing the truth to have been proclaimed by the Bhagavat,
For the benefit of the world, passing not away,
Welcoming all, leading to salvation,
To which through truth the wise will attain,
Each one by one by his own efforts.

"And, finally, it is the consciousness
That the disciple is possessed of faith in the order,
Believing in the efficacy of a union among those men and women
Who are anxious to walk in the noble eightfold path;
Believing the church of the Buddha,
Of the righteous, the upright, the just, the law-abiding,
To be worthy of honor, of hospitality, of gifts, and of reverence;
To be the supreme sowing-ground of merit for the world;

To be possessed of the virtues beloved by the good,
Virtues unbroken, intact, unspotted, unblemished,
Virtues which make men truly free,
Virtues which are praised by the wise,
Are untarnished by the desire of selfish aims,
Either now or in a future life,
Or by the belief in the efficacy of outward acts,
And are conducive to high and holy thought.

"This is the mirror of truth
Which teaches the straightest way to enlightenment
Which is the common goal of all living creatures.
He who possesses the mirror of truth is free from fear;
He will find comfort in the tribulations of life,
And his life will be a blessing to all his fellow-creatures."

92 • Ambapali

Then the Bhagavat proceeded with a great number of brethren to
Vesali,
And he stayed at the grove of the courtesan Ambapali*.
And he said to the brethren:
"Let a brother, O bhikkhus, be mindful and thoughtful.
Let a brother, while in the world,
Overcome the grief which arises from bodily craving,
From the lust of sensations,
And from the errors of wrong reasoning.
Whatever you do, act always in full presence of mind.
Be thoughtful in eating and drinking, in walking or standing,
In sleeping or walking, while talking or being silent."

When the courtesan Ambapali,
Heard that the Bhagavat was staying in her mango grove,
She was exceedingly glad and went in a carriage
As far as the ground was passable for carriages.

* **Ambapali:** It is difficult to form a proper conception of the social position of courtesans at Buddha's time. This much is sure, that they were not common prostitutes or venal daughters of lust, but ladies of wealth, possessing great influence that rose to prominence, not by birth, but by personal accomplishments, and many of them were installed by royal favor (Paul Carus note).

There she dismounts and thence proceeding
To the place where the Bhagavat was,
She took her seat respectfully at his feet on one side.
As a prudent woman goes forth to perform her religious duties,
So she appeared in a simple dress without any ornaments,
Yet beautiful to look upon.

And the Bhagavat thought to himself:
"This woman moves in worldly circles
And is a favorite of kings and princes;
Yet is her heart calm and composed.
Young in years, rich, surrounded by pleasures,
She is thoughtful and steadfast.
This, indeed, is rare in the world.
Women, as a rule, are scant in wisdom
And deeply immersed in vanity;
But she, although living in luxury,
Has acquired the wisdom of a master,
Taking delight in piety,
And able to receive the truth in its completeness."

When she was seated, the Bhagavat instructed,
Aroused, and gladdened her with religious discourse.

As she listened to the law, her face brightened with delight.
Then she rose and said to the Bhagavat:
"Will the Bhagavat do me the honor of taking his meal,
Together with the brethren, at my house tomorrow?"
And the Bhagavat gave, by silence, his consent.

Now, the Licchavi, a wealthy family of princely rank,
Hearing that the Bhagavat had arrived at Vesali
And was staying at Ambapali's grove,
Mounted their magnificent carriages, and proceeded with their
servants to the place where the Bhagavat was.
And the Licchavi were gorgeously dressed in bright colors
And decorated with costly jewels.

And Ambapali drove up against the young Licchavi,
Axle to axle, wheel to wheel, and yoke to yoke,
And the Licchavi said to Ambapali, the courtesan:
"How is it, Ambapali, that you drive up against us thus?"

"My lords," said she,
"I have just invited the Bhagavat
And his brethren for their tomorrow's meal."

And the princes replied: "Ambapali!
Give up this meal to us for a hundred thousand."

"My lords, were you to offer all Vesali with its subject territory,
I would not give up so great an honor!"

Then the Licchavi went on to Ambapali's grove.

When the Bhagavat saw the Licchavi approaching in the distance, he
Addressed the brethren, and said:
"O brethren, let those of the brethren
Who have never seen the gods gaze upon this company of the
Licchavi,
For they are dressed gorgeously, like immortals."

And when they had driven as far as the ground was passable for
carriages,
The Licchavi dismounted and went on foot to the place where the
Bhagavat was,
Taking their seats respectfully by his side.
And when they were thus seated, the Bhagavat instructed,
Aroused, and gladdened, them with religious discourse.

Then they addressed the Bhagavat and said:
"Will the Bhagavat do us the honor of taking his meal,
Together with the brethren, at our place tomorrow?"

"O Licchavi," said the Bhagavat,
"I have promised to dine tomorrow with Ambapali, the courtesan."

Then the Licchavi, expressing their approval of the words of the
Bhagavat,
Arose from their seats and bowed down before the Bhagavat,
And, keeping him on their right hand as they passed him, they
departed thence;
But when they came home, they cast up their hands, saying:
"A worldly woman has outdone us;
We have been left behind by a frivolous girl!"

And at the end of the night Ambapali, the courtesan,
Made ready in her mansion sweet rice and cakes,
And on the next day announced through a messenger
The time to the Bhagavat, saying,
"The hour, Lord, has come, and the meal is ready!"

And the Bhagavat robed himself early in the morning,
Took his bowl, and went with the brethren
To the place where Ambapali's dwelling-house was;
And when they had come there they seated themselves
On the seats prepared for them.
And Ambapali, the courtesan, set the sweet rice and cakes
Before the order, with the Buddha at their head,
And waited upon them till they refused to take more.

And the Bhagavat had finished his meal,
The courtesan had a low stool brought, and sat down at his side,
And addressed the Bhagavat, and said:
"Lord, I present this mansion
To the order of bhikkhus,
Of which the Buddha is the chief."

And the Bhagavat accepted the gift;
And after instructing, arousing, and gladdening her with religious
edification, he rose from his seat and departed thence.

93 • The Buddha's Farewell

When the Bhagavat had remained as long as he wished at Ambapali's
grove,
He went to Beluva, near Vesali. There the Bhagavat addressed the
brethren, and said:
"O mendicants, take up your abode for the rainy season round about
Vesali,
Each one according to the place where his friends and near
companions may live.
I shall enter upon the rainy season here at Beluva."

When the Bhagavat had thus entered upon the rainy season
There fell upon him a dire sickness,
And sharp pains came upon him even unto death.

But the Bhagavat, mindful and self-possessed,
Bore his ailments without complaint.

Then this thought occurred to the Bhagavat,
"It would not be right for me to pass away from life
Without addressing the disciples, without taking leave of the order.
Let me now, by a strong effort of the will, subdue this sickness,
And keep my hold on life till the allotted time have come."

And the Bhagavat, by a strong effort of the will subdued the sickness,
And kept his hold on life till the time he fixed upon should come.
And the sickness abated.

Thus the Bhagavat began to recover;
And when he had quite got rid of the sickness,
He went out from the monastery,
And sat down on a seat spread out in the open air.
And the venerable Ananda, accompanied by many other disciples,
Approached where the Bhagavat was, saluted him,
And taking a seat respectfully on one side, said:
"I have seen, Master, how the Bhagavat was in health,
And I have seen how the Bhagavat had to suffer.
And though at the sight of the sickness of the Bhagavat
My body became weak as a creeper, and the horizon became dim to
me,
And my faculties were no longer clear,
Yet notwithstanding I took some little comfort from the thought
That the Bhagavat would not pass away from existence
Until at least he had left instructions as touching the order."

And the Bhagavat addressed Ananda in behalf of the order, saying:

"What, then, Ananda, does the order expect of me?
I have preached the truth without making any distinction
Between exoteric and esoteric doctrine;
For in respect of the truth, Ananda,
The Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher,
Who keeps some things back.

"Surely, Ananda, should there be any one who harbors the thought,
'It is I who will lead the brotherhood,' or,
'The order is dependent upon me,'
He should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the order.

Now the Tathagata, Ananda, thinks not that it is he who should lead
the brotherhood,
Or that the order is dependent upon him.

"Why, then, should the Tathagata leave instruction
in any matter concerning the order?

"I am now grown old, O Ananda, and full of years;
My journey is drawing to its close,
I have reached the sum of my days,
I am turning eighty years of age.

"Just as a worn-out cart cannot be made to move along without much
difficulty,
So the body of the Tathagata can only be kept going with much
additional care.

"It is only, Ananda, when the Tathagata,
Ceasing to attend to any outward thing,
Becomes plunged into that devout meditation of heart
Which is concerned with no bodily object,
It is only then that the body of the Tathagata is at ease.

"Therefore, O Ananda, be you lamps unto yourselves.
Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help.

"Hold fast to the truth as a lamp.
Seek deliverance alone in the truth.
Look not for assistance to any one besides yourselves.

"And how, Ananda, can a brother be lamp unto himself,
Rely on himself only and not on any external help,
Holding fast to the truth as his lamp
And seeking deliverance in the truth alone,
Looking not for assistance to any one besides himself?

"Herein, O Ananda, let a brother,
As he dwells in the body, so regard the body that he,
Being strenuous, thoughtful, and mindful, may, while in the world,
Overcome the grief which arises from the body's cravings.

"While subject to sensations
Let him continue so to regard the sensations that he,

Being strenuous, thoughtful, and mindful, may, while in the world,
Overcome the grief which arises from the sensations.

"And so, also, when he thinks or reasons, or feels,
Let him so regard his thoughts
That being strenuous, thoughtful, and mindful he may, while in the
world,
Overcome the grief which arises from the craving due to ideas,
Or to reasoning, or to feeling.

"Those who, either now or after I am dead, shall be lamps unto
themselves,
Relying upon themselves only and not relying upon any external help,
' But holding fast in the truth as their lamp,
And seeking enlightenment in the truth alone,
And shall not look for assistance to any one besides themselves,
It is they, Ananda, among my bhikkhus, who shall reach the very
height!
But they must be anxious to learn."

94 • The Buddha Announces his Death

Said the Tathagata to Ananda:
"In former years, Ananda, Mara, the Evil One,
Approached the holy Buddha three times to tempt him.

"And now, Ananda, Mara, the Evil One,
Came again today to the place where I was, and, standing beside me,
Addressed me in the same words as he did
When I was resting under the shepherd's Nigrodha^{*} tree
On the bank of the Neranyjara river:
'Be greeted, you Holy One.
You have attained the highest bliss
And it is time for you to enter into the final Nirvana.'

"And when Mara had thus spoken, Ananda,
I answered him and said:
'Make yourself happy, O wicked one;

^{*} **Nigrodha:** The tree under which the Buddha sought Enlightenment for seven days.
A *Ficus religiosa* or sacred fig-tree.

The extinction of the Tathagata
Shall take place before long."

And the venerable Ananda addressed the Bhagavat and said:
"Vouchsafe, Lord, to remain with us, O Bhagavat!
For the good and the happiness of the great multitudes,
Out of compassion for the world, for the good and the gain of
mankind!"

Said the Bhagavat:
"Enough now, Ananda,
Plead not the Tathagata!"

And again, a second time,
The venerable Ananda besought the Bhagavat in the same words.
And he received from the Bhagavat the same reply.

And again, the third time,
The venerable Ananda implore
The Bhagavat to live longer;
And the Bhagavat said:
"Has you faith, Ananda?"

Said Ananda: "I have, my Lord!"

And the Bhagavat, seeing the quivering eyelids of Ananda,
Read the deep grief in the heart of his beloved disciple,
And he asked again: "Has you, indeed, faith, Ananda?"

And Ananda said: "I have faith, my Lord."

Then the Bhagavat continued:
"If you have faith, Ananda, in the wisdom of the Tathagata,
Why, then, Ananda, do you trouble the Tathagata even until the third
time?

Have I not formerly declared to you
That it is in the very nature of all compound things
That they must be dissolved again.
We must separate ourselves from all
Things near and dear to us, and must leave them.
How then, Ananda, can it be possible for me to remain,
Since everything that is born, or brought into being, and organized,
Contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution?

How, then, can it be possible
That this body of mine should not be dissolved?
No such condition can exist!
And this mortal existence, O Ananda,
Has been relinquished, cast away, renounced, rejected,
And abandoned by the Tathagata."

And the Bhagavat said to Ananda:
"Go now, Ananda, and assemble in the Service Hall
Such of the brethren as reside in the neighborhood of Vesali."

Then the Bhagavat proceeded to the Service Hall,
And sat down there on the mat spread out for him.
And when he was seated,
The Bhagavat addressed the brethren, and said:

"O brethren, you to whom the truth has been made known,
Having thoroughly made yourselves masters of it,
Practice it, meditate upon it, and spread it abroad,
In order that pure religion may last long and be perpetuated,
In order that it may continue for the good
And happiness of the great multitudes,
Out of compassion for the world,
And to the good and gain of all living beings!

"Star-gazing and astrology, forecasting lucky or unfortunate events by
signs, prognosticating good or evil, all these are things forbidden.

"He who lets his heart go loose without restraint
Shall not attain Nirvana;
Therefore, must we hold the heart in check,
And retire from worldly excitements
And seek calmness of mind.

"Eat your food to satisfy your hunger,
And drink to satisfy your thirst.
Satisfy the necessities of life like the butterfly that sips the flower,
Without destroying its fragrance or its texture.

"It is through not understanding and grasping the four truths,
O brethren, that we have gone astray so long,
And wandered in this weary path of reincarnations,
Both you and I,

Until we have found the truth.

"Practice the earnest meditations I have taught you.
Continue in the great struggle against sin.
Walk steadily in the roads of saintship.
Be strong in moral powers.
Let the organs of your spiritual sense be quick.
When the seven kinds of wisdom enlighten your mind,
You will find the noble, eightfold path that leads to Nirvana.

"Behold, O brethren,
The final extinction of the Tathagata
Will take place before long.
I now exhort you, saying:
'All component things must grow old and be dissolved again.
Seek you for that which is permanent,
And work out your salvation with diligence.'"

95 • Chunda, the Smith

And the Bhagavat went to Pava.

When Chunda, the worker in metals,
Heard that the Bhagavat had come to Pava
And was staying in his mango grove,
He came to the Buddha
And respectfully invited him and the brethren
To take their meal at his house.
And Chunda prepared rice-cakes
And a dish of dried boar's meat.

When the Bhagavat had eaten the food prepared by Chunda, the
worker in metals,
There fell upon him a dire sickness, and sharp pain came upon him
even unto death.
But the Bhagavat, mindful and self-possessed, bore it without
complaint.

And the Bhagavat addressed the venerable Ananda, and said:
"Come, Ananda, let us go on to Kusinara."

On his way the Bhagavat grew tired,
And he went aside from the road to rest
At the foot of a tree, and said:
"Fold the robe, Ananda, and spread it out for me.
I am weary, Ananda, and must rest a while!"

"Be it so, Lord!" said the venerable Ananda;
And he spread out the robe folded fourfold.

The Bhagavat seated himself,
And when he was seated he addressed the venerable Ananda, and
said:
"Fetch me some water, I pray you, Ananda,
I am thirsty, Ananda, and would drink."

When he had thus spoken, the venerable Ananda said to the
Bhagavat:
"But just now, Lord,
Five hundred carts have gone across the brook
And have stirred the water;
But a river, O Lord, is not far off.
Its water is clear and pleasant, cool and transparent,
And it is easy to get down to it.
There the Bhagavat may both drink water and cool his limbs."

A second time the Bhagavat addressed the venerable Ananda, saying:
"Fetch me some water, I pray you, Ananda,
I am thirsty, Ananda, and would drink."

And a second time the venerable Ananda said:
"Let us go to the river."

Then the third time the Bhagavat
Addressed the venerable Ananda, and said:
"Fetch me some water, I pray you, Ananda,
I am thirsty, Ananda, and would drink."

"Be it so, Lord!" said the venerable Ananda
In assent to the Bhagavat;
And, taking a bowl, he went down to the streamlet.
And lo! the streamlet, which stirred up by wheels, had become
muddy,
When the venerable Ananda came up to it,

Flowed clear and bright and free from all turbidity.
And he thought:
"How wonderful, how marvelous
Is the great might and power of the Tathagata!"

Ananda brought the water in the bowl to the Lord, saying:
"Let the Bhagavat take the bowl.
Let the Happy One drink the water.
Let the teacher of men and gods quench his thirst."

Then the Bhagavat drank of the water.

Now, at that time a man of low caste, named Pukkusa,
A young Malla, a disciple of Alara Kalama^{*},
Was passing along the high road from Kusinara to Pava.

And Pukkusa, the young Malla, saw the Bhagavat seated at the foot of
a tree.

On seeing him, he went up to the place where the Bhagavat was,
And when he had come there, he saluted the Bhagavat
And took his seat respectfully on one side.
Then the Bhagavat instructed, edified,
And gladdened Pukkusa, the young Malla, with religious discourse.

Aroused and gladdened by the words of the Bhagavat,
Pukkusa, the young Malla,
Addressed a certain man who happened to pass by, and said:
"Fetch me, I pray you, my good man,
Two robes of cloth of gold[†],
Burnished and ready for wear."

"Be it so, sir!" said that man in assent to Pukkusa, the young Malla;
And he brought two robes of cloth of gold, burnished and ready for
wear.

And the Malla Pukkusa presented the two robes of cloth of gold,
Burnished and ready for wear, to the Bhagavat, saying:
"Lord, these two robes of burnished cloth of gold are ready for wear."

^{*} **Alara Kalama:** An Indian sage.

[†] **Cloth of Gold:** Fabric woven wholly or partly of gold threads. In India tapestries were made from gold threads as fine as silk and are still made today. The city of New Delhi alone produces many miles per annum, working in the ancient way.

May the Bhagavat show me favor and accept them at my hands!"

The Bhagavat said:

"Pukkusa, robe me in one, and Ananda in the other."

And the Tathagata's body appeared shining like a flame,
And he was beautiful above all expression.

And the venerable Ananda said to the Bhagavat:

"How wonderful a thing is it, Lord, and how marvelous,
That the color of the skin of the Bhagavat
Should be so clear, so exceedingly bright!
When I placed this robe of burnished cloth of gold
On the body of the Bhagavat, lo!
It seemed as if it had lost its splendor!"

The Bhagavat said:

"There are two occasions on which a Tathagata's appearance
Becomes clear and exceeding bright.
In the night, Ananda, in which a Tathagata attains to the supreme and
perfect insight,
And in the night in which he passes finally away
In that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever
Of his earthly existence to remain."

And the Bhagavat addressed the venerable Ananda, and said:

"Now it may happen, Ananda,

That someone should stir up remorse in Chunda, the smith, by
saying:

'It is evil to you, Chunda, and loss to you, that the Tathagata died,
Having eaten his last meal from your provision.'

Any such remorse, Ananda, in Chunda, the smith, should be checked
by saying:

'It is good to you, Chunda, and gain to you, that the Tathagata died,
Having eaten his last meal from your provision.'

From the very mouth of the Bhagavat, O Chunda,

Have I heard, from his own mouth have I received this saying,

"These two offerings of food are of equal fruit

And of much greater profit than any other:

The offerings of food which a Tathagata accepts

When he has attained perfect enlightenment

And when he passes away by the utter passing away

In which nothing whatever of his earthly existence remains behind,

These two offerings of food are of equal fruit and of equal profit,
And of much greater fruit and much greater profit than any other.
There has been laid up by Chunda, the smith,
A karma redounding to length of life,
Redounding to good birth,
Redounding to good fortune,
Redounding to good fame,
Redounding to the inheritance of heaven and of great power."
In this way, Ananda should be checked any remorse in Chunda, the
smith."

Then the Bhagavat,
Perceiving that death was near,
Uttered these words:
"He who gives away shall have real gain.
He who subdues himself shall be free,
He shall cease to be a slave of passions.
The righteous man casts off evil;
And by rooting out lust, bitterness, and illusion,
Do we reach Nirvana."

96 • Maitreya¹

The Bhagavat proceeded with a great company of the brethren
To the sala grove of the Mallas, the Upavattana of Kusinara
On the further side of the river Hirannyavati,
And when he had arrived he addressed the venerable Ananda, and
said:

"Make ready for me, I pray you, Ananda,
The couch with its head to the north,
Between the twin sala trees.
I am weary, Ananda, and wish to lie down."

"Be it so, Lord!" said the venerable Ananda,
And he spread a couch with its head to the north, between the twin
sala trees.
And the Bhagavat laid himself down,
And he was mindful and self-possessed.

¹ **Maitreya:** In this teaching Buddha announces the future Buddha. Maitreya (Metteyya in Pali) is a Sanskrit word meaning 'loving-kindness', 'friend'.

Now, at that time the twin sala trees
Were full of bloom with flowers out of season;
And heavenly songs came wafted from the skies,
Out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old.
And Ananda was filled with wonder that the Bhagavat was thus
honored.

But the Bhagavat said:
"Not by such events, Ananda,
Is the Tathagata rightly honored, held sacred, or revered.
But the brother or the sister,
The devout man or the devout woman,
Who continually fulfils all the greater and lesser duties,
Walking according to the precepts,
It is they who rightly honor, hold sacred,
And revere the Tathagata with the worthiest homage.
Therefore, O Ananda, be you constant
In the fulfillment of the greater and of the lesser duties,
And walk according to the precepts;
Thus, Ananda, will you honor the Master."

Then the venerable Ananda went into the vihara,
And stood leaning against the doorpost, weeping at the thought:
"Alas! I remain still but a learner,
One who has yet to work out his own perfection.
And the Master is about to pass away from me,
He who is so kind!"

Now, the Bhagavat called the brethren, and said:
"Where, O brethren, is Ananda?"

And one of the brethren went and called Ananda.
And Ananda came and said to the Bhagavat:
"Deep darkness reigned for lack of wisdom;
The world of sentient creatures was blind for absence of light,
Then the Tathagata lit up the lamp of wisdom,
And now it will be extinguished again,
Ere he has brought it out."

And the Bhagavat said to the venerable Ananda,
As he sat there by his side:

"Enough, Ananda!
Let not your self be troubled; do not weep!

Have I not already, on former occasions,
Told you that it is in the very nature of all things
Most near and dear unto us
That we must separate from them and leave them?

"The foolish man conceives the idea of 'self,'
The wise man sees there is no ground
On which to build the idea of 'self,'
Thus he has a right conception of the world
And well concludes that all compounds amassed by sorrow
will be dissolved again,
But the truth will remain.

"Why should I preserve this body of flesh,
When the body of the excellent law will endure?
I am resolved;
Having accomplished my purpose
And attended to the work set me,
I look for rest!

"For a long time, Ananda,
You have been very near to me by thoughts
And acts of such love as never varies
And is beyond all measure.
You have done well, Ananda!
Be earnest in effort
And you too shall soon be free from the great evils,
From sensuality, from selfishness, from delusion and from ignorance!"

And Ananda, suppressing his tears, said to the Bhagavat:
"Who shall teach us when you are gone?"

And the Bhagavat replied:
"I am not the first Buddha who came upon earth,
Nor shall I be the last.
In due time another Buddha will arise in the world,
A Holy One, a supremely enlightened One,
Endowed with wisdom in conduct,
Auspicious, knowing the universe,
An incomparable leader of men,
A master of angels and mortals.
He will reveal to you the same eternal truths
Which I have taught you.

He will preach his religion,
Glorious in its origin,
Glorious at the climax,
And glorious at the goal,
In the spirit and in the letter.
He will proclaim a religious life,
Wholly perfect and pure;
Such as I now proclaim."

Ananda said: "How shall we know him?"

The Bhagavat said:
"He will be known as Maitreya
Which means 'he whose name is kindness.'"

97 • The Buddha's Final Entering into Nirvana

Then the Mallas, with their young men and maidens and their wives,
Being grieved, and sad, and afflicted at heart,
Went to the Upavattana, the sala grove of the Mallas,
And wanted to the Bhagavat,
In order to partake of the bliss that pass on
Upon those who are in the presence of the Holy One.

And the Bhagavat addressed them and said:

"Seeking the way,
You must exert yourselves
And strive with diligence.
It is not enough to have seen me!
Walk as I have commanded you;
Free yourselves from the tangled net of sorrow.
Walk in the path with steadfast aim.

"A sick man may be cured by the healing power of medicine
And will be rid of all his ailments without beholding the physician.

"He who does not do what I command sees me in vain.
This brings no profit.
While he who lives far off from where I am
And yet walks righteously is ever near me.

"A man may dwell beside me, and yet,
Being disobedient, be far away from me.
Yet he who obeys the Dharma will always enjoy
The bliss of the Tathagata's presence."

Then the mendicant Subhadda went to the sala grove of the Mallas
And said to the venerable Ananda:

"I have heard from fellow mendicants of mine,
Who were deep stricken in years and teachers of great experience:
'Sometimes and full seldom do Tathagatas appear in the world, the
holy Buddhas.'

Now it is said that today in the last watch of the night,
The final passing away of the samana Gautama will take place.
My mind is full of uncertainty,
Yet I have faith in the samana Gautama
And trust he will be able so to present the truth
That I may become rid of my doubts,
O that I might be allowed to see the samana Gautama!"

When he had thus spoken
The venerable Ananda said to the mendicant Subhadda:
"Enough! friend Subhadda. Trouble not the Tathagata.
The Bhagavat is weary."

Now the Bhagavat overheard this conversation
Of the venerable Ananda with the mendicant Subhadda.
And the Bhagavat called the venerable Ananda, and said:
"Ananda! Do not keep out Subhadda.
Subhadda may be allowed to see the Tathagata.
Whatever Subhadda will ask of me,
He will ask from a desire for knowledge,
And not to annoy me,
And whatever I may say in answer to his questions,
That he will quickly understand."

Then the venerable Ananda said to Subhadda the mendicant:
"Step in, friend Subhadda;
For the Bhagavat gives you leave."

When the Bhagavat had instructed Subhadda,
And aroused and gladdened him with words of wisdom and comfort,
Subhadda said to the Bhagavat:

"Glorious Lord, glorious Lord!
Most excellent are the words of your mouth, most excellent!
They set up that which has been overturned,
They reveal that which has been hidden.
They point out the right road to the wanderer who has gone astray.
They bring a lamp into the darkness
So that those who have eyes to see can see.
Thus, Lord, the truth has been made known to me by the Bhagavat
And I take refuge in the Bhagavat, in the Truth, and in the Order.
May the Bhagavat accept me as a disciple and true believer,
From this day forth as long as life endures."

And Subhadda, the mendicant, said to the venerable Ananda:
"Great is your gain, friend Ananda,
Great is your good fortune,
That for so many years you have been sprinkled
With the sprinkling of discipleship in this brotherhood
At the hands of the Master himself!"

Now the Bhagavat addressed the venerable Ananda, and said:
"It may be, Ananda, that in some of you the thought may arise,
'The word of the Master is ended, we have no teacher more!'
But it is not thus, Ananda, that you should regard it.
It is true that no more shall I receive a body.
For all future sorrow has now forever passed away.
But though this body will be dissolved, the Tathagata remains.
The truth and the rules of the order
Which I have set forth and laid down for you all,
Let them, after I am gone, be a teacher unto you.
When I am gone, Ananda, let the order,
If it should so wish, abolish all the lesser and minor precepts."

The Bhagavat addressed the brethren, and said:
"There may be some doubt or misgiving in the mind of a brother
As to the Buddha, or the truth, or the path.
Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought,
'We did not inquire of the Bhagavat when we were face to face with
him.'
Therefore inquire now, O brethren, inquire freely."

And the brethren remained silent.

Then the venerable Ananda said to the Bhagavat:

"Verily, I believe that in this whole assembly of the brethren
There is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving
As to the Buddha, or the truth, or the path!"

Said the Bhagavat:

"It is out of the fullness of faith that you have spoken, Ananda!
But, Ananda, the Tathagata knows for certain
That in this whole assembly of the brethren
There is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving
As to the Buddha, or the truth, or the path!
For even the most backward, Ananda,
Of all these brethren has become converted,
And is assured of final salvation."

Then the Bhagavat addressed the brethren and said:

"If you now know the Dharma,
The cause of all suffering,
And the path of salvation,
O disciples, will you then say:
"We respect the Master,
And out of reverence for the Master
Do we thus speak?"

The brethren replied: "That we shall not, O Lord."

And the Holy One continued:

"Of those beings who live in ignorance,
Shut up and confined, as it were, in an egg,
I have first broken the egg-shell of ignorance
And alone in the universe
Obtained the most exalted, universal Buddhahood.
Thus, O disciples, I am the eldest, the noblest of beings.

"But what you speak, O disciples,
Is it not even that which you have yourselves know,
Yourselves seen, yourselves realized?"

Ananda and the brethren said: "It is, O Lord."

Once more the Bhagavat began to speak:

"Behold now, brethren," said he,
"I exhort you, saying,

'Decay is inherent in all component things,
But the truth will remain forever!'
Work out your salvation with diligence!"
This was the last word of the Tathagata.
Then the Tathagata fell into a deep meditation,
And having passed through the four jhanas,
Entered Nirvana.

When the Bhagavat entered Nirvana there arose,
At his passing out of existence,
A mighty earthquake, terrible and awe-inspiring:
And the thunders of heaven burst forth,
And those of the brethren who were not yet free from passions
Some stretched out their arms and wept,
And some fell headlong on the ground, in anguish at the thought:
"Too soon has the Bhagavat passed away from existence!
Too soon has the light of the world gone out!"

Then the venerable Anuruddha exhorted the brethren and said:
"Enough, my brethren! Weep not, neither lament!
Has not the Bhagavat formerly declared this to us,
That it is in the very nature of all things near and dear unto us,
That we must separate from them,
Since everything that is born,
Brought into being, and organized,
Contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution?
How then can it be possible
That the body of the Tathagata should not be dissolved?
No such condition can exist!
Those who are free from passion will bear the loss,
Calm and self-possessed,
Mindful of the truth he has taught us."

And the venerable Anuruddha and the venerable Ananda
Spent the rest of the night in religious discourse.

Then the venerable Anuruddha said to the venerable Ananda:
"Go now, brother Ananda, and inform the Mallas of Kusinara saying,
'The Bhagavat has passed away:
Do, then, whatsoever seem fit to you!'"

And when the Mallas had heard this saying they were grieved,
And sad, and afflicted at heart.

Then the Mallas of Kusinara gave orders to their attendants, saying,
"Gather together perfumes and garlands,
And all the music in Kusinara!"
And the Mallas of Kusinara took the perfumes and garlands,
And all the musical instruments, and five hundred garments,
And went to the sala grove where the body of the Bhagavat lay.
There they passed the day in paying honor and reverence
To the remains of the Bhagavat, with hymns, and music,
And with garlands and perfumes,
And in making canopies of their garments,
And preparing decorative wreaths to hang thereon.
And they burned the remains of the Bhagavat
As they would do to the body of a king of kings.

When the funeral pyre was lit,
The sun and moon withdrew their shining,
The peaceful streams on every side were torrent-swollen,
The earth quaked, and the sturdy forests shook like aspen leaves,
While flowers and leaves fell untimely to the ground,
Like scattered rain, so that all Kusinara became strewn knee-deep
With mandara flowers raining down from heaven.

When the burning ceremonies were over,
Devaputta said to the multitudes
That were assembled round the pyre:

"Behold, O brethren, the earthly remains of the Bhagavat have been
dissolved,
But the truth which he has taught us lives in our minds and cleanses
us from all error.

"Let us, then, go out into the world,
As compassionate and merciful as our great master
And preach to all living beings the four noble truths
And the eightfold path of righteousness,
So that all mankind may attain to a final salvation,
Taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha."

And when the Bhagavat had entered into Nirvana,
And the Mallas had burned the body with such ceremonies
As would indicate that he was the great king of kings,
Ambassadors came from all the empires
That at the time had embraced his doctrine,

To claim a share of the relics;
And the relics were divided into eight parts
And eight dagobas^{*} were erected for their preservation.
One dagoba was erected by the Mallas
And seven others by the seven kings of those countries,
Whose people had taken refuge in the Buddha.

^{*}Dagoba: A dome-shaped structure built over relics of Buddhas or Buddhist saints.

Conclusion

98 • The Three Personalities of the Buddha

When the Bhagavat had passed away into Nirvana,
The disciples came together and consulted what to do
In order to keep the Dharma pure and uncorrupted by heresies.

And Upali rose, saying:

"Our great Master used to say to the brethren:
'O bhikkhus! after my final entrance into Nirvana
You must reverence and obey the law.
Regard the law as your master.
The law is like unto a light
That shines in the darkness,
Pointing out the way;
It is also like unto a precious jewel
To gain which you must shun no trouble,
And be ready to bring any sacrifice,
Even, should it be needed, your own lives.
Obey the Dharma which I have revealed to you;
Follow it carefully and regard it
In no way different from myself.'

"Such were the words of the Bhagavat.

"The law, accordingly, which the Buddha has left us as a precious

inheritance

Has now become the visible body of the Tathagata.
Let us, therefore, revere it and keep it sacred.
For what is the use of erecting dagobas for relics,
If we neglect the spirit of the Master's teachings?"

And Anuruddha arose and said:

"Let us bear in mind, O brethren,
That Gautama Siddhartha has revealed the truth to us.
He was the Holy One and the Perfect One and the Bhagavat,
Because the eternal truth had taken abode in him.

"The Tathagata taught us
That the truth existed before he was born into this world,
And will exist after he has entered into the bliss of Nirvana.

"The Tathagata said:

"The truth is omnipresent and eternal,
Endowed with excellencies innumerable,
Above all human nature,
And ineffable in its holiness.'

"Now, let us bear in mind that not this or that law
Which is revealed to us in the Dharma is the Buddha,
But the entire truth, the truth which is eternal,
Omnipresent, immutable, and most excellent.

"Many regulations of the Sangha are temporary;
They were prescribed because they suited the occasion
And were needed for some transient emergency.
The truth, however, is not temporary.

"The truth is not arbitrary
Nor a matter of opinion,
But can be investigated,
And he who earnestly searches for the truth
Will find it.

"The truth is hidden to the blind,
But he who has the mental eye sees the truth.
The truth is Buddha's essence,

And the truth will remain the ultimate standard
By which we can discern false and true doctrines.

"Let us, then, revere the truth;
Let us inquire into the truth and state it,
And let us obey the truth.
For the truth is Buddha our Master,
Our Teacher, our Lord."

And Kassapa rose and said:

"Truly you have spoken well, O brother Anuruddha.
Neither is there any conflict of opinion on the meaning of our
religion.
For the Bhagavat possesses three personalities,
and every one of them is of equal importance to us.

"There is the Dharma Kaya.
There is the Nirmana Kaya.
There is the Sambhoga Kaya.

"Buddha is the all-excellent truth,
Eternal, omnipresent, and immutable.
This is the Sambhoga Kaya
Which is in a state of perfect bliss.

"Buddha is the all-loving teacher
Assuming the shape of the beings whom he teaches.
This is the Nirmana Kaya,
His apparitional body.

"Buddha is the all-blessed dispensation of religion.
He is the spirit of the Sangha and the meaning of the commands
Which he has left us in his sacred world, the Dharma.
This is the Dharma Kaya,
The body of the most excellent law.

"If Buddha had not appeared to us as Gautama Sakyamuni,
How could we have the sacred traditions of his doctrine?
And if the generations to come
Did not have the sacred traditions preserved in the Sangha,
How could they know anything of the great Sakyamuni?
And neither we nor others would know anything about the most

Excellent truth which is eternal, omnipresent, and immutable.

"Let us then keep sacred and revere the traditions;
Let us keep sacred the memory of Gautama Sakyamuni,
So that people may find the truth;
For he whose spiritual eye is open will discover it,
And it is the same to every one who possesses the comprehension of a
Buddha to recognize it and to expose it."

Then the brethren decided to assemble a synod in Rajagaha
In order to lay down the pure doctrines of the Bhagavat,
To collect and collate the sacred writings,
And to establish a canon which should serve
As a source of instruction for future generations.

99 • The Purpose of Being

Eternal verities dominate the formation of worlds
And constitute the cosmic order of natural laws.
But when, through the conflicting motion of masses,
The universe was illuminated with blazing fire,
There was no eye to see the light,
No ear to listen to reason's teachings,
No mind to perceive the significance of being;
And in the immeasurable spaces of existence no place was found
Where the truth could abide in all its glory.

In the due course of evolution sentiency appeared and sense-
perception arose.
There was a new realm of being, the realm of soul-life, full of
yearning,
With powerful passions and of unconquerable energy.
And the world split in twain:
There were pleasures and pains, self and notself,
Friends and foes,
Hatred and love.
The truth vibrated through the world of sentiency,
But in all its infinite potentialities no place could be found
Where the truth could abide in all its glory.

And reason came forth in the struggle for life.

Reason began to guide the instinct of self,
And reason took the scepter of the creation
And overcame the strength of the brutes and the power of the
elements.

Yet reason seemed to add new fuel to the flame,
Increasing the turmoil of conflicting passions;
And brothers slew their brothers
For the sake of satisfying the lust of a fleeting moment.
And the truth move to the domains of reason,
But in all its recesses no place was found
Where the truth could abide in all its glory.

Now reason, as the helpmate of self,
Implicated all living beings more and more
In the meshes of lust, hatred, and envy,
And from lust, hatred, and envy
The evils of wrong-doing originated.
Men broke down under the burdens of life,
Until the savior appeared, the great Buddha,
The Holy Teacher of men and gods.

And the Buddha taught men the right use of sentiency,
And the right application of reason;
And he taught men to see things as they are, without illusions,
And they learned to act according to the truth.
He taught righteousness
And thus changed rational creatures into humane beings,
Just, kind-hearted, and faithful.
And now at last a place was found
Where the truth might abide in all its glory,
And this place is the heart of mankind.

Buddha, O Bhagavat,
O Holy One, O Perfect One,
You have revealed the truth,
And the truth has appeared upon earth
And the kingdom of truth has been founded.

There is not room for truth in space,
Infinite though it be.

There is not room for truth in sentiency,
Neither in its pleasures nor in its pains;

Sentiency is the first footstep of truth,
But there is not room in it for truth,
Though sentiency may beam
With the blazing glow of beauty and life.

Neither is there any room for truth in rationality.
Rationality is a two-edged sword
And serves the purpose of love
Equally as well as the purpose of hatred.
Rationality is the platform on which the truth stands.
No truth is attainable without reason.
Nevertheless, in mere rationality there is no room for truth,
Though it be the instrument that masters the things of the world.

The throne of truth is righteousness;
And love and justice and good-will are its ornaments.

Righteousness is the place in which truth dwells,
And here in the hearts of mankind
Aspiring after the realization of righteousness,
There is ample space for a rich
And ever richer revelation of the truth.

This is the bequest of the Holy One.
This is the revelation of the Enlightened One.
This is the Gospel of Buddha.

Those who accept the truth and have faith in the truth,
Take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Receive us, O Buddha, as your disciples
From this day hence, so long as our life lasts.

Comfort, O holy Teacher, compassionate and all-loving,
The afflicted and the sorrow-laden, illumine those who go astray,
And let us all gain more and more in comprehension and in holiness.

The truth is the end and aim of all existence, and the worlds originate
so that the truth may come and dwell therein.

Those who fail to aspire for the truth
Have missed the purpose of life.

Blessed is he who rests in the truth,
For all things will pass away,
But the truth abides forever.

The world is built for the truth,
But false combinations of thought
Misrepresent the true state of things
And bring forth errors.

Errors can be fashioned
As it pleases those who cherish them;
Therefore they are pleasant to look upon,
But they are unstable and contain the seeds of dissolution.

Truth cannot be fashioned.
Truth is one and the same;
It is immutable.

Truth is above the power of death,
It is omnipresent, eternal, and most glorious.

Illusions, errors, and lies are the daughters of Mara,
And great power is given unto them to seduce the minds of men
And lead them astray upon the path of evil.

The nature of delusions, errors, and lies is death,
And wrong-doing is the way to perdition.

Delusions, errors, and lies
Are like huge, beautiful vessels,
The rafters of which are rotten and worm eaten,
And those who embark in them
Are fated to be shipwrecked.

There are many who say:
"Come error, be you my guide,"
And when they are caught
In the meshes of selfishness, lust, and evil desires,
Misery is begot.

Yet does all life yearn for the truth
And the truth only can cure our diseases
And peace to our unrest.

Truth is the essence of life,
For truth endures beyond the death of the body.
Truth is eternal and will still remain
Even though heaven and earth shall pass away.

There are not different truths in the world,
For truth is one and the same
At all times and in every place.

Truth teaches us the noble eightfold path of righteousness,
And it is a straight path easily found by the truth-loving.
Happy are those who walk in it.

100 • The Praise of All Buddhas

All the Buddhas are wonderful and glorious.
There is not their equal upon earth.
They reveal to us the path of life.
And we hail their appearance with pious reverence.

All the Buddhas teach the same truth.
They point out the path to those who go astray.
The truth is our hope and comfort.
We gratefully accept its illimitable light.

All the Buddhas are one in essence,
Which is omnipresent in all modes of being,
Sanctifying the bonds that tie all souls together,
And we rest in its bliss as our final refuge.

